Obituary
Anya Pogosyants

Anya Pogosyants died with her husband Igor Slobodkin as a result of an automobile accident on December 15, 1995, in Vermont. The tragedy occured in the middle of a snowy night, while Anya and Igor were on their way to Lake Placid for a weekend of skiing.

Anya was a PhD. candidate in Computer Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She worked in Nancy Lynch's Theory of Distributed Systems research group.

Anya was born on March 31, 1969 in Moscow. She and Igor had been friends since their high school years at the famous School Nr. 57 for Mathematics in Moscow. Her husband Igor, 28, was a brilliant physicist specialized in the area of molecular biology. They were married shortly before they came to Boston in 1991 for pursuing graduate studies. Before starting a PhD. program at the MIT, Anya completed a Master's degree in Computer Science with the coveted Red Diploma from the Moscow State University.

Anya's research was guided by the idea of developing methods amenable to machine verification. She developed decision procedures for the Larch Prover, an automatic theorem prover developed at the MIT.

Furthermore, she contributed significantly to the theory of randomized distributed algorithms. Together with Roberto Segala, she developed a methodology for formal analysis and verification of distributed algorithms that contain probabilistic and non-deterministic choices. Recently, Anya presented a novel method for proving the correctness of probabilistic time bound statements. This method leads to formal proofs that allow partially automated verification. Especially in the field of randomized algorithms, in which correctness proofs usually are notoriously difficult to understand, a methodology that allows the use of automatic verification tools is of immense value. Anya's research work will be continued by her colleagues under the supervision of Nancy Lynch.

Anya was not only a brilliant researcher. Above all, she was a very kind, friendly, warm person. She was always cheerful and ready to help and encourage everybody. Besides her own outstanding research work, she helped many students and supervised undergraduate research projects. She and Igor both had many friends and were much-loved in and outside of their research community. Her former supervisor John Guttag said: "When Anya entered a room, she made this room a nicer place to be."

All those who knew Anya will miss her very much, and those who heard her sing will never forget her clear and beautiful voice. All relatives and friends of Igor and Anya will remember them as two wonderful people full of ideas, joy and optimism.

Surviving are Anya's parents, Bella and Gregory Pogosyants of San Francisco, Igor's parents Wolf Slobodkin and Natascha Tomilina of Moscow, and their grandparents.