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# Friends mourn student's loss

By JUDY HUGHES  
Staff Writer

More than 150 mourners braved snow-covered roads and drizzly weather Monday afternoon to pay their last respects to the young victim of this weekend's convenience store robbery.

Nizam Ali, 18, was stabbed to death in the early morning hours last Saturday while he worked the overnight shift at the Mac's convenience store at Winston Churchill Blvd. and the Collegeway.

About 150 friends and relatives of the Erindale Secondary School student crammed into the largest chamber of the Cardinal Funeral Home on Annette St., while dozens of others spilled out into the hall and lobby of the home.

Many of the mourners were classmates and friends of the Grade 13 student, several of whom cried softly throughout the 30-minute Muslim prayer service.

Ali's family and other Muslim friends participated in a short ceremony restricted to Muslims before the prayer service began. Following the ceremony, the Imam (leader of the prayer service) led the way to Ali's casket, followed by Muslim members of the crowd, where they silently repeated verses from the Koran.

Reverend James Seunarine, minister at Sheridan United Church, was among several guests who spoke to the mourners after the ceremony. Seunarine offered the Ali family his sympathy, saying, "On occasions like this, feelings transcend religious polarity."

Mayor Hazel McCallion was visibly upset while offering her

condolences to the family. "The citizens of Mississauga are shocked," she said. "We have lost a fine student, a fine young member of Mississauga."

The mayor promised that Nizam Ali's death would not be in vain. "We will do everything, we will leave no stone unturned in bringing about the necessary changes," said McCallion, referring to the closing of 24-hour convenience store operations.

"I hope that this young man, that what has happened to this young man, will instill in us a greater faith, a greater action" to overcome the "breakdown in society" that is responsible for such senseless murder, she added.

Ward 8 councillor Steve Mahoney, one of a half dozen councillors who attended, reiterated the mayor's pledge to prevent similar tragedies from happening to other families. Mahoney praised Nizam Ali as a dedicated employee and a fine young man. Customers at the store were always served, "with a smile, always a friendly greeting," he recalled.

Erindale Secondary School principal Hal McKay added his praise of Ali as both an "excellent student" and involved member of the school and community.

"Erindale Secondary School this morning is saddened, grieving, angry," said McKay. "Nizam will not be forgotten. His death has strengthened our resolve to abhor all violence."

Ali's mother, Zorida, and three sisters had to be helped from the funeral home to the limousine which would take them to Beechwood Cemetery for the interment.

# Slain teenager honor student

By JOHN STEWART  
Staff Writer

Nizam Ali was a top student in economics, except when it came to taking change from children at the Mac's Milk Store where he worked in Erin Mills.

Nizam was a favorite of the kids because he wasn't always fussy if you had the exact amount of change necessary to make a purchase.

Ward 8 Mississauga councillor Steven Mahoney, a regular customer at the store, says his three sons also frequented it. "If they were short a nickel or a dime, he'd always tell them to bring it in the next time," says the councillor.

Mahoney says that "when you talk about someone who's gone, you always say nice things, but this was just a tremendous friendly young guy." The councillor was in the store at 11 p.m. the night before Nizam died there.

The youngster always had a ready smile and a friendly word, recalls Mahoney.

Nizam's economics teacher at Erindale Secondary School described him as an "outstanding" student in the subject.

Principal Harold McKay

relayed comments from Nizam's teachers over the last two semesters. They were all similar. He was described as "a really nice kid" and as "the kind of person you enjoy having in your classroom."

McKay says a portrait emerged of a student who was "organized, quiet, and methodical."

"He had his whole career planned carefully," says the principal. "He would drop in to the counselling office every couple of weeks to check with the counsellor and see how his applications for university were doing and whether he was on the right track."

A straight-A Grade 13 student, Nizam planned to attend McMaster University in Hamilton in business.

Many of the staff who didn't teach Nizam didn't know him because he spent most of his free time working at the store. "His whole life was school work or working at the store," says McKay.

At 8:30 a.m. Monday, the 2,000 students at Erindale rose to honor Nizam with a moment of silence.

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