

LEHIGH UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING & MECHANICS

Memorial Resolution in Remembrance of Professor Jacob Kazakia (October 2025)

The students, faculty, and administration of Lehigh University note with deep sadness the passing of Jacob Y. Kazakia (Iakovos), Emeritus Professor of Mechanical Engineering & Mechanics, on February 20, 2025, at the age of 80.

Born on February 27, 1945, in Istanbul, Jacob was the son of Saleh and Galateia (Nikolaidou). He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Maria "Popi" Despoina Karabodos, his daughter Galateia with her husband Justin Raade and children Jacob "Jack", West, and Athena; his daughter Christina with her husband Demetrios Staurinos and children Ourania and Simon, cousins Stelios and Maria Taketzis, Kleri Kazakias, and their families, as well as other relatives in Greece, Europe, and South America. His family remembers him as a loving husband, father, and grandfather.

Jacob attended the Greek Orthodox Parochial High School Zografeion and the Istanbul Technical University, where he obtained a combined BS and MS degree in Civil Engineering in 1968. In January 1969, he came to the US, and in 1972, he received his Ph.D. in Applied Mechanics from Lehigh University. He then joined the Lehigh faculty as an assistant professor in the Center for Application of Mathematics, rising to the rank of associate professor. In 1983, Kazakia was appointed to the Department of Mechanical Engineering and Mechanics (subsequently referred to as MEM). He was promoted to full professor in 1989 and retired in December 2019, capping a 50-year career of research, teaching, and service at the university. Notably, Jacob taught courses both in Mathematics and Mechanical Engineering and pioneered distance education. He was awarded the Rossin College Service and Teaching Excellence Awards twice (in 1993 and 2000).

Jacob's research expertise was in analytical and numerical modeling of viscous and non-Newtonian fluid flows. He supported several graduate students and published more than fifty articles. Jacob was a major contributor to initiatives in the MEM department that enabled the transition of prospective graduate students who did not have an undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering. A large majority of those students had undergraduate majors that included physics, mathematics, and biology. To facilitate the transition of these students to the MEM graduate program, it was necessary to establish criteria for foundation courses that could be taken either at other institutions or online. Jacob devoted considerable time to counseling these students, thereby contributing to the highly successful transitions of nontraditional students into our graduate program.

Jacob was also instrumental in leading several University Committees, including the University Personnel Committee, the Educational Policy Committee, the Rossin College Nominations Committee, and the MEM Curriculum Committee. He was also a member of the Committee on Discipline, Faculty Committee in Student Life, Faculty Representative

to the Council for Equity & Community, LTS Committee and the Visiting Lecturers Committee. Jacob was the MEM coordinator for ABET and Middle States reviews from 2011 to 2020.

In addition to his role as the ABET coordinator for the MEM department, Jacob served for several years as Chair of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. In this capacity, he was instrumental in maintaining the rigor and fostering educational innovation of the MEM curriculum over nearly a decade. A dedicated educator, Jacob developed new course projects through the KEEN initiative to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset among students. He also contributed to the broader academic community by publishing these modules and innovative course materials. Jacob's thoughtful approach to education and commitment to the MEM department have left a lasting impression. His mentorship, guidance, and friendship continue to influence the undergraduate curriculum committee and ABET accreditation to this day.

For over 20 years, he and his family lived in Bridgewater, New Jersey. During that time, he was an active member of Piscataway's St. George Greek Orthodox Church. He served as president of the NJ AHEPA chapter and organized the annual Graduates Banquet, a celebration of college and high school graduates of the community. After moving to Lower Saucon Valley, PA, he became a member of the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral and the Homer chapter of AHEPA.

Those who had the privilege of knowing Jacob would attest to his gentle character and strong convictions. He was a mentor to many junior faculty members, guiding them towards service activities that aligned with their interests and passions. His kindness, generosity, and hospitality were evident in all his interactions. His absence will be deeply felt, but his legacy of mentorship and service will continue to inspire.

Respectfully submitted,

Arindam Banerjee, Christina Haden, Murat Ozturk, Don Rockwell and Charles Smith