

Reflections

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It is not easy to write about one's own son who has passed away in the prime of his life. Mino was such an extraordinary person that even we as parents have to admit that we did not grasp the scope of his personality and the range of his abilities. We failed to recognize his full potential. Therefore we are now left with a nagging feeling that we should have done more and could have done more.

When Mino came to NASA Ames, he blossomed. After ETH Zürich, UC Berkeley, CalTech–JPL, the Japanese Space Research Institute ISAS, the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, and the Air Force Research Laboratories—traveling from low-temperature physics to cosmology to nanotechnology—he found at the NASA Ames Research Center an environment, where he could combine his knowledge and understanding of science with his keen sense of what it technologically possible. Supported by many who were drawn in by his contagious optimism and quick mind, Mino embarked on a suite of ambitious projects from basic science to new satellite concepts. He promoted ideas, which others had not yet even started dreaming about, such as fleets of hundreds of nanosatellites, fully capable despite their diminutive size, flying in formation, communicating with each other and the ground, transmitting crucial services to all parts of the world. He crisscrossed the country and spent endless hours in Washington to drum up support for his dreams.

Cosmology filled Mino with awe for the vast expanse of the universe. Nanotechnology gave him a glimpse of the smallest dimensions, where the laws of classical physics no longer apply. But his greatest pleasure derived from his love for Nature, watching the sunset over the Pacific Ocean or hiking—often alone—among the giant redwood trees in Big Basin. It filled him with humility for Nature's seemingly endless life forces.

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