

In Niagara, most tennis roads and tennis stories lead eventually to Tan Qureshi. He has been a calm and benevolent presence for as long as most can remember, always happy to spend time on the court with anyone who manifests respect and caring for the game of tennis.

When Tan and Sue Qureshi moved to St Catharines from Ottawa in 1981, there were about 3500 skilled employees at the GM plant on Ontario Street and they were producing 3600 rear axles a day. A young mechanical engineer had a lot to learn!

The White Oaks Tennis & Racquet Club had just opened in 1978 (and would add its hotel in 1984). Our newcomer had less to learn in this arena, and Tan was soon recognized as the top tennis player in the region. The game was a great stress release as well as an ideal introduction to the new community.

It was a stimulating beginning and, with a young son in the household, it was a happy one. The story that unfolded over the next 36 years revolves around three unwavering characteristics :

- (1) love of family,
- (2) love of tennis,
- (3) innovative problem-solving.

The economic terrain has been riddled with shifting sands through all those years, but Tan Qureshi adapts and adjusts with each new wave. The initial big change came about in fairly short order as the first PC (personal computer) arrived at GM in 1982. The company bought Ross Perot's EDS enterprise and Tan was assigned to that division. Seeing a developing opportunity, Tan relinquished the coveted security of GM life in 1989 .... not an easy step to take now that the family included three young sons. But his newly formed company - Computan - was in the right place at the right time; it quickly became the premier builder and supplier of PC units for both business and personal use throughout Niagara.

In 1991, it was time to move the family into a more spacious home in a new subdivision .... a move which resulted in an ideal example of those three characteristics we talked about earlier. Three active young boys needed a place to play, and their father had instilled in them his own love of tennis. A hitting wall would be ideal .... but how? Tan sealed up the garage door, covering the exterior with a couple of layers of building material designed to produce a good rebound; then he painted it green and added a white line at tennis-net height. The driveway was now a practice tennis court! The cars had to be parked on the road during the day, but it was a small price to pay for so much joy.

But back to business : today, you'll still see veteran Niagara tennis players occasionally showing up for a game wearing a t-shirt from a 1990s Computan Regional Championships tournament. This was again an ideal mix of circumstances : Players left White Oaks for the outdoor clubs during the summer months, leaving the indoor courts dark and empty. The PC revolution was moving from

the business world to home use and consumers wanted to try them out and learn how to use them. So Tan created a marathon summer tennis tournament, bringing together all the region's players. And in the foyer above the courts, they could try out a full array of all the latest technical offerings. Nothing was left to chance; no detail left untended. "Let's rock this place!" was the goal, and for 12 years running that's exactly what happened. There were 250-300 entries per year from across the region; draws in some events extended to 64 and 128; media coverage was extensive; it was the place to be!

Of course the business of technology keeps changing, and the hardware side soon became less innovative than the software side. Computan rolled with the flow and Tan's love of tennis again made the sport a beneficiary. The Ontario Tennis Association needed a computer-driven system for managing its events, so Tan designed a dynamic website : the first interactive web-based application for online registration, tournament results and player rankings. OTA executive director Jim Boyce dubbed it 'Baseline' and for 20 years it was the standard in Canada.

We should back the story up a bit here and return to those three sons : Munzil, Sajeel and Nazeel. As they reached their teens, the hitting wall was getting a bit old-hat. Tan began to yearn for a full-size tennis court .... a place where the whole family could play, and to which the boys could invite their friends. An opportunity arose when the adjacent area became zoned for another subdivision. Tan seized on the largest lot, albeit oddly shaped, and calculated it could accommodate the court. There were problems to be dealt with : first was the city's fence-height restriction .... solved by bringing in an excavator and digging down 5 or 6 feet to create a sunken court. To make sure all was perfect, the tennis court was built first; then, and only then, came the challenge of fitting a house into the space remaining around it. Sue Qureshi is a very patient woman indeed!

For the past 20 years, the Qureshi tennis court has played host to a who's-who of Niagara, and indeed Canadian, tennis, and has helped hone the fine game of all its resident players. The third generation is just starting to enjoy it now as well.

Munzil moved to Ottawa after graduating from Brock University, but is now back in Niagara commuting to his job in Oakville. He is a mastermind of detail and enjoys matching players with those who have similar games. Players are often astounded to find that Munzil recalls their match history better than they themselves do.

Sajeel played NCAA division-one tennis at St Bonaventure University, earning an A-10 championship and a degree in business administration. At Eastern Illinois University, he coached the tennis team, earned his MBA, but most importantly met the computer scientist who is now his wife.

Sajeel is the Vice President of Operations at Computan, which has evolved into a digital-marketing and software company. It serves as the digital department for numerous businesses throughout the globe, ranging from start-ups to multinationals.

Nazeel is a medical doctor and works as an internist at Samaritan Medical Centre in Watertown NY. He is also married and has a young son.

Here's a blog post by Sajeel regarding the value of tennis to a business career :

[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/sajeel-qareshi/why-your-business-needs-a\\_2\\_b\\_5634194.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/sajeel-qareshi/why-your-business-needs-a_2_b_5634194.html)