

Good afternoon everyone.

It brings me great honour and privilege to share with you today, the journey of our dearest friend and brother, Ghadi 'Ghadz' Nakhoul. In his long, prosperous tenure at Urban, Ghadi made a significant impact on so many of our lives. Developing strong relationships, creating lifelong memories and simply enjoying the day to day struggles at work, Ghadi contributed heavily to the very strand of Urban DNA which we call "FAMILY". In light of his career, it would be selfish of me to stand here alone, without the people who Ghadz was dearest to. And so, I would like to invite those up here to share this moment with me.

Many of us were privileged to have worked with Ghadi at different stages of his career, and for some of us, lucky enough to have been there on his first day. He joined Urban in 2016, at the age of 19, where he began his professional career as a cadet. The boy was calm, collected, and eager to learn. He saw every problem as an opportunity to prove himself, and never succumbed to the pressures of work. Ghadi quickly became Marks go-to man. Between the years of 2016 to 2019, he progressed through his cadetship, journeying on to a project engineer, where he played an integral role in the delivery of several projects, including Wolli Creek, and 3 projects at Penrith.

In 2020, at an URBAN significant project in Penrith, called the Henry, Ghadi's true potential was brought to light, where he unwillingly had to step in as Project Manager at the most critical part of the project – OC STAGE. Just when we thought the pressures of OC in the grasp of Mark Elias' hands was enough, think twice. For the first time in the industry's history, we were challenged by the blindsiding of the NSW Building Commissioner, who Ghadz and I referred to as "the boogeyman". We scrambled, Suman, Ghadi & Mark working tirelessly to get every piece of documentation in order, while Mick Ha, Elias and Myself running around ensuring the site was presentable for the visit. Needless say, the commissioner was blown away by the quality, and silently shocked by the capability of the young team on the project. This marked the first significant achievement in his professional career, and also heightened the existing relationship which had already been established.

In 2021, Ghadi contributed to the delivery of the project, Navali, located in Penrith. Another one of which we endured unforeseen challenges and struggles, specifically around Covid. However, as a team, and in iconic URBAN fashion, we persevered to deliver this project on time and of the highest quality, having went on to win a national UDIA award for excellence- Something which Ghadi was extremely proud to be apart of.

It was then in 2022, where Ghadi had respectfully earned his role as Project Manager, making his debut on the Parq, Bexley. It was on this project, where his characteristics as a great leader, role model and friend were personified. His leadership cultivated a young team, instilled with determination and a unified vision to passionately succeed. It was undoubtedly a challenging project, which I now see as a blessing, for through every hardship was a contributing reward of the stronghold of our team. He excelled in his role, earning the respect of all involved in the project. His determination was unbeaten; having once challenged a mechanical engineer on a technicality, Ghadz researched every Australian Standard, and Code to prove him wrong. The result, the engineers boss offered Ghadi a job. I still remember him walking into the office and raising his glasses in triumph. Ghadz always backed himself when he knew he was right.

At different stages of the project, Ghadi led the team through confronting opportunities, which allowed us to demonstrate the good work to some quite significant people of our government and industry; some of which included the NSW Premier Chris Minns & NSW Building Commissioner David Chandler. These events created quite the influence, surrounded by an entourage of Channel 7 Media folk. Ghadi Project Managed the first development in Australia to attain a Latent Defects Insurance Cover, which rapidly echoed throughout the industry. A truly remarkable achievement that he was extremely proud of. With so many success stories to share, our greatest achievement on this project was the relationship the team developed, and the memories we shared. A special bond, that will live on forever.

From 2023, after having successfully handed over The Parq, Ghadi moved on to work on the early stages of Little Bay, where he took the lead as Project Manager, planning and staging the project throughout the early works and excavation. In mid 2024, he then transitioned to the upcoming Edmondson Park project, and commenced the Pre-construction planning. His dedication and hard work contributed heavily to the project, setting the foundation & paving the way for the rest of the team to follow.

As you can evidently imagine, Ghadi's fingerprints were amongst almost every project, and his contributions are engraved in every success of the Company. Despite the many hardships and challenges faced, there was one thing he always turned to in time of need; His Faith! His spiritual strength and connection to God often guided him through difficult situations, enabling him to make calm and wise decisions that would impact the project and the team. On every project which we worked together, was a spiritual presence which I can't explain. We always felt safe and guarded by our faith. Our office, scattered with symbols of faith and print outs of bible scriptures. Through his headphones, you could hear the divine melody of traditional Church hymns. He brought myself, and those standing next to me closer to God, always leading by example and influencing us to participate in traditions, especially Christian holidays. He taught us the perfect balance between Family, Faith & Work.

And so, as we reflect on his career, we can undeniably agree that Ghadi left behind a remarkable legacy of achievements, but more so, an endless share of friendship, memories & love. In his Honour, Mick Ha would like to share with you all, some of his fondest memories with our brother Ghadz.

Michael Boutros

28 November 2024