



## Juan Ramón Ortiz-Ortiz

Juan Ramón Ortiz-Ortiz was born on Feb. 4, 1981, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, to Juan Ramón and Brunilda Ortiz.

Juan graduated from the Colegio Nuestra Señora de Belén, in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico, where he was a member of the basketball, baseball, and track and field teams and the National Honor Society and participated in the Presidential Classroom of America.

In 2005, Juan completed undergraduate studies in civil engineering at the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico,

where he was chapter president of the American Society of Civil Engineers and a member of numerous professional organizations. He was also part of the University Honor Board and a member of the Middle States Association for Colleges and Schools Curriculum Committee for the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico.

Juan and his wife, Liselle, both started the master's program in civil engineering at Virginia Tech

in August 2006. He was a research and teaching assistant, and Professor G.V. Loganathan was his mentor.

Juan loved music and played the timbales for a family music group and also for a choir in college. His love for God also filled his life. He was involved in several Catholic activities throughout his school years.

Juan's family remembers him for his perseverance; dedication; patience; responsibility; and, most importantly, his smile. His life was characterized by his love for his family and his desire to become a better person each day. He lived his life with great intensity and changed the lives of everyone he met, filling them with love and happiness. He will be remembered forever for his passion for civil engineering, family, and life.



## Minal Hiralal Panchal

Throughout her life, Minal Hiralal Panchal strengthened her family with her childlike enthusiasm and infectious laughter. She is remembered for her kindness, her lifelong passion for architecture and the built environment, and her ability to focus on her goals and to dedicate herself to challenges.

Minal was born in Borivali in Mumbai, India, on July 17, 1980. Called "Minu" by her family, she developed a talent for watercolor painting, swam, wrote poetry, read modern fiction, and enjoyed soft rock and Indian Western fusion music.

Minal's fascination with complex and beautifully resolved structural solutions guided her academic career. In India, she was ranked in the top 10 of the state-level architecture entrance test and was ranked first at Rizvi College of Architecture in Mumbai, India, for her final-year design solution.

After graduating from Rizvi, Minal worked for two architects in Mumbai and then enrolled in fall 2006 in the M.S. program in architecture in Virginia Tech's School of Architecture + Design, where she focused on energy-efficient design solutions and advanced building structures. She also worked for VT STARS (Summer Training Academy for Rising Students).

At Virginia Tech, Minal connected with countless people due to her kind, uncomplicated nature. Her self-respect and ability to love radiated to the Virginia Tech community. Her friends and family carry her spirit with them.

"There are some people who need a year to be noticed, some who need a big achievement, and some conquer the world with power and fame," says a Virginia Tech friend. "There are others who change the world by simply being themselves, offering peace and happiness with their smiles—Minal, you were one of those."

