"You own not what you've acquired
but what you've shared."
Oleksiy Vadaturskyy.


НІБУЛОН

PETRO GADZ
MYKHAILO MASLIY

THE GRAIN CAPTAIN OF UKRAINE

Translated by Task Force LLC

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У книзі Петра Гадза та Михайла Маслія «Хлібний капітан України» зібрано інтерв'ю рідних та друзів, колег, чиновників, відомих людей про Олексія Вадатурського, видатного українця, Героя України, засновника компанії «НІБУЛОН», який разом з дружиною трагічно загинув у власному домі 2022 року внаслідок російської агресії.

Ці спогади розкажуть про невідомого нам Олексія Опанасовича – доброго і відвертого, готового завжди допомогти й підтримати, мотивувати й надихати, великого патріота та господарника, для якого зміцнення та розбудова України завжди були на першому місці.

The publication was prepared with the support of NIBULON and
personal assistance of Andriy Vadaturskyy

P. I. Gadz, M. M. Masliy
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The Grain Captain of Ukraine is a book by Petro Gadz and Mykhailo Masliy. It includes interviews with relatives and friends, colleagues, officials, and famous people about Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, an outstanding Ukrainian, Hero of Ukraine, and founder of NIBULON, who was killed with his wife in their own home in 2022 following Russian aggression.

These memoirs are the story of the non-public Oleksiy Opanasovych, a kind and frank person, who was always there to help and support, motivate and inspire, a patriot and businessman, whose priority was strengthening and developing Ukraine.

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"If Ukraine had 10 people like Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, it would flourish." That's what they said about my Father. I know this for sure. I could feel the warmth of his visionary flame, saturated with the dignity of a freedom-loving person paving the future. The bigger the tasks and the more brazen the attempts to extinguish it, the stronger this flame grew.

From the dream of a thirteen-year-old boy who started working at the threshing floor. From the ambitions of a young specialist who traveled the world to meet challenges. With the perseverance of the conqueror of the desert of Mongolia, where he built modern enterprises, the decision to revive Ukraine as a breadbasket of the world was born, sprouted, made its way, and matured.

The brave have happiness, and the hardworking have destiny. Add to this the courage to never give up, and you get the genetic code of a Ukrainian hero who managed to build a powerful enterprise at the intersection of several industries: agricultural production, international trade, shipping, and shipbuilding.

The glorious indomitability of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy is already an example and inspiration for NIBULON employees and partners. I hope the book "The Grain Captain of Ukraine" will make it possible for a wider circle of readers to learn his wisdom, which has become of particular importance in these times when we fight for our independence.

Andriy Vadaturskyy.



Olena Kondratiuk

(Deputy Chair of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 9th convocation).

The Russian-Ukrainian war has made many show their true colors and call things their true names. The world has witnessed the brutal intentions of the regime to erase Ukrainians as a nation. There have been attacks on our elevators, ports, and grain supplies, which have made it clear – for the first time – that our State, our Land, is the breadbasket for many people across all continents.

This war has already claimed many lives both on the frontline and in cities suffering from air raids and missile attacks. The losses make the future different not only for Ukraine, as we realize we are losing those who could make this world a better place: at least, save thousands of children and people from death and hunger. I keep this in mind when writing a dedication to the book of memoirs about Oleksiy Vadaturskyy.

However, people respected Oleksiy Opanasovych for the fact that he – one of the richest Ukrainians – was aware of his social and public

responsibility, and always advocated for a strong Ukrainian state. He invested huge amounts of money in Ukraine, built a unique cutting-edge agricultural infrastructure, and created new jobs. He invested more than three regional budgets in the Mykolaiv healthcare facilities. During the coronavirus pandemic, he helped equip 400 oxygen stations, which saved many lives.

Oleksiy Vadaturskyy went down in the history of Ukraine as the creator of a new agrarian economic miracle. His love for the land, honesty, humane attitude, ethics, zest for life, and transparent and open way of doing business made others respect him.

He had actively supported the Ukrainian army since 2014 and carried on when the full-scale war began. He did not flee from his native Mykolaiv region, even when the Russian aggressor came close to it. "I am a Hero of Ukraine, therefore, I should uphold the title with my actions in these darkest times for Mykolaiv," said Oleksiy Opanasovych.

"He was avenged for being resilient, indomitable, and loving Ukraine. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy and Raisa Mykhailivna, his beloved wife and reliable life companion, were killed when rascists shelled Mykolaiv. Law enforcement officials later claimed that the missile attack on their house was not accidental but targeted...

"The more you are doing for your country, the more difficult the challenges you have to face. The more you wish to share, the more efforts you have to make," said Oleksiy Vadaturskyy in one of his last public speeches. And his "Never give up!" motto has become a universal one for Ukraine. We do not give up, Oleksiy Opanasovych, we stand, fight, and the Victory will be ours! For the sake of peace in Ukraine and justice, to honor all those who gave it all in this war and lost their lives but not their Dignity, blessed memory, and undying love of relatives, the dearest, and friends.



Viktor Yushchenko

(politician and statesman, third President of Ukraine (2005-2010)).

Oleksiy Opanasovych and I frequently discussed the establishment of Ukraine as a nation. That was what made him a pleasant and likable person – a manufacturer having a great sense of the challenges we faced when setting up a Ukrainian environment, both historical and linguistic. I involved him in several projects, and he never refused. Whether to renovate the theater or to erect monuments to our heroes: craftsmen, politicians, or defenders.

In terms of being a true Ukrainian, he was an example of a citizen. He took responsibility not only for the issue in question but also for related ones. I know a few other great Ukrainians acting the same way. Whether we had to renovate the Mystetskyi Arsenal or St. Sophia of Kyiv, raise awareness of the Holodomor, or build a house for a family that adopted five to seven children – name any project involving Ukrainian national issues – you would see Oleksiy Opanasovych at the forefront. He offered a helping hand and made major Ukrainian deeds. That made me admire and appreciate him. In Ukraine, if we take

big businesses, it is usually difficult to come to common terms and get support from people who are otherwise not indifferent to any national activity. Vadaturskyy was flawless here. The man set a perfect example for others.

I remember him once saying he had become a workshop owner. I asked: "What workshop?" "We will be building barges."

"What barges, Oleksiy Opanasovych?" "Well, those I mentioned when telling about logistics..." I thought he would find a sub-partner to run that business together. Only Vadaturskyy could get a Soviet-era dilapidated facility and turn it into a European production with cutting-edge technologies and equipment. He fabricated 5,000 GT barges that could pass all the gates along the Dnipro River to the sea. That was his another implemented project.

When there was a need to organize the grain market in Ukraine, namely, the export, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy with his NIBULON project was the first applicant. He managed to launch a relevant pilot project, which started with production as the key to success. Managers from Mykolaiv also successfully addressed the logistics issues. The grain sector is valuable as Ukraine, with its lands, may compete in the world market and be among the leaders. Unfortunately, the profit is no more than 40 percent if companies make logistics errors. Therefore, the project could have turned out to be unsuccessful, as usual. I, when holding the position of the President of Ukraine, valued such an ally as Oleksiy Opanasovych. He was a pioneer in the idea presented and implemented. A few years passed, and time proved that Vadaturskyy was right when he gradually but insistently implemented the project as it made him a trusted global exporter of Ukrainian grain.

He and I had similar concepts in mind. The common problem of this sector in Ukraine is that two-thirds of producers do not have any elevator facilities. Thus, they lack any major tactic in the grain market. If producers have no industrial elevators they have to transport harvested crops to Odesa at once. And sell. If crops are stored outside an elevator, they become damp, moldy, and lose nutritional value within four months.

As a result, they can be used only as a fodder. I remember the first grain elevator project implemented on the Dnipro River. It was a great delight and honor for me to open it together with Vadaturskyy. It was not only a grand celebration but an economic victory. Establishing a logistics strategy was no less important: restoring long-abandoned routes along the Dnipro; and starting production of our river-sea barges to load grain at internal port elevators and transport it to the Black Sea.

When a pilot part of the NIBULON project was completed, we had a standard set in the grain industry. Especially given current circumstances. It was an example of the cheapest way to deliver Ukrainian grain from the mainland to the sea by river: load it onto a 5,000 GT river barge fabricated at the NIBULON Shipbuilding Yard (owned by NIBULON); deliver it to the Black Sea without entering any port in Ukraine; reload it at sea onto seagoing vessels using company's floating cranes.

And supply it by grain vessels to any point in the world. Nowadays, it is the ultimate option. The Vadaturskyy's model proved to be the most effective. It can be recommended for a major part or even most Ukrainian grain transportation. That said, transporting grain by road or rail to some elevator in Europe for storage, and then delivering it by sea to other parts of the world is a highly complex and financially expensive model. That's not a point for discussion nowadays. The idea presented by my dear friend Oleksiy Vadaturskyy and NIBULON is an example of how people, despite their age, may have modern, interesting, and contemporary thoughts. The implemented strategy made it possible for us to have everything we needed to promptly manage the grain market and supply the required amount of grain from Ukraine in any month of any year. NIBULON introduced the tactics. Its strategy is the most economical as it allows producers to select the best time to export the grain – not only in August-September-October or November because there is no storage available. As President, I had a responsibility and a duty to award Oleksiy Opanasovych Vadaturskyy the title of Hero of Ukraine for his activity, work, and efficient organization of NIBULON, and I handed him the highest award. This is what heroes should be like!

He is a model and an example for others. Vadaturskyy is the Hero who has managed to introduce a super-efficient business model in such a demanding economic sector as grain export. I deem it a tragedy that such a great person was deprived of life. He is a true Hero for me and the Ukrainian people, and I am proud that I was the one who awarded him on behalf of the state.

I recall talking with Oleksiy Opanasovych a few months before the full-scale war. I guess, he was too emotional as he took personally all the articles, in which the media unduly offended him. There was always unpleasant gossip about his affairs and activities. We may not have met in person but we talked often. He told me the local press reproached him for the worn-down roads. Still, they failed to mention the funds he allocated to support local projects, and that he always complied with the technical characteristics related to cargo excess

load. He wished to express his feelings as it hurt him. I understood him well, I realized he couldn't hold all that to himself. We talked a lot and discussed painful issues. He was then offended by some material published in Cherkasy region. I then said: "Oleksiy Opanasovych, I listen to you, your timbre, tonality, and pronunciation. I believe you speak with a Western Ukrainian accent. Your language is so profound, correct, and melodious!" He answered: "The day I was awarded the Hero of Ukraine I spoke that foreign "mother tongue."

I devoted most of my life to mastering my native language." This great person was a many-sided man well aware of his national duties. That was our second to last conversation. Vadaturskyy talked to me as in confession, for which I am grateful.

Oleksiy Opanasovych was also a real cossack! Both in body and in spirit. In fact, he was a great Ukrainian. I remember one of my friends, Vadym Petrovych Hetman, told me once: "To become a great Ukrainian, a person must start and finish at least one deed."

Oleksiy Opanasovych perfectly fits into this definition! The great Ukrainian performed a great deed he loved.

He loved his nation very much and was proud of it wherever he was. This was crucial as he was a Hero of Ukraine. He was a Ukrainian in all matters, and that spoke volumes. When I walk down Khreshchatyk Street and hear most passers-by speaking the language of the invader, a foreign one, I feel sadness and despair. There are millions out there having no clue that the Ukrainian language is our greatest and most efficient weapon as it sets our borders. Vadaturskyy intuitively knew that and made every effort to become a flawless Ukrainian.

When I think of the undeveloped Dnipro routes, I feel sad. I mean water, river transport, shipments, freight ones. I remember when visiting some port elevator, we entered a room and Oleksiy Opanasovych showed me on a board different routes to deliver 100 tons of grain to the port of Odesa with a calculation. I clearly remember the board with those detailed calculations. The figures proved that whoever ignored the cheapest sea or river transport, will certainly face economic challenges inherent to grain farming given Ukrainian conditions. Back then, there were several Turkish companies engaged in the construction of elevators on the Ukrainian market.

Türkiye is the largest exporter of grain in Europe due to its exceptionally advanced and efficient processing capabilities. When you own an elevator and logistics infrastructure, you should aim to acquire five to seven hectares of land near the elevator in order to organize primary grain processing there. To generate value-added tax. By doing so, we wouldn't have to pay it to Türkiye, but rather benefit

from it in our own country. This would allow Ukrainian manufacturers to start producing cereals and pasta. We had some interesting debates with Oleksiy Opanasovych, which I found meaningful as an economist. He could envision logistics step by step and was always striving for optimization. His system has now become one of the best available in the grain sector.

Without Oleksiy Opanasovych, the Dnipro would have been orphaned, and Ukraine would have been orphaned too. If we adequately and properly evaluate his work, what he achieved, and how he looked at the future, we will recognize that it can serve as a vivid example for many of how to organize both today and tomorrow.

The fact that the country went from 24 million tons of grain in 1999 to a record 106 million in 2021 is significant. No other economy in Europe, or in the entire world, can boast such a transformation. In such a short period, Ukraine has become one of the five largest exporters and the world leader in several key areas.

When the second phase of the cursed Russian occupation began, and we couldn't export grain for three months, the entire world realized what it meant for Ukraine to be absent from the market. It took the country 15 to 20 years to become a truly significant player. In this critical sector of global trade, we have once again arrived at a definition that was an axiom 100–200 years ago. In particular, in the European market, where Ukraine has always been referred to as the breadbasket. No nation in Europe wanted to face the winter without Ukrainian grain. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy's example allowed us to scale up even further.

There are still many challenges and tasks ahead, but his model demonstrates the amount of innovative work one person can accomplish.



Oleksiy Vadaturskyy
(agricultural entrepreneur, Hero of Ukraine,
General Director of NIBULON Ltd. (1991–2022)).

I have never chased money. I still don't feel like being a dollar millionaire. I've never strived for that. I consider the Forbes list to be an execution one, I've never wished to be there, to be at the top of it. There are too many people there, oligarchs, who earned their first millions via cooperation with the authorities. They laid their hands on certain facilities, production facilities, and made their first millions due to close bonds with the authorities.

Thus, we are a unique enterprise as we developed in a whole different way. Our example proves that nothing is impossible for a willing heart.

So, look, we get metal from Ukrainian production plants. It is the primary component for shipbuilding and production. To build a vessel, we need to have this metal cleaned, painted, preserved, and cut into 70 thousand parts. And assemble a vessel, as if it were a Lego. However, those 70 thousand parts should be welded together in a

fixed consequence. Our latest manufactured vessel has 450 kilometers of welding seams. We have zero-waste production. Our equipment is modern, new, we never use anything outdated. I prefer having new items to dealing with anything second-hand. We got nothing "for free." Anything outdated brings temporary benefits that will cost a lot later, therefore, it is neither sound nor efficient.

Life experience prompts me we should not be afraid to get new things. We find them in France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, the UK, or Sweden – only the best offers. Global shipbuilders respect us. We are on equal footing with CARGILL, BUNGE, IDM, as well as SOUFLET and LOUIS DREYFUS, US companies. No exceptions. There is nothing to be afraid of, we just should operate better, faster, with a guarantee. And have the same access to funding. That's it: competition is set.

The strangest thing is that no one aids us in Ukraine, only abroad, where we compete with the "big boys."

I cannot invest elsewhere as I wish to live and work at home, in my native country. I am a patriot of Ukraine and I am a Hero of Ukraine. As a Hero of Ukraine, I would never finance production in any other country.

The manager must set a personal example and physically help all the employees to develop. I have never benefited from pulling the strings and have never got any undeserved material value. There was a time when I could not afford a normal fridge or a TV in a store. Thus, I earned money myself: on weekends, I gathered rose hips with my son. That was the specific system of cooperation, where you gathered something to get a coupon to finally buy a TV. Labor therapy is a wonderful upbringing as children begin to realize that patience guarantees results.

Ukraine needs ten Vadaturskyys and a proper legislation. Nothing more! We should create conditions for business to develop, and we get people like Vadaturskyy. A person should be ready morally, physically, and mentally to fight and achieve in all areas. They need to be given terrible conditions so that they fight and win. So that they believe in their own strengths. I wouldn't like dozens of people to get experience the way I did. You should keep far from the authorities and have a strong character to withstand the toxic internal environment.

I'm 72. I swim at least 600 meters daily, and on weekends – a kilometer. Before that, I do physical activity for one and a half to two hours: gymnastics and exercises. I get up early, at 5:30 or 6:00 a.m. I dedicate time for myself till 9:00 a.m. No days off. I can stay at work until 9-10:00 p.m.

Exceptions are possible only during business trips. I believe, there is no part of the world I haven't visited. There are also business trips at home, in Ukraine, one or two days a week. I go abroad every month, sometimes more often. Nowadays, many young company employees travel with pleasure, where they gain experience, study, and engage in activities. I delegate authority but keep control. I trust everyone, although I keep saying that the most motivated person is the owner. I help everyone in a friendly way. So that they could defend the company's interests and fight for them the way I do.

I'm primarily interested in how employees have presented themselves since their first days at work and during their student years. That they are truly devoted to the company. That they had no idea how other industries or enterprises operated. So that no one, Lord forbid, would ever be ready to introduce certain corruption schemes.

I strive to ensure my employees are educated and surrounded by honest individuals. When they prove themselves in a particular position and deserve a salary increase or a promotion, they get the right to head the management and be my deputy. It's true, some people leave NIBULON for other companies. Thus, they can compare the benefits of working openly, fairly, and transparently within a legislative field, even if it is mined.

If someone wishes to leave, I just let them go. However, there is no way back. If they write a resignation letter once, they will do it again tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, or even years later. It's in their blood.

I have learned to use Facebook, where I write posts. I do it rarely, though. No matter the age of a businessperson, they must adapt to modern market trends and not only keep pace with them but stay ahead. It matters for my team that I, as a head, never feel ashamed when talking to young employees as I am aware of modern trends. Therefore, I need not only to keep up with the current young generation in everything but also to set a personal example. To stay young, you should be among young people. This is my challenge, my drive. How can you be different when you are surrounded by young and talented people.

The country will never prosper unless it allows for new jobs to be created, unless employees get a decent salary and live in their own homes with their families. Therefore, I respect such people and strive for this, to do everything possible so that Ukrainians live better. I wish to make Ukraine not a country by the sea but a maritime country in all aspects.

I earned my first million 20 years ago. It may sound incongruous but from agricultural production. When you get the first million to

invest in your production, you realize you can invest in the economy and development. The company head must organize the team and set a program. Make a collective decision for the program to be implemented. The main duty of the head is to insist that whatever is planned becomes a reality. That no service falls out of the general cycle, and that they all operate harmoniously. It somehow happened that the more difficult my life is, the calmer I am. My calmness has more effect on people than if I were shouting or swearing. Since I got engaged in shipbuilding, I never raised my voice at anyone. I knew that I could make the right decision only when I held my temper, never shouted, and stayed calm, when my brain worked at full capacity.

When you give in to emotions, you may humiliate people, you deflate, moreover, you are knocked off the path of creative development. This interferes with the collective decision-making. I know all my employees by face, though not always by name. They shake my hand not only at the office but also when we meet in Mykolaiv.

It's not surprising as I am a well-known person. I am pleased that people know and respect me.

I'm grateful to people who appreciate my hard work. For many, I have become an example of how to achieve certain goals in life. They tell me this. Sometimes their words make me cry. I'm really touched. During meetings, when people stand up, listen, and applaud standing, I recollect all my life path.

I see the difficulties I have experienced. What I had to give to achieve my goal. The main rule of any businessperson is to stay clear of any "raids" and corrupt officials so as not to give them the tiniest reason to put pressure on you. You should work openly, fairly, and transparently.

They say: "Can't you afford to hide or not pay UAH 30, 20, 10 million?" I respond that I see no point in that when I've already invested USD 2 billion in the economy. When I have a lot of property, which is transparent and properly registered. Even if I were tempted to steal UAH 100 million or illegally receive the same amount from the state, I would have risked everything! Including the lives of 7 thousand people working with me. I cannot and have no right to put the team at risk.

It has never been so easy for us, therefore, my people are not used to simple solutions.

We have never agreed with anyone on a case-by-case basis.

Transportation by river is the cheapest option in the world, still, here it is quite the opposite. It was caused by the historical struggle between the port and the river industry. The ports of Odesa lobbied their economic interests, which made it almost impossible to transport

cargo by river. When the port and river industries are subordinate to one minister, who also manages Ukrzaliznytsia, they, given that NIBULON is involved in the river industry, believe we cope, that they can keep charging us, give us a bad time, suppress us economically as we will not withstand the competition. This creates a major threat of smuggling as vessels buy fuel in neutral waters USD 320 cheaper than we do in Ukraine before they enter inland territorial waters. There is no excise duty there and they do not pay VAT. While I have to pay excise duty for road repairs to fill the containers! Although we transport along rivers. Nonsense!

I made sure there was no one on the river except for NIBULON. I made a comprehensive investment in the river: USD 650 million, and 12 new terminals were constructed. The SHIPBUILDING YARD reconstruction cost was USD 35 million. That was a major funding. No foreigner will ever give a cent for what I have done for Ukraine.

They all count on "freebies." They wish to enter Ukraine without paying for fuel or excise duty in neutral waters, to bring in old vessels, never to pay anything, and to get raw materials, grain, and goods here, in Ukraine. No costs incurred. Thus, they are destroying whatever is Ukrainian, local. They are destroying the shipbuilding industry and the river fleet. The entire Black Sea Fleet was exported offshore for next to nothing. Nowadays, it is 40, 50, and 60 years old. It is already not allowed to enter any port like old Eurocars, and they import it back to Ukraine. They wish to do it unconditionally, for free. And also refuel under a foreign flag in neutral waters. I oppose all these situations.

I've always been an independent person, and I once explained to our then-president: "If I developed my business the way others did, if I negotiated with each government, I would have ended up with an enterprise having twenty co-founders from different political parties." The annual turnover of NIBULON is USD 1.5 billion. We operate in several sectors of the Ukrainian economy – shipbuilding, fleet, grain trade, agricultural production, and logistics.

Big Money, author's program by Yevhen Cherniak on YouTube. "Oleksiy Vadaturskyy. How to create a business against all odds. The rules of a billionaire's life," 2019.



Valeriy Asadchev

(politician, public figure, People's Deputy of Ukraine of the 3rd and 4th convocations, Head of Poltava Regional State Administration (2006–2010)).

On May 26, 2006, I was appointed the Head of Poltava Regional State Administration by the Decree of the President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko.

Poltava region is a powerful agro-industrial area of Ukraine. We have oil-producing, mining and processing, and industrial complexes of Ukraine operating here. Still, the pearl of Poltava region is its fertile lands and its agro-industrial sector. Poltava region is the breadbasket of Ukraine. It is the most technologically advanced agrarian region with focus on crop production, namely, environmentally friendly technologies for growing grain crops, animal husbandry, processing, and various traditional areas of agricultural production and lifestyle.

The main challenge was to preserve grain, which volume was increasing every year. It was not only about current preservation until

sale but also about long-term preservation guaranteeing all grain characteristics remain intact so that it could be sold later under the most favorable terms on the market. The problem was solved via the introduction of a grain sector policy allowing capitalization of farms, their competitiveness, and options for further development.

In 2006, the elevator complexes operating in Poltava region could ensure storage of no more than 40 percent of the grain grown. Those elevators were built in Soviet times and did not ensure long-term storage under proper conditions. Most of them were monopolistically privatized, which also caused problems for farmers. There were almost no modern elevator complexes in Poltava region.

I first met with Oleksiy Opanasovych in my office. I knew nothing about him. An elderly man came in, short but athletic and fit; I felt some powerful energy he emanated. I had met such people in the industrial sector, they were passionate about their business. Oleksiy Opanasovych came with a manager who was from Poltava region, as it turned out later. Vadaturskyy told me: "I managed to get credit funds to build about 20 modern grain elevator complexes in Ukraine. It took NIBULON, the company I head, almost five years to build only two grain complexes: a grain transshipment terminal in Mykolaiv and a grain elevator complex in Cherkasy region. However, the matter did not get any further, and if it did, there appeared limitations. The main ones were corrupt practices and bribes. I cannot bribe anyone as I will lose the creditors' trust and face the consequences."

Then, he told me about his problems in detail. I listened and said: "So, you are a man of action, just like me. Before being appointed to this post, I was the deputy chairman of the budget committee of the Verkhovna Rada, thus, I prefer talking numbers. You have credit funds to build 20 elevators but you've managed to construct only two. I propose to build the other 18 in the Poltava region. We will provide you with the highest level of support and assistance, requiring no prepayments or other commitments that are uncommon in this business."

Oleksiy Opanasovych didn't see this coming, thus, he said that the chances to build 18 complexes in Poltava region were low as the credit funds were not lying around and waiting. They were transferred as the elevators were built and put into operation, which made them a relevant guarantee of credit repayment. Secondly, that didn't fit into the logistics system. Still, such an approach and proposal forced him to make Poltava region the base for the project implementation.

"Our views and desires are the same," I said to Vadaturskyy. "But this is not enough. We should think of a clear algorithm for our joint actions. You, as the head of a major grain trading company, cannot be in Poltava region all the time to manage everything related to construction in real time. I also cannot be daily involved in NIBULON issues exclusively. Whilst, to implement a project of this scale requires daily monitoring of the situation. Therefore, I suggest you give me the names of the managers who will directly supervise the issues in Poltava region, and I, for my part, will instruct my assistant to monitor the situation with the project implementation daily. Your managers and my assistant will keep in contact and cooperate in a regular reporting mode. Moreover, I will ask you to visit the Poltava region soon. I will gather all the heads of district administrations for you to present the project the region requires.

It seemed that Oleksiy Opanasovych left the office not only satisfied but inspired. For my part, I realized that the Poltava monopolists would do whatever it took to prevent the project implementation as it would demonopolize their status. I also knew that my main challenges were still ahead.

As we had agreed, I gathered all the heads of district administrations and introduced Vadaturskyy to them, who then presented the project for the elevator construction. Oleksiy Opanasovych emphasized that the funds were credit ones and were under the strict control of creditors. Everyone realizes that such projects cannot be implemented by avoiding a social component. Therefore, apart from jobs created in rural areas where elevators will be built, increased economic potential, more taxes paid, etc., NIBULON will also allocate UAH 400-500 thousand to the social needs of the relevant territorial community.

I noted that I shouldn't tell the residents of Poltava region about the current problems related to grain preservation. The project allows the district leader who can work quickly and without extra limitations to receive bonuses in the form of modern facilities. As for funds allocated for social development, they will be 100 percent transferred to the budget of the relevant community. This was an incredibly smart motivational step made by Vadaturskyy. As further practice proved, the heads of village councils became our assistants. That said, those were significant funds for villages, not to mention a major facility that can always be beneficial for the village.

I recently heard from those in power that they were planning to introduce an investment nanny mechanism in Ukraine, that is, support for large investment projects. That's a nice initiative, however,

Vadaturskyy and I introduced the "Poltava nanny" back then, and it turned out to be viable without any bureaucratic obstacles. Construction was fast. In 2006-2010, we built seven modern elevator complexes with a capacity of up to one hundred thousand tons of grain each, including two port ones (Kremenchuk, Hradyzk) and in Reshetylivka, Romodan, Hlobyne, Skorokhodove, and Marianivka. Clearly, the driving force of this process was not the "nanny" but Oleksiy Opanasovych. He kept his word that he would make the region the base for the elevator construction project implementation. Modern NIBULON elevators became a kind of business card of Poltava region. These facilities not only comply with all the terms set for grain preservation but also provide modern services.

At NIBULON, the owner delivered grain without any certificates. In their presence, the employees took a small amount of the batch delivered with a measuring cup and poured it into a special device that showed the grain class and issued the relevant certificate at once. Moreover, at NIBULON, grain owners could choose the elevator so that it would be cheaper for them to deliver the grain. The first NIBULON elevators that appeared in Poltava region (Reshetylivka, 2006) caused a revolution in the minds of farmers, who saw the advantages of civilization finally available to them. My fears about counteractivity from the monopolists were not justified, still, another problem appeared, and that was envy. Some major Poltava farmers told me that they could also build modern elevator complexes. Such competition resulted in several elevator complexes constructed by local farmers (Karlivka, Kozelshchyna, Pyriatyn). One of the largest elevator complexes in Europe with a capacity of 240 thousand tons of grain (Zavodske, Lokhvytskyi district) built by the Rise Company proves that Vadaturskyy has launched an elevator boom not only in Poltava region but throughout Ukraine. Nowadays, Poltava region can store up to five million tons of grain. This is almost 100 percent of the grain harvested in the region. That said, it took five years to solve the problem. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was the driving force of this process. NIBULON is not a monopolist in this market in Poltava region, still, its business is systemic, moreover, as the owner of port elevators, the company can also carry out external logistics by water.

Another major project of Oleksiy Opanasovych, the construction of a fleet of river-sea grain carriers, was launched based on port elevators, including the same in Poltava region. It is quite logical to diversify the system of grain terminals so that to transport grain abroad from the middle of the Dnipro River (Kremenchuk, Hradyzk).

It was a great and inspiring work in cooperation with a great and inspiring person. Our joint work with Oleksiy Opanasovych evolved into friendly relations. We solemnly opened the newly built facilities of NIBULON in Poltava region and laid the first bricks to start the construction of new ones. Oleksiy Opanasovych fell in love with Poltava region. He visited the famous Sorochyntsi Fair and always used Ukrainian designs for the openings of his facilities. I visited him in Mykolaiv several times. During my first visit, he gave me a tour of a unique grain terminal, which has a beautiful spherical shape and has become the new symbol of Mykolaiv. He also demonstrated the system for loading grain vessels. Next time, he was at the launch of the first river-sea grain vessels from the NIBULON fleet, which construction was initiated by Vadaturskyy.

We knew families of each other. Raisa Mykhailivna – Oleksiy Opanasovych's faithful companion, a beautiful, charming woman, Mother, housekeeper, and assistant. Their relationship proved they had walked a long path together and become one. Andriy, their son, was a very young man at the time, but he was confident and convincing as a man with experience and knowledge behind him. Oleksiy Opanasovych said that if he were the NIBULON engine, Andriy would be the company computer. Andriy knows several languages and is well-versed in the world grain market, exchanges, prices, quotas, freight, etc. He was clearly proud of Andriy.

When I learned that Oleksiy Opanasovych and Raisa Mykhailivna were killed by an enemy missile, I cried. I've always believed that Ukraine can exist and develop only due to people like Vadaturskyy. He is an example of purposefulness worth studying and imitating. His death once again proves the criminal and inhumane nature of russian actions.

I was at the last rites held in St. Volodymyr's Cathedral and expressed my condolences to Andriy and his family. The loss is ultimate.



Olha Babanina

(financial expert, CFO of NIBULON Ltd. (since 2014)).

People die when the last memory of them vanishes. I believe that such extraordinary people as Oleksiy Opanasovych Vadaturskyy, who was an extremely wise, hardworking, talented, and devoted to Ukraine person, should remain in history forever. Both of our native country and of the world. Despite his age, the General Director of NIBULON was full of energy and vitality at 75.

He had a lot of plans and ideas. Like his wife, Raisa Mykhailivna. In our lives, things happen unexpectedly and unpredictably. We had to cope with the great grief so unexpectedly, and it was so painful that those who knew and loved them would have to recover until the end of their lives. On the one hand, I feel unutterable despair, unspeakable sadness, and unquenchable pain, and on the other, I wish to thank that great person for bringing so much goodness, happiness, and joy, and just for knowing him. I have never met another superman of great will and intelligence like Oleksiy Opanasovych...

I am a native resident of Mykolaiv, thus, I know a lot about Oleksiy Opanasovych, who is a brand businessman of our region. Before NIBULON, I worked in the regional branch of Ukrsotsbank. I was the company manager and provided services to it. Once, NIBULON was looking for a deputy head of the financial department. Andriy Mykhailiuk, the then-head of this department, offered me the position. I had met Oleksiy Opanasovych before as he visited the bank to sign agreements. Thus, they hired me without any additional tasks or interviews. I personally met Vadaturskyy Sr. at my fourth day on the position. We discussed some routine question. As for the bank, there was no point in staying there, I lost interest in work since I saw no growth and no prospects. It was the post-crisis year of 2009. Banks were merging and downsizing with most functions being transferred to Kyiv branches. Therefore, it was time to change, and I have never regretted my decision. NIBULON became a new challenge for me. I used to review issues from the bank's perspective, and then I changed sides and joined private business.

From the very first days of working at NIBULON, I was responsible for investment and credit projects. When I took the position, there were only two banks in Ukraine, later – 17. For the period, we attracted five international financial organizations: EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development), IFC (International Finance Corporation, one of the five institutions of the World Bank Group), EIB (European Investment Bank, currently, 27 EU countries are its shareholders), FMO (Dutch Entrepreneurial Development Bank, one of the largest private sector development banks in the world), and DEG (global financial company and the largest banking concern). Before the war, NIBULON loan portfolio included credits granted by 35 banks. Apart from Ukrainian banks and IFOs, there were also European institutions.

Oleksiy Opanasovych was a very forward-looking person, he had a strategy for many years ahead given that he believed in logistics and its development on the Dnipro River. The said required additional investments. We had to raise funds and attract huge credit facilities to construct elevators, a river fleet, a terminal in Mykolaiv, and floating cranes. Everything NIBULON owned at the beginning of a full-scale war.

The company was growing quickly and it was a hard task to manage it. To achieve the goal and move forward, Oleksiy Opanasovych needed a team of top-notch professionals. He indeed knew and controlled everything, still, he needed people who knew not only how

to do things but could do things the way he wanted, who could get the result no matter what. We went on business trips both in Ukraine and abroad. They could last several days or a week. His phone number has not changed for decades, since mobile communication appeared. He always picked up, even if it was a landlord asking for UAH 1,000 as something had happened. He solved even such problems. For a businessman of such a scale as Vadaturskyy, it was clearly a waste of time. Still, he answered everyone. Tens of thousands of people knew his phone number! It's not surprising as there were only 30 thousand landlords at different periods of company operations.

I visited European banks together with Oleksiy Opanasovych. We took a flight from Odesa, the nearest airport, and returned to Odesa. We visited the Netherlands, Switzerland, and France most often. I visited these countries with him many times, every quarter. Since 2014, it became especially difficult as we were in the list of risky countries. However, they trusted NIBULON everywhere. Oleksiy Opanasovych was always a patriot. When telling Europeans about his company, he did that with special warmth and sparkles in his eyes, as he was talking about his native Ukraine. He always stood for its interests. He popularized our native land globally. They always welcomed us at the top level as Vadaturskyy and his company had an excellent long-term credit history and a history of cooperation with European banks, thus, their doors were always opened for us.

NIBULON had a reputation as a European company as Ukraine is Europe. Oleksiy Opanasovych didn't have the time to study English or French, so either I or my colleague would translate during those trips. Interesting fact: it always seemed to me that he understood everything, he could read by their eyes, intonations, pronunciation, mood, gestures, and articulation.

Everything was traditional and seemed simple: we arrived at the airport, took a taxi, got to the hotel, had breakfast and dinner together. All trips were extremely busy and eventful, there could be four or five meetings a day. Although we had little free time, we still tried to find at least an hour to walk around the city and breathe in the European air. When abroad, Oleksiy Opanasovych usually enjoyed marine fish with wine. When bankers invited us to some formal events, wine was offered only as a tradition, he never took a glass too much, just like he did not like nor drink strong beverages. Usually, we visited the bankers we had long-standing relationships with. They welcomed us at the top level everywhere, and that's how it should be in business. There is almost no difference whether you come to a modern Ukrainian office or a Swiss

one to have a meeting. I can't even hard to remember whether he had some music or some songs playing in his company car, or what they were – there was never time for that. He continued working even when traveling, without a break. He had business trips every week, he was always on his way somewhere and there was always someone waiting for him. You could say that Oleksiy Opanasovych had three homes: Odesa, Mykolaiv, and... his company car.

I used to visit Kyiv with him. When we were driving to the capital, his phone would turn hot red. He was either talking to someone or reading something. If no one wrote him, he wrote to someone. Oleksiy Opanasovych learned how to use Facebook (he administered his page), he wrote on Viber, WhatsApp, and Telegram... There was always someone asking him to sign, approve, re-approve, ask a question, or answer a question. He worked on weekends, and sometimes even held operations meetings on Sundays.

It was interesting to be by Oleksiy Opanasovych. He had a unique view of everything. It fascinated and attracted me, I wished to be a part of all that. We all see the world differently but his views were special. You could always learn something from him. He was an ordinary, down-to-earth person. I saw Oleksiy Opanasovych as a leader and was very happy about his family life with Raisa Mykhailivna. They were an example of a unified and inseparable couple. I communicated less with his wife but we met more than once, and even went on a business trip together once. Many guests from Ukraine and abroad visited our company. They were businessmen, bankers, partners, and media figures... Oleksiy Opanasovych was happy to meet everyone and found time to give them a tour. You should have seen him during it. There were thousands of guests, and he had to spend precious minutes or hours with them. He had such a feature that he could find time for everything and paid attention to everyone. He was the same with his employees. It seemed as if he knew everyone by name.

Wherever he was, he always found something of interest. He took photos of the things he liked. He would know where he would use this or that in his work, who to present to, or where to apply. He tried not to miss a single detail, had a photographic memory, and was capable with a camera. He could even take pictures of things he didn't like, just to show them to someone he knew would love them.

NIBULON document flow was always in Ukrainian, and since 2014, Ukrainian has become the company's only official language. Oleksiy Opanasovych honestly admitted that he had spoken the language of the fascists, the invaders, and murderers for three decades but finally

reconsidered and would only speak his native language from now on. Since then, he was holding all meetings and conferences in Ukrainian only. He was born in a village where they spoke surzhyk [a mixture of Ukrainian and Russian languages], then lived in Russian-speaking Odesa. Unfortunately, Mykolaiv was almost the same in terms of language.

2014 was quite a difficult year for Mykolaiv. Still, the Lord Almighty did not let our native city be captured! Thank goodness, our flag is flying, the Russian world failed to destroy everything to the ground, as they could, and the land is free and belongs to us. The city is Ukrainian! Since the beginning of the full-scale war on February 24, 2022, NIBULON has partially switched to remote operations but I communicated with Oleksiy Opanasovych every day.

After they killed our Hero of Ukraine, I was still waiting for his call at 8:00 p.m. for a month as it was a tradition. If I had urgent questions, I called him, otherwise he called me when the time was convenient for him. We met before the tragedy. It was Wednesday or Thursday. He was leaving for Izmail, and our next meeting was scheduled for Monday...

Back then, Vadaturskyy held planning briefs in the basement of our office, it was safer there. He made the decision and it was the right one. Since June, we had meetings every week. If you ask me if anyone has had any premonitions, well, I don't think so. I got a call on Sunday morning and they told me that a missile had hit Oleksiy Opanasovych's house. I refused to think that he could have been killed then!

Oleksiy Opanasovych made every effort to ensure NIBULON's development and movement forward. NIBULON is moving. Of course, these are difficult times for us, just like for everyone else. Less than half of our assets are in operation but the company has survived the first year of the war. Nowadays, we work hoping for development.

Oleksiy Opanasovych had a very strong will, but he knew that no one could be certain things would go exactly as wished or planned. Still, you have to stay afloat and move on. Forward and only forward.



Serhii Besedin

(Civil Engineer, laureate of the State Prize of Ukraine in the field of architecture, Deputy General Director for Construction at NIBULON Ltd. (2006–2023)).

Our whole life is a set of trials and the desire to win them. This is how I can describe times when Oleksiy Opanasovych headed NIBULON.

Development, namely, construction, even large-scale construction as envisaged by Vadaturskyy, by his life philosophy. Such an inspirer and a leader, who mastered the modern global approaches to business, helped me realize that I should never be afraid to do the things no one ever tried before, not only in Ukraine.

In 2002, I was the contractor working on the construction of the Kolosivskyi Elevator, in 2004, Oleksiy Opanasovych invited me to head the Capital Construction Department at NIBULON, and in 2006, I became Deputy General Director for Construction. On the very first day of my work at the position, Vadaturskyy told me: “A business dies if not developed!”.

Our Mykolaiv Transshipment Terminal is a true miracle. It was the first facility we built from scratch using the latest technologies, and I worked on it from the first brick laid. We erected two domes – granaries with a capacity of 50 thousand tons each. That said, they are currently the largest hemispherical structures in Europe and the largest grain storage facilities in the world (the base area of each dome is almost the same as that of the Olympic Stadium in the capital of Ukraine). The hemispheres are covered with insulating polyurethane film and foam on the outside, which protects the grain from external temperature fluctuations by creating the "thermos" effect, and the properties of the materials used prevent condensation inside.

The domes were erected in cooperation with colleagues from Canada under French technology, which is unique for Ukraine. There are galleries 60 meters long inside, and the dome itself is 64 meters in diameter and 32 meters high. The entire system of grain transporting and loading onto vessels is brand new, few people have implemented it earlier. The same can be found in major ports only. This was the first case the private business implemented such an elaborate system.

This was the first breakthrough in private business. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy and his NIBULON launched development not of their integrated infrastructure but of Ukraine as a whole. Ukrainians were constructing our facilities not only by their hands but also by their minds and hearts. We were pioneers: we challenged ourselves, gained experience, introduced cutting-edge technologies, and created jobs and ultimately new production culture.

Our efforts were not in vain, and we were duly praised by the state. In June 2008, the President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko awarded the company's team headed by Oleksiy Vadaturskyy with the State Prize of Ukraine in the Field of Architecture by the Presidential Decree "On Awarding State Prizes of Ukraine in the Field of Architecture." It was a challenge of time and construction technologies. We learned a lot. It was quite an interesting time.

We successfully kept the outstanding construction speed, which went down in history as the "NIBULON Standard," from the start, and raised the bar high so that we would never fall below.

Having built the terminal, we switched to linear elevators. At first, we built land elevators at Reshetylivka and Smotrych. After a transshipment terminal, we built river terminals in Vitove, Kremenchuk, Pereiaslav-Khmelnytskyi, Voznesensk, and Nova Odesa. The activity was new to us but we managed to build new berths and develop shipbuilding at the same time. Since we lacked partners who would

keep their word, namely, at the Okean Shipyard, we had to acquire facilities on the territory of the old Lyman Shipbuilding Plant built back in the 1940s. We called it the NIBULON Shipbuilding Yard.

The shipyard construction was a new stage, new operations, where everything was interesting and up-to-date: equipment and technologies. We purchased new cranes, constructed new workshops and renovated old ones, and also renewed the embankment. The old Lyman facilities had a 70-meter-long slipway, which we extended to 140 so that we could build vessels of that length. We expanded, recovered, and renovated the embankment.

Nowadays, despite the wartime, NIBULON is developing, we are building a transshipment complex for the port of Izmail, on the Danube River. Currently, you can see a lot of construction underway in that area, as well as in Reni and Vylkove. Oleksiy Opanasovych had certain feelings so he was the first to start construction there, to get rights to the land officially, and to issue all the necessary documents. We were the first to build our berth and warehouse, as well as to launch a transshipment terminal. Many follow us. Oleksiy Opanasovych managed to be the first, this feature made him differ from the others.

Vadaturskyy paid a lot of attention to construction. He controlled everything, held production meetings, set tasks, and, most notably, supervised their implementation. He could come up with some ideas that were hard to take in at first. They seemed to be impossible to implement, totally unrealistic. Still, when he elaborated on the idea and got into the details, it all immediately became clear, and you realized it was not that difficult, that it was possible! It all happened as he described. The typical construction time for a linear elevator is 9 months. He set the goal to complete it in 100 days, "turnkey," three times faster than the standard timeline.

It should be noted that we succeeded due to the proper process organization, first of all. Secondly, we have already built more than one terminal, not ten nor even twenty! Therefore, both our team and contracting organizations have gained vast experience. We managed to reduce the construction time due to the synchronized and coordinated operations of all organizations involved. We had no downtime, everyone did their task and was immediately followed by the successor.

As an agricultural business, NIBULON understood that if the elevator was not operational by the start of the marketing year, prior to the harvest, it would remain unused throughout the year. That meant money thrown away. It was unacceptable! We have never missed

the set deadlines. Thus, in Zhytomyr region, the elevator was ready prior to corn harvesting, and in Kherson region – before they started harvesting early grains. Almost all construction works were completed by July.

Each new facility surpassed the previous one in many characteristics. We operated exclusively within the legal framework, which made local businesses transparent, and allowed them to replenish budgets with taxes paid.

Oleksiy Opanasovych knew all the construction participants personally, and that could be more than a hundred organizations at once, from suppliers of materials to those engaged in finishing work. He knew each manager, their tasks and deadlines, as well as what could be required from them, what assignments could be set, and what they could accomplish.

We built about 30 elevators. Oleksiy Opanasovych could ask to set the stage for the construction in a certain area. I stood there thinking how to perform that. Having considered the options, I knew that there we could drive piles, there – dig a gallery, and there – start a net or pour concrete. Somehow it all fit together as Oleksiy Opanasovych saw it. He never took by fear. Still, I can't claim no one was afraid of him. Firstly, we all felt a huge responsibility. When we were building the transshipment terminal, Oleksiy Opanasovych visited the site every day. It was close to Mykolaiv where he lived and had an office. He found an hour every day to supervise, make sure, and see that everything was going the way he envisaged. He talked to people and went into the details of construction works. That was our first joint project, where he taught us and studied himself. We had already been tuned due to many years of cooperation so that we all looked in one direction and saw the things he did, namely, a finished major project. Not only from the outside but also inside as if we had an X-ray built into our eyes. The processes inside and the way they functioned.

Oleksiy Opanasovych was aware of all the novelties, new developments in construction. He traveled abroad to gain the experience, and our technologists traveled to Germany and the USA. We were one of the first in Ukraine to start building metal containers. There was nothing like that before, they mainly operated floor warehouses. Still, metal containers are an American technology introduced back in the 1950s. They were first used in ports, and then – on linear elevators. Vadaturskyy saw how grain was transported on the Mississippi, and adopted that experience. He said:

"They have many barges transporting grain by water, why do we need

vehicles damaging the roads?" That was how Oleksiy Vadaturskyy's era of shipbuilding began. We, the building companies, took an active part in that.

Surprisingly, I wasn't dreaming about those construction sites. Although I rarely dream as I sleep well. Construction is for those in love with an active lifestyle. Our minimum site is 300 by 200 meters, six hectares. You can walk kilometers there a day while giving instructions and checking. Thus, you sleep well at night! Oleksiy Opanasovych went around those territories more than once. When we had no photographers (Vadaturskyy was a photographer at heart, he had a talent for this artistic craft), he climbed into containers or up to take panoramic photos. Our highest point was 42 meters, which he easily climbed up without gasping for breath. At the start and the end of all construction works, he photographed everyone and recorded details.

In the end, when we celebrated the "flower" (not with bouquets, but by cutting the ribbon), we thanked everyone involved in the construction, invited the authorities, and offered a salute. We had facilities worth USD 20–22 million. Later, he taught young photographers how to do things. We uploaded all the photos taken by Oleksiy Opanasovych to the internet and websites, and also used them at various seminars and planning briefs.

I went on business trips with Vadaturskyy more than once. He loved to tell me about his life: how he worked part-time as a loader at Odesa airport during his student years, how he traveled around the former Soviet Union with construction teams during summer vacations, how he worked in the Urals, Karelia, Tyumen, and Kazakhstan, how he laid asphalt in Poland, how he managed the flour mill renovation in Mongolia, his work at a grain products plant, and the early days of NIBULON.

On Friday, July 29, 2022, we met in Izmail. Oleksiy Opanasovych held a planning brief, and later we had dinner together. He confessed, "It's so calm here, as if it's a holiday – street lamps are on everywhere, and Ukrainian flags are on every pole... It feels like there's no war, and that our Mykolaiv isn't being bombed and destroyed mercilessly by the fascists..." The city was clean and tidy back then, and it made me happy.

The last thing he told me on Saturday: "It's so quiet and nice in Izmail but I have to go home..." And then – a tragic Sunday, the last one in his life...



Svitlana Bocharova

(Cash Management Economist, NIBULON Ltd. (1993–2023)).

Tetiana Kviatkovska, my friend from student days, who already worked at NIBULON, persuaded me to join them. She said they needed another person in the accounting department (there were four professionals there back then). I was a civil servant and worked in the tax administration of the Zhovtnevyi district in Mykolaiv, where I held the position of chief tax auditor. At first, I hesitated whether to join an unknown private structure as private business was at its early stage in the country. Tania assured me that I would not only not regret it but would be grateful for the rest of my life. So it happened.

I plucked up my courage and agreed to come to an interview with Oleksiy Opanasovych, whom I saw then for the first time. Valentyna Doroshenko, the chief accountant (unfortunately, deceased), and Larysa Buryk, the head of the HR department (the only person in HR back then), were in his office.

I was young, cheerful, optimistic, and eager to overcome challenges. I was 33 – the prime of life. I still remember the meeting

in detail. It was Wednesday, August 25, 1993. The day after we celebrated the second anniversary of our Independence, and it was also the second anniversary of NIBULON. Those present greeted me warmly. Vadaturskyy was recruiting professionals for the company. He was almost 46 but was wise as a hundred-year-old elder. It took me years to fully understand his global, far-sighted ideas and his ability to make estimates for decades to come. "We cannot trust state structures as they are a source of corruption and abuse of power," Oleksiy Opanasovych claimed. He was right, time proved his words. Unfortunately. Therefore, we had to maintain our activity.

He looked at me seriously, tenaciously, meticulously but kindly and sincerely, and he listened carefully to how and what I said. The questions were simple but they made me realize I was hired! Where did I study, where did I work? Have I heard anything about NIBULON? How long do I plan to stay with the company?

Everyone was satisfied and my sincere answers secured me a position.

There were five of us in the accounting department, and 12 people – in the entire company, including Oleksiy Opanasovych and his driver, Yuriy Zalevskyy, who passed away early due to an incurable illness (he was an extremely kind and responsible person, highly trustworthy, Vadaturskyy's fellow villager from Bendzary. He worked at NIBULON since the company foundation).

It was both interesting and difficult to work as the 1990s were tough. Private business was not really welcome. We operated not due to but in spite of. Only Lord knows the nerves, energy, and health Oleksiy Opanasovych lost back then. It was never easy for him as there always were close people betraying instead of helping. That happened in the 2000s and a dozen years later. Always and regularly.

I have never met people like Vadaturskyy either earlier or afterward. He was strong, stocky, with deep roots, sturdy as an oak, athletic, vigorous, tough, and self-confident. He was never complacent or resting on his laurels. He moved forward and only forward.

Finally, he was awarded the well-deserved title of Hero of Ukraine. He was the first and only person with such a high state status I knew, and I worked with him for three decades.

I witnessed and observed the transparency in calculations, honesty, and fairness of both NIBULON and its leader. We had related traditions. He kept saying: "I don't owe anyone anything, the things I own were gained by very hard work. And I'm not going to pay anyone for nothing!" He claimed he would be honest all the way, and he wished people never said bad things about him. So that no one would say

that Vadaturskyy was giving something to the authorities when buying things or taking action. He was like a challenge to any authority. He was uncontrollable, unpredictable, straightforward but hardworking. He was an extremely talented manager of the European level, a rare person. Or, rather, a unique one!

His love for the team was immeasurable! He worried about everyone, helped as much as possible, and never refused anyone. It hurt him when someone decided to quit. He then got worried and said: "Am I such a bad person that my employees are leaving me?" He dreamed of a monolith representing his loyal team, which had dedicated decades to the cause he established, enabling him to reach great heights.

So it happened but it took him years. Together with those people, he managed to grow from an ordinary employee to the founder of the most successful exporter of Ukrainian agricultural products. At first, I processed cash transactions and performed accounting calculations. There were no computers yet, so we did everything manually. We used kilometers of rolled paper. Nowadays, a typewriter is a museum piece, but I used it in those times. I inserted sheets, put carbon paper between them to get two copies, and typed letters and numbers with one finger. I had to type payments and settlement accounts manually. Lord forbid making even a single mistake with a digit. Everything had to be without any corrections or errors. We were relieved when computer era started. Of course, computers made a revolution but a lot of paper documents were still accumulated. We couldn't do without them. Oleksiy Opanasovych always tried to make our work easier as soon as any new technology or software was introduced.

I managed the cash accounts and was responsible for fuel (we used coupons back then). I calculated depreciation on our equipment. As the company developed, I became responsible for settlements with other companies, which could number up to 500 in a single day. I was in charge of the cash, and they even jokingly referred to me as a "rich woman" because there was a safe behind me.

There was a lot of work and a lot of people. I was always careful and attentive. I could handle anything.

You should've seen us celebrating birthdays together! There was a huge kitchen in the office, which served as a kind of banquet hall. We all were friends and it seemed we could move mountains. Thus, we held small celebrations after hard working days. Oleksiy Opanasovych never missed them. He loved to congratulate people and say sincere words of gratitude, however, he never celebrated his birthdays as he had no time to rest. He tried to go on some trip on his birthday.

We also celebrated other holidays and had corporate parties. We

never missed the anniversary of our beloved NIBULON. We always took a group photo on the steps of the central office to capture for history not only the people and the event but also the years that pass so quickly.

Oleksiy Opanasovych bought vegetables for the employees for winter use. When the vegetables were delivered by truck, he stood and unloaded them with everyone, for example, cabbage, onions, or potatoes. During summer vacations, he paid for suits in Foros, Crimea, allowed families to go there in a company car, and even sent it to bring vacationers home.

When there were up to 25 female employees, Oleksiy Opanasovych organized an unforgettable women's holiday. He gathered and congratulated us, presented some flowers, and then welcomed an unexpected guest. The door opened, and a stranger in a sea captain's uniform came in with a huge box. He gave each of us expensive French perfumes, all were different. Few people could boast of having one back then.

In 1996, he sent 10 children of the company's employees to London to a summer training center, where they learned English, relaxed, and went on tours around England. They visited the Madame Tussauds wax museum, saw the Stonehenge megalithic structure, walked along the Thames over the Tower Bridge in central London, and explored many other historical sites. It was fascinating. You never forget anything like that.

I remember the 20th anniversary of NIBULON, which we celebrated in Mykolaiv. We listened to Iryna Bilyk, watched local artists performing, and Olha Sumska was the host.

It seemed to everyone that our top manager had never truly rested, as regular phone calls constantly interrupted him. However, it wasn't his way to turn off the phone, ignore calls, or be unaware of what was happening. Even a few days of rest allowed him to work all year round. We were all amazed at how he managed to recharge and recover.

Raisa Mykhailivna would occasionally pay a visit, come into our offices, ask how things were going, and smile. She was a pleasant woman who added energy to both her husband and the entire team. It seemed the years were not taking their toll as the older she got, the better she looked. She was always friendly and positive. Our team was always a happy family. At first, as a small one, then – a larger one, and finally – a huge one. We started with a dozen employees, and then we employed hundreds and thousands. We all were united by seven happy letters – NIBULON – that allowed us to live and work. Work and live.

Andriy, the son of the Vadaturskyys, became a member of our

team at a young age. He grew up and lived with NIBULON. We all have only warm and bright memories of this family, and it could not be otherwise. The Vadaturskyy family were an exemplary and model family. If they could, they would have got the moon for each of us. Raisa Mykhailivna worked at our terminal, did the landscaping. She had an exquisite taste. She chose all these trees so stylishly that every single one was in line with the immaculate vision she had. There was not an extra plant or an extra flower there.

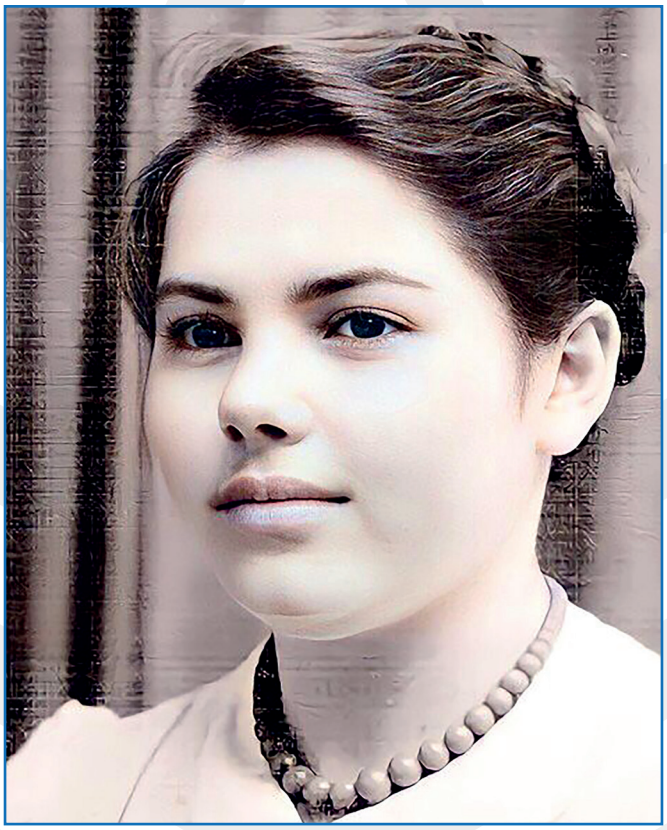
Everyone who visited the enterprise not only enjoyed her work but also found themselves in a kind of paradise. This instilled a sense of pride in the things that we, as Ukrainians, possess. We were glad having it in our hometown, which made us even more happy. Raisa Mykhailivna put her soul into NIBULON, she inspired and supported Oleksiy Opanasovych in all his endeavors.

Language is also a weapon. Unfortunately, it affected us as well. The hostile Russian language prevailed in all spheres. However, NIBULON has become Ukrainian-speaking since 2014. Oleksiy Opanasovych spoke only Ukrainian and others followed his example. Document management and correspondence were in our native language also.

When checkpoints were set in Mykolaiv, we paid salaries to everyone who was on duty there. We would come and pay them as they protected us from those invaders and barbarians. Our boss never put his good deeds on display, never advertised them. He just did them.

Our hearts and minds could accept the fact of the wicked and planned murder of Oleksiy Opanasovych and Raisa Mykhailivna. We were shocked, we could not believe in such a fate. Even when it was officially confirmed. NIBULON employees were consumed with grief. We all experienced such stress as if we had lost our dearest people. Still, they were like that for us.

The grief we felt divided our lives into “before” and “after.” We knew we were working by and with a great man. That was our “before.” And our “after” happened that tragic day of July 31, 2022. There was a genius among us but we never noticed that, we just kept working. The mind and wisdom of Oleksiy Opanasovych allowed him to bring the Ukrainian dream to life with scale and beauty no one had ever managed to implement.



Hanna Vadaturska
(poultry farmer, wife to Oleksiy Vadaturskyy's brother).

Volodia Vadaturskyy, a tall, handsome, intelligent, and very kind man, noticed me at their relatives' wedding. He looked at me and fell in love. I also liked him. He was 22, and I was 18. He made me careful, gentle, and persistent advancement, and finally, I gave up. Thus, we got married two years later. My maiden name was Kobylianska, and in 1963, I changed it to Vadaturska when I married Volodia, Oleksiy's older brother. I came to live with my in-laws, where I felt welcomed and appreciated. They all became my closest from the very first day. It was quite easy for me to start calling Volodia's parents "Mom" and "Dad." Clearly, brothers were lucky to have such good parents who were an authority for their children. Although they were quite poor, like the rest of us, their parental love never drained but even increased over the years. They did not have a daughter, therefore, they accepted me as their kindred.

It seemed that Afanasii Fedorovych and Fenia Ivanivna would give their lives and get the moon so that their children were happy. And their daughter-in-law! It would be improper to say even one bad word against them as I don't remember a single moment or a hint of feeling of being offended. People may say that's impossible. Let them say. That's what happened.

We lived with my husband's parents for three happy years. In 1966, we moved to our house that was across the garden from the Vadaturskyys. My husband and his father, who were skilled in construction work, undertook all the burden of the house building. There used to be a house owned by a collective farm on that site, where a lonely former political prisoner lived. When that man passed away, Afanasii Fedorovych bought it for his eldest son to live close to his parents. Mom and Dad wished that their youngest lived with them.

In his free from school time, Aliosha would run to our construction site to help. He would bring clay on horses, carry water (it was far away), and help deliver materials to the oilers. When the work was finished, they arranged a housewarming party for us. They gave us a dowry, everything we needed for an independent life.

My Volodia was born on June 20, 1939. He was 8 years and three months older than Aliosha. He was young, persistent, full of energy, and more mature than his younger brother, who also grew up a strong and very hardworking man. The brothers lived friendly all their lives, there was an understanding and no grudge between them, so, they always stuck together. Others could envy their brotherly union if they've never experienced the same. Volodia was always a guardian angel for Oleksiy, and the younger brother reached out to the older one, whom he saw as an example. They maintained mutual understanding, love, and care for a lifetime. Parents give us life, raise us, and promote love in us. However, their best gift is a brother or sister. Aliosha (we all called him so in surzhyk) didn't have a sister but me, his brother's wife. He sometimes called me that but usually – Hania.

I should note he accepted Volodia's choice when we got married. We had close relations with him, there was not a slightest grudge or even a hint of it.

My father-in-law was a managing person. He had to own whatever was needed for the small-scale farming. He even had an apiary. It seemed not much but the honey Afanasii pumped out was the best I've ever tasted. He had his secrets, maybe he even added something no one could guess. He loved his sons very much, so he turned himself inside out to make them happy. Not many women could match him in

cooking. Even the skilled lady they invited to cook for the wedding.

Aliosha was happy to have a niece when our daughter Valia was born. After school, he ran to us. He could bring some water or help with something around the house. We never had to ask, he knew what should be done at a certain moment. Both brothers learned to play the accordion. The first was Volodia, then Aliosha also began to pick different melodies. Although accordionists played at weddings back then, the boys did not become musicians, I guess, that was not their calling. They played folk songs at home or even in the village club. The older brother had a beautiful voice, so he also sang.

I worked on a collective poultry farm built in our village after WWII. You could see it from afar, it was located in a field where chickens had enough space to run around. Currently, there is no sign of it left.

When Aliosha went to school, my husband often helped him with wall newspapers, and sometimes even to do homework, especially mathematics, which Volodia was good at. Both brothers grew up smart and had no problems with studying. However, the eldest left school after the eighth grade and gave way to the youngest. Rural parents would not have been able to give their two children a higher education.

Volodia started driving at an early age. He initially worked for the head of the collective farm, then switched between various jobs before finally choosing metalworking as his profession. Volodia became a unique specialist in engines in our district. I have no idea where he got that but there was no engine he couldn't repair. They respected him in our collective farm and the nearby villages, and people came to him for help from all over our Balta district. Volodia was a jack of all trades when it came to vehicle repair. People knew that if he took on a task, he would always do it. He could never refuse anyone due to his kindness. As they say about such people: if he were a woman, he would be always pregnant. Because he can't refuse anyone!

The brothers missed each other when they couldn't meet for a long time. Volodia regularly went to Odesa to deliver a bag packed by their parents to Aliosha, when he was a student. He visited him at the institute and in the dorm. He told me his brother found a very beautiful girl and they were going to get married. So it happened. We all liked Raia. The Lord Almighty paired them, they were a perfect match and complemented each other. I liked her very much, she was gentle and kind. She merged into the family as if she had always been its member. I remember the day when the newlyweds arrived together for the first time.

The Vadaturskyy parents were people of the Lord and treated their daughters-in-law (both me and Raia) as if we were their own family.

Aliosha and Raia visited Volodia and me every time they came to the village. They brought us gifts. It was always like that. Aliosha loved village food, so, he missed it, and couldn't get enough of it. Raia never refused our treats. If we needed help, she would roll up her sleeves and pitch in with the chores.

Of course, I was the one cooking all the dishes Volodia and Aliosha grew up on. It seemed that nothing ever changed in those pancakes, potato cakes, or milk starch drinks for years but they thanked and praised me as a good hostess every time.

Christmas and Easter were unforgettable holidays, as they were in every family. We all went to visit the Parents. At first, Mom baked Easter bread, later, she taught me. Dad made finger-licking hams and sausages. He cooked meat well as it was considered a man's chore in their family. Dad himself butchered the pig, cut it up, and processed every part of it. The brothers could not praise Dad enough.

When Aliosha had settled in Mykolaiv, he was always waiting for Volodia to visit him. My husband was eager to see how his brother was living and to meet his soulmate once again. He told me everything after each such trip. About Aliosha's work, about Raia, and about baby Andriusha.

Aliosha would visit Bendzary not as often as he would have liked but always at the first opportunity. He always brought his son with him and we were always waiting for them.

The death of their Parents was a hard blow to sons. Volodia and Aliosha's Father died after a stroke, and their Mother had cirrhosis of the liver. Over the years, the younger brother became famous and founded NIBULON.

Volodia and I were happy for him.

Some years later, a great grief struck our family. My husband was diagnosed with oncology, Volodia had throat cancer. Aliosha made every effort to help his older brother but nothing could be done. For some reason, Volodia gave up quickly and did not fight for his life. I guess, his time had come and he wished to join our Lord. He did not want any treatment.

Oleksiy helped with the funeral and undertook all the expenses. He came with the whole family. It was a hard time for him and for all of us. He was happy to have an older brother, with whom he was like hand and glove. With whom they spoke the same shorthand. Aliosha wanted Volodia to recover, to see his achievements in agriculture. He lived a short life and left us too early, he was only 67 years old.

Volodia died on November 6, 2005. I was left all alone...

Who could have known that Oleksiy would become a Hero of Ukraine shortly. When I heard the news, my first thought was that Volodia, Dad Afanasii, and Mom Fenia would be really proud of him. Who knows how they hear or see us from Heaven. They pray for us and rejoice... Oleksiy had no one to say the right words as he was left an orphan. He was lucky to have Raia by his side who replaced everyone and everywhere. She was the messenger of the Lord who was everything, a wife, a Mother of his son, the most loyal friend, a true guardian, and an advisor.

Bendzary residents told me that Oleksiy did great work to achieve his goal. The long-time residents saw that he had a spark of Lord as he was growing up, a persistent and hardworking person. He could handle everything. Whatever he took on. Just like the Dad and my Volodia.

All the men in their family were characterized by a special feeling of justice and honesty. They were real and loved people. Such people are rare. If you know one, protect them like the apple of your eye. I was lucky to have one in my woman's life. Although we worked hard and it was never easy, we lived a happy life. We helped and supported each other.

Neighbors, who heard it on the news, told us that Aliosha and Raia were killed. We couldn't believe that. We refused to believe in such a tragedy. Our whole family was consumed with grief. I couldn't go to Kyiv to bid my farewell as I had high blood pressure. My daughter Valia with my granddaughter Aryna were there.

Life goes on, my daughter Valentyna gave me two grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. I have people to live with and for.

We became orphans without Aliosha. Although I know and understand everything, I still look out and wait for him...



Mykhailo Vadaturskyy

(Civil Engineer, half-uncle of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy):

When he learned that Nazariy Yaremchuk, a popular singer beloved by millions, was born when his Dad was 64, he immediately drew a parallel with himself. My father was 68 years old, and I was the youngest of my brothers and sisters. There were eleven of us in the family. Late births may cause certain anecdotes. It so happened that I became Oleksiy's half-uncle although I was six years younger. My Dad and his grandfather were brothers (there were eight of us, six brothers and two sisters, all were raised without a Dad and were hardworking). His Dad, Opanasii, and I were cousins.

Opanasii Fedorovych told me about the events of the 1930s. The Soviets called Oleksiy's family kulaks although they came from serfs. All six Vadaturskyy brothers were hardworking. Their Mom bought ten dessiatines for each of them as a wedding gift. My Dad, Makarii Ivanovych, and Oleksiy's grandfather, Fedir Ivanovych, became richer from that tiny piece of land than the others. They owned horses, livestock, and they even jointly bought a grain threshing machine.

When the Soviet authorities carried out the dekulakization, my Dad was arrested, and Fedir Ivanovych, Oleksiy's grandfather, wrote a letter to the Verkhovna Rada that he came from serfs, and it helped him. My Mom with a baby were kicked out of the house while Dad was in prison, and she finally settled in Vradiivka. There, my oldest brother took his first steps, and later they returned to our native village.

My Mom was 25 years younger than Dad. When he was released, my Dad and Oleksiy's grandfather were arrested. They were both taken to the railway station in Balta. Grandfather Fedir ordered Opanasii to run. It was getting late, and Oleksa's Dad waited for a convenient moment, rolled out of the cart, and fell into a ditch. That's how he escaped.

When collective farms were organized, and everyone were forced to join, Fedir Ivanovych complied but my Dad refused. That's why he was arrested. Fedir Ivanovych worked for a while as an agro-technician on a collective farm, but at some point, he simply disappeared. His fate is still unknown. Oleksiy managed to rehabilitate his grandfather but he never learned details. We lived in the center of the village of Bendzary, on the Balta side, next to Tamara Pavlivna Bondar, a beloved teacher of more than one generation of fellow villagers and a long-time school principal, and Vasyl Hryhorovych Shulha, her husband, who was respected by everyone, young to old alike. Oleksiy lived with his brother and Parents at the end of the village.

From an early age, I enjoyed Oleksiy's company, whom I saw as an example in everything. They never even told me I was his uncle somehow, we grew up like brothers. He studied well at school, could make friends, knew many different stories, and grew up as an authority for me in any area common to hardworking rural children. My Parents respected Oleksiy's family. If we needed to bring or get anything from them, my mother would send me, and I was glad to help. I was also fascinated by the fact that he was the captain of our football, volleyball, and basketball teams. Dad always told me to follow Oleksiy's example.

There was the village of Nemyrivske neighboring the other side of Bendzary, where he lived. When in senior school, Oleksiy used to get up at six a.m. to run five kilometers there, and the same distance back. Then he did exercises, had breakfast, and went to school in Balta by bus coursing along the Myrony – Andriiashivka route. Sometimes he had to walk.

When he played in the school basketball team, he organized a match between his school's team and the Bendzary team. Oleksiy, however, played for his native village, and they defeated seniors from the Balta school! The village was talking about that for several days. Apart from Oleksiy, the team was comprised of Vladyslav Shulha,

Mykhailo Dekhtiaruk, Anatolii Kryzhanovskyi, Yevhen Shevtsov, and Volodymyr Bahrianovskyi. He had a lot of dumbbells at home (made of various suitable materials), and his Dad, Opanasii Fedorovych, even made a barbell for his youngest son. He took a half-axle at a tractor crew warehouse and fitted it with sets of discs of different weights.

Oleksiy told me: "If you want to gain muscle mass, you should focus on exercises with a barbell as they involve movement along a certain trajectory. Dumbbells allow for a more natural movement as you can put wrists into a comfortable position when using them." My older relative was genetically sturdy and strong, and he also exercised regularly.

His Dad loved his son very much, so he bought him not only a FED camera but also all the accessories: a photo enlarger, a ferrotyper, a cutter, and trays for developing and fixing. Oleksiy mastered the art of photography. He captured moments of rural life. In senior school, he worked in the fields. Whether he worked as a trailer operator on a Belarus tractor with his uncle or as an assistant combine operator, he was always characterized by a responsible attitude to the labor of agricultural workers. During the harvest season, Oleksiy was in the field from the first to the last day. Till harvest festival. He had to work around the clock, so he didn't go home and slept in the hay pile in the field. Volodia, his older brother, brought him something to eat.

In addition to Christmas and Easter, the biggest holiday for us was the village holiday, namely, the Patronal festival, originating from the consecration of the church. In Bendzary, the holiday was on August 28, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which was also commonly called the First Blessed Mother. When Oleksiy studied in Odesa and later, when he worked in Mykolaiv region, he always visited his parents at the Patronal festival and never missed it. It allowed us to keep the sacred and dear feeling of homeland. Collective farm workers did not have passports back then. Young people could escape village life only if they entered universities or technical schools. Without a passport, you couldn't get a job anywhere except on a collective farm. Thank God, Oleksiy managed to enter the institute in Odesa. He passed three entrance exams with flying colors but he was so exhausted and worn out that he could not take the fourth one. It turned out he wasn't the only one, and the institution made some advances given that the talented applicant from Bendzary had three excellent marks. They allowed him to take the exam later. Oleksiy did not miss the chance. We didn't meet often back then. During summer vacations, Oleksiy took tourism classes. His uncle served in Crimea, thus, he had a place to stay, which allowed him to walk around all the mountain ranges and

peaks of the peninsula in his student years. Oleksiy kept a diary where he recorded his tourist achievements. I wasn't at his wedding as it was a small student party in a dormitory for the closest people. Later, the newlyweds visited Bendzary. Oleksiy's parents gathered their close family. My Dad had passed away but Mom was invited and she couldn't stop praising the bride. Oleksiy was lucky to find Raia, just as she – him. Oleksiy's Mom and Dad loved her as their child, and they all lived amicably. They had two sons, thus, Raisa was like a daughter to them. It was impossible not to love her. She was sweet, friendly, sincere, and benevolent. She seemed glowing with kindness. All the neighbors liked the Vadaturskyys' daughter-in-law as she was kind to them. She wasn't forced to act like that, it was her natural disposition.

I met Raisa in Odesa, where I studied. Firstly, at the Automobile and Road Technical School, and then at the Institute of Civil Engineering. I was going somewhere on a trolleybus then. At the station bus stop, I got on through the front door and didn't look around. I felt someone hugged me. It was Oleksiy who said that he wasn't alone, and introduced me to his chosen one. I had heard so many good things about Oleksiy's young and beautiful wife, and I learned they all were telling the truth.

When they both were to visit Parents in Bendzary, Opanasii Fedorovych would tell me the news in advance.

As a rule, everyone would stay up late having hearty talks. After the institute, they went to Trykraty, where Andriy was born. I would sometimes come to Mykolaiv, where Oleksiy worked in Soviet times. There were no telephones and no such communication options back then. I visited Oleksiy's two-room apartment on Kosmonavtiv Street (Mykolaiv), which was his first home in the regional center. I remember Oleksiy's business card when he had just established NIBULON. I called him and we agreed to meet. I was lucky to visit the company's office. It seemed I had moved to another world. I was impressed by the things I saw. I received a warm welcome. When I showed my official ID and they learned I was Vadaturskyy, they led me to the reception office. There, Oleksiy's secretary made me a cup of fragrant coffee as Oleksiy was holding a meeting. When it was over, he came out to see me. We hugged, he was very happy to see me.

We were constantly in touch after mobile phones appeared. If I called him and he couldn't answer, he would always reach out to me back later. We never missed holidays or events.

He called me Mykhailo. As children, we spoke in the rural surzhyk but when we got older, we took up our native language. When one of our close relatives passed away, Oleksiy would always come to bid his last farewell. Of course, he always helped financially. The village

people knew this well and said: "We should give Oleksiy proper respect. Despite a busy schedule and workload, he never forgets his roots, his lineage."

My daughter-in-law underwent internship at NIBULON. She told me everything with awe. The structure Oleksiy created and the goals he was setting and implementing seemed a miracle, something both obvious and incredible. In 2018, Oleksiy drove me from Bendzary to Pervomaisk. We were talking on the way. "Where is your daughter-in-law? Why does your son work in Pervomaisk, don't they need traumatologists in Mykolaiv?" I explained that the Vadaturskyy family get everything themselves and never ask anyone for anything. He shook his head but agreed. He told me that when he was seven years old, he climbed onto the roof. He wished to see the landscape from an unusual angle.

He got a ladder and climbed up the chimney. He saw Andriiashivka, the railway track but when he turned around, he almost fell. He saw his mother coming home from work! He got frightened and jumped from the roof as he couldn't find the ladder. He injured his left leg and slightly limped for almost his entire life. Many years passed until Swiss traumatologists put bones right.

The day Oleksiy became a Hero of Ukraine all Bendzary residents celebrated and were proud of their fellow villager. They were all proud of him. He had already become a famous and well-known person in the world but in his native village, he was on equal footing with everyone, never held his head high, and never stood out. He greeted and had something to discuss with everyone.

When he became a Hero of Ukraine, he enjoyed walking barefoot around his Dad's yard, where he took a shovel, a hoe, or a scythe, and skillfully used them. He had not forgotten a poor and barefoot childhood, the hard work of the villagers and his parents, for whom he was an exemplary son. They gave him life and taught him to love his native land, and he neither forgot nor betrayed this love.

Oleksiy was proud of his only son Andriy, who got a proper modern European education. I believe he will take his Father's place with honor and dignity and lead the company to further development. Oleksiy Opanasovych was also proud of his grandson Mykola, who inherited the Vadaturskyys' characteristic features.



Roman Vashchuk

(Canadian diplomat of Ukrainian origin, Canada's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Ukraine (2014–2019), Business Ombudsman in Ukraine (since 2022)).

On March 4, 2016, I, as the Canadian Ambassador to Ukraine, was lucky to visit Mykolaiv, meet Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, and witness the miracle his NIBULON had made. First of all, the company head surprised me when he came driving a white Škoda Octavia to the hotel in the morning. Anyone familiar with Ukrainian business knows that is not common. He was a person who cared about business development and did not waste money on some show-offs. The fact that Oleksiy Opanasovych was aware of every detail was impressive. Vadaturskyy gave me an unforgettable tour of the Transshipment

Terminal and NIBULON Shipbuilding Yard. The meeting was organized by Andriy Vadaturskyy whom I met after he was elected as a People's Deputy of Ukraine and our sales department, which reminded me of the long-standing commercial ties between Canada

and the Mykolaiv-based company. NIBULON proved the successful cooperation between Canada and Ukraine, which the company had initiated back in 2003. Then, due to financing involving the Export Development Canada Agency and with the assistance of the State Export-Import Bank of Ukraine, USD 1.1 million was allocated for the purchase of a shell for granary domes from the Canadian Domexpert, Inc. Canada manufactured one of the shells for the granary domes, which are still the largest ones in the world. During the trip, I intended to search for opportunities and options for further cooperation to cover the widest range possible of common interests. NIBULON was chosen for the scale of the company's activities.

Vadaturskyy had a unique gift of a comprehensive and systematic approach to achieving his goals. Some businesses grow crops, others – transport and manufacture goods. Oleksiy Opanasovych built a successful logistical and agricultural model involving the fleet and shipbuilding capabilities. He was thinking about actions to be taken to defend Ukraine in the field of shipbuilding. He managed to turn all his interests into large-scale operations. The things I saw were impressive, everything was implemented on a grand scale! The agribusiness and fleet that Oleksiy Vadaturskyy built proved the incredible creative energy of the company's management. NIBULON is an outstanding company not only for Ukraine. It has been and remains one of the major global players. I saw that the company would have the same success in shipbuilding as in grain exports. Vadaturskyy knew how to invest in every link of the NIBULON vast logistics chain. He saw the light at the end of the tunnel. He never shared responsibility like others by saying "I will do my link, and let someone else do the rest of the chain."

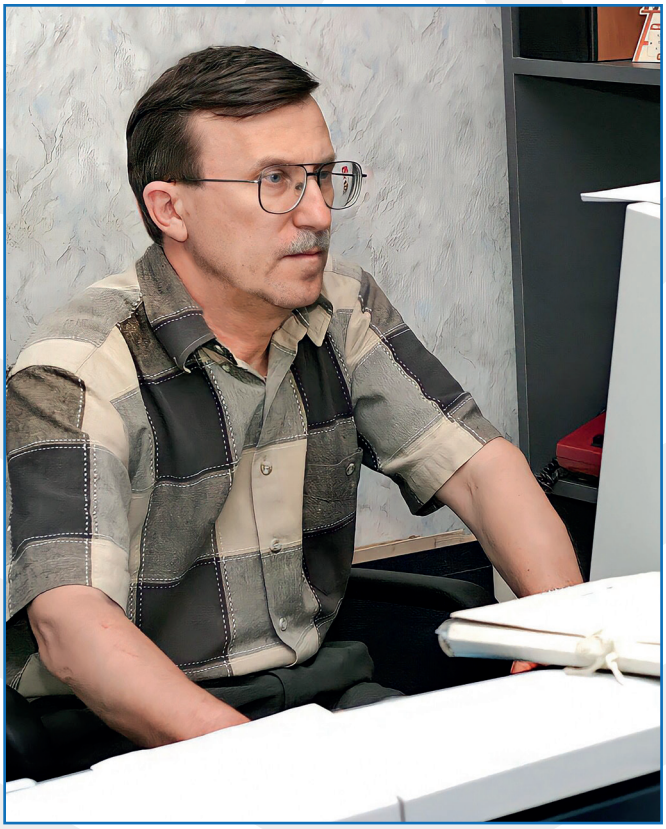
Oleksiy Opanasovych had the vision, desire, and skills to organize, finance, and bring everything to a successful implementation. Captains of the NIBULON ships were very lucky as it is a rare case when a Ukrainian captain commands a Ukrainian vessel! Vadaturskyy managed to succeed here as well. He also restored the fleet of passenger "Raketa" boats! Everything he did had Ukrainian roots and promoted the interests of the Ukrainian state.

He was a true pioneer who helped position Ukraine as a key player in the global grain market. His meticulous attention to product quality was truly impressive. He wanted to ensure that the buyer received exactly what they needed. When I became the business ombudsman, I discovered that NIBULON frequently approached us with complaints.

Vadaturskyy was a manager who would not tolerate dishonesty, whether in business dealings or in the relationship between businesses and the state. He worked tirelessly to ensure that even smaller companies could thrive in a free and unrestricted environment, without interference from the state. He was deeply dedicated to his lifelong project.

I was always struck by the melodic harmony of his first and patronymic name – Oleksiy Opanasovych. It sounded like something timeless, infused with the essence of native traditions and national pride. He was a remarkable man who made his Ukrainian choice with both clarity and conviction.

I followed his social media posts, his mastery of the Ukrainian language, and his thoughts, visions, and actions. He excelled in everything he did. He never left anything unfinished. When he committed to something, he always delivered results that left a lasting impression.



Oleksandr Vedeneiev
(photo artist, typographer).

When the Soviet Union collapsed, I, a former shipbuilder, found myself searching for a job in my hometown of Mykolaiv. The factories were running down and closing. Thanks Lord, I had a hobby: photography, which I had always loved. Deep down, I've always felt more like a photo artist than a shipbuilder. My hobby let me achieve everything – I met interesting people and had a life rich with unforgettable encounters. I have enough memories to fill several volumes, not to mention the photo albums I've created, and those I still hope to compile in the future. In 1993, photography led me to meet Oleksiy Vadaturskyy. I was fortunate to witness and document the beginning of NIBULON's journey. What I hadn't anticipated was becoming a chronicler of both Oleksiy Opanasovych's great path and NIBULON's labor achievements. If you look through these photos, you'll not only see the growth of a vast agrarian entity, but also the extraordinary journey of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy! Many of these photos

are carefully preserved in the archives of numerous publications, publishing houses, and magazines from both Ukraine and abroad.

I was fortunate to meet many talented artists and designers throughout my journey, including Olena Konovalova, a graduate of the Kharkiv Institute of Arts and Industrial Design, whose exceptional talent set her apart. Together, we accomplished many great things, but mostly for NIBULON and Oleksiy Vadaturskyy. We began with brochures, booklets, date planners, and calendars. Initially, we worked under an agreement, but later, we founded our own business – the publishing house Vart and the Vart printing firm. Back then, the Internet didn't exist, but when it finally arrived, Vadaturskyy noticed that we had captured the lion's share of the photos.

I vividly remember the first office of NIBULON. Once the repairs were complete and the offices were spotless, Vadaturskyy invited the designer to document everything for posterity, so it would be preserved. The designer recommended me for the job. And that's how it all began. That's how not only the first photo album was made but also our cooperation with Oleksiy Opanasovych, whom I then met for the first time, began. It should be noted that during the first years of NIBULON's activity, Vadaturskyy was a much more simple and open person. However, over time, as more challenges and responsibilities piled up, it became almost impossible for one person to handle it all. Yet, he wouldn't have been Vadaturskyy if he hadn't managed to overcome everything! The leadership of NIBULON changed over the years, and with that, the earlier, more transparent times – with fewer problems – were the best for us in our work as photographers and designers. It was easier when we worked directly with him, without the involvement of a press service or press secretaries. Oleksiy Opanasovych would discuss everything with us in his office, as he knew every detail, every nuance, and every photo. He would make suggestions, offer adjustments, and provide valuable advice. Together with my brother, I created the first photo albums for NIBULON. They provided us with a car, and we traveled across the fields and factories. At various times of the day and throughout the seasons, we captured whatever we saw. No one anticipated that digital photography would replace film – and with such vivid colors and intensity. That developers, fixers, photo enlargers would become an antiquity! Slides met the same fate, disappearing quickly.

For 30 years, my colleagues and I created all the advertising print materials for Oleksiy Opanasovych. I knew that Vadaturskyy was quite skilled in photography. He once told me that, as a child, his father had

bought him his first camera, and that he had kept all his photographic equipment as relics, including his early photo tests. So, photography had been his childhood passion. I've seen his photos of the student construction crew working on the Baikal–Amur Mainline, and there was something truly special about them. It's clear that a person who cannot appreciate the beauty of the world around them is cold-hearted and indifferent – yet Vadaturskyy saw that beauty in a full spectrum of colors.

In 2021, we produced the final NIBULON calendars under Oleksiy Opanasovych's leadership. None of us knew at the time that these would be the last ones created during peaceful times. When I delivered them to the company, I had the chance to meet Oleksiy Opanasovych. He approached me, greeted me with a firm handshake, and said, "Well, the old guard still outperforms the young!" I always addressed him formally, as he did with me. He would greet everyone this way – with a handshake and a genuine acknowledgment. He remembered every single person who had worked with him. Initially, there were only a handful of people, but over time, the number grew to thousands. He never failed to greet me and never pretended not to see me. Even from across the street, if he spotted me, he would always wave his hand. I must admit that his team was always composed of highly skilled professionals, true experts in their fields.

Vadaturskyy was in impeccable shape. I recall one time when we met downstairs, and together we quickly ascended to the fourth floor. By the time I reached the third floor, I was out of breath, yet he appeared as though he had just taken a short walk. He then asked, "How old are you?" He explained that I should take better care of my health. He always placed his trust in me, and there was nothing he wouldn't openly express if something didn't sit right with him. Once, he said to me, "I'm aware of the issue, don't try to fool me." And another time – to Olena Mykhailivna, our designer, who was presenting the new booklet: "So, you think I don't catch up?"

He never had any complaints about us or our work. He was always satisfied and grateful for everything we did. There was always a strong mutual trust between us. Of course, there were many competitors, as Mykolaiv didn't have any other large enterprises like NIBULON. More than once, they tried to outsmart us, to end our cooperation with Vadaturskyy, but he was loyal and wouldn't let that happen. No one believed that we maintained clear and transparent relations. Depending on their depravity, they claimed we offered some kind of "payoffs." It was laughable and completely contrary to how Vadaturskyy operated.

Lord forbid he ever learned that anyone was introducing any shady schemes. Such people were not tolerated within the company. In both the old and new NIBULON offices, there was a guest room, its walls lined with photographs that captured moments from the company's history. Most of those photos were ours. Naturally, we never traveled to Kyiv.

There were "court" photographers in ministries, government departments, at various forums, and during the Hero of Ukraine award ceremonies, while we were working right here in Mykolaiv, where he had strong and reliable support. As for video, with the advancement of technology, especially the advent of quadcopters, we began using them to capture events from unique angles. Still, we took photos as well. The workload was substantial, as with each new era and the advancement of technology – often occurring every year, or even every six months – we had to regularly update our printing equipment.

Oleksiy Opanasovych's love for photography played a key role in allowing us to maintain our partnership for so many years, leaving behind a rich legacy. Our calendars deserve their own story, as they became our signature project, something he cherished deeply. If you take a look at the calendars we've been producing since 1994, you'll see a visual history unfold. Each calendar tells its own unique story! Moreover, these calendars were printed in large quantities. Vadaturskyy ensured that every NIBULON employee received one! Not only in the head office but also across the branches, and of course, to the fortunate landholders. In 2021, we printed 20,000 one-fold calendars and 8,000 three-fold corporate calendars. They were everywhere in Mykolaiv, wherever you come: in a clinic, a hospital, a post office, and government offices... It was a kind of advertising. The impressive results were things worth showcasing: grain terminals, transshipment complexes, boats, and state-of-the-art global equipment used in the fields.

All the major milestones of Oleksiy Opanasovych's work were documented in these calendars. The first edition featured German Fendt tractors, built for long-term use, with photos of machinery that had been in operation for over 10 years, yet still looked brand new. When Vadaturskyy purchased 15 tractors in Germany (where farmers typically buy only one or two machines due to the small size of their agricultural lands), the news was covered by a German magazine to which we had sent our photos. When the tractors arrived in our country, company employees drove them from the railway station. I found a spot on a hill where I could see them stretching along a serpentine path, and it looked as though there were hundreds of them! I

captured a beautiful photo at that moment. I made similarly successful photos when the most modern combines, seeders, and winders were transported to NIBULON in Mykolaiv on trailers across the bridge.

There is one key milestone in our printing history. In 2005, when large deep-sea vessels began docking at the Mykolaiv terminal, Vadaturskyy ordered a night photo shoot of the terminal from a helicopter (today, we use a quadcopter with a camera) for the company calendar. According to the plan, all the lights of the terminal and the loading vessels should be on when we would have been photographing. It was late autumn, and the helicopter was only authorized to fly until dusk, which was around 6 p.m. The flight took place, and the photo shoot was completed. The following day, we brought the flash drive to the General Director's office, opened the files on the computer, and... Oleksiy Opanasovych was disappointed. It was a gray and indistinct photo with spots from the lights. He looked at me, having lost all hope, and I said I couldn't promise anything but would try to fix things.

Late in the evening, the terminal was illuminated and all the lights on the vessel near the pier were also on. We took photos of the bright scenery, as well as the reflections on the water from the boat, from the water itself. Then we climbed onto a large cargo crane in the neighboring port, to the very top of it, and took some photos from there. That was some material for the designer.

Kostiantyn Konovalov, the youngest designer on our team and the son of our chief designer, took up this difficult task. He had just graduated with a designer's diploma from the University of Shipbuilding. He creatively added sketches to enhance the images from the helicopter shoot. Due to his skills, he succeeded. That photo became the signature image of NIBULON for many years, featured in booklets, brochures, and posters. We even used it for the next year's calendars. We successfully completed the challenging task the General Director had entrusted to us. This is how seriously we approached our 30-year collaboration with NIBULON.

Recently, I felt a sense of loss when I realized many of my photographs had disappeared. For various reasons, I had given and presented them, but unfortunately, I hadn't kept even the most cherished ones. I have a memorable photograph of myself, Vadaturskyy, and Olena Mykhailivna, taken after the opening of the famous two-domed terminal in Mykolaiv. When Oleksiy Opanasovych stepped outside after the official ceremony to take in some fresh air, I looked at him and called out to my brother, "Take a picture!" It was a perfect shot. He was so inspired and happy there! It took him a lot of time to achieve that...



Andriy Volyk

(Deputy General Director for Construction, Fleet Operations and Navigation Safety of NIBULON Ltd. (2007-2023)).

Sometimes, Lord leads you down a path in ways you can't comprehend! If someone had told me that I, a career military man and border guard, would end up in charge of fleet operations and navigation safety at NIBULON – a Ukrainian agricultural company, one of the largest domestic producers and exporters – it would have seemed impossible, like a whimsical fantasy. I never imagined I would end up in this field, as I had no relevant skills.

However, I graduated from the "Maritime Academy" under the mentorship of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, a Hero of Ukraine, who, like me, didn't have formal training in the profession but possessed a rare, Lord-given talent.

I joined the company in 2004. Prior to that, I served in the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine. My final position there was head of the checkpoint in Mykolaiv region. During that time, I had a serious disagreement with Mykola Lytvyn, the then Head of the State Border

Guard Service (and brother of the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine). Unfortunately, the head of the border guards held pro-Russian views, and at some point, I realized there was nothing I could do to change the situation. That's how I ended up at NIBULON, being interviewed by Oleksiy Opanasovych himself. He listened to me attentively and asked me to resign within two weeks. I did, and it was absolutely worth it. For the first three years, I served as head of security at the Mykolaiv transshipment terminal, the largest terminal owned by the company. In 2007, Oleksiy Opanasovych initiated a campaign promoting children's diplomacy. Senior school students from the city and surrounding regions visited us, and we gave them tours of the company. All the tours were highly educational. We even used boats to show NIBULON from different perspectives.

Vadaturskyy personally conducted the tours, and he was so passionate about them that he always devoted a great deal of his valuable time to the children. You should have seen the way his eyes sparkled with every word, as he saw the future builders of the country in each child. He was incredibly proud of his business and his work! I was always by his side during the tours, listening carefully. One day, they urgently called Oleksiy Opanasovych to attend a meeting, and to my surprise, he asked me to continue in his place. I kept my composure. Someone must have mentioned that I could handle it. From that moment on, I conducted the tours, and Oleksiy Opanasovych occasionally joined us, listening to my stories. He would sometimes add his own thoughts. That's how we worked together and grew closer. I had a sense that he was observing me, preparing me for something more. Oleksiy Opanasovych never had a nickname; we simply called him "boss." But only among ourselves – no one ever addressed him that way in person.

After two months of active work, the Deputy General Director for Construction, Fleet Operations, and Navigation Safety resigned. One Saturday, Oleksiy Opanasovych offered me the position. I was caught off guard by the offer and asked for time to think about it. He gave me until the next day. To say I was anxious would be an understatement. I was from a military background and had no experience with this kind of work or the challenges that lay ahead. As it turned out, Vadaturskyy observed me closely and recognized qualities I wasn't even aware I had. He gave me a reassuring pat on the shoulder and said, "Don't worry, you can do it!" I quickly became immersed in the work, which brought me immense satisfaction. He trusted me completely, and I made sure never to let him down. We both constantly learned, not just to keep up with trends but to stay ahead of them. Working with

him was both easy and fascinating. He always demanded the best, which both motivated and inspired me, and I delivered the results he expected. I organized everything and wrote an administrative note to Vadaturskyy. He invited me for a conversation. I still remember him saying: "We need to explore the Dnipro River and decide what kind of fleet to build." The merchant fleet should be the backbone of Ukraine's transport infrastructure. Therefore, we must cultivate a fleet culture in our country, with the support of the state! Oleksiy Opanasovych truly believed in this vision.

It took me nearly a year to study all the banks of the Dnipro. I shared my findings and thoughts with Vadaturskyy, who visited the locations I proposed to evaluate them himself.

He approved the 10 grain terminals we identified along the Dnipro. For the tasks at hand, we needed barges. Barges were the only cost-effective way to transport grain for transfer onto sea vessels that couldn't navigate the river channels. We had to pay USD 250,000 for a single trip to Mykolaiv! The lion's share of that cost was the so-called "canal" toll. When we used barges, the toll was up to USD 20,000. This was how Oleksiy Vadaturskyy revived shipping on the Dnipro at the perfect time. From this, a completely new river fleet, built on modern technologies, was born from scratch. We also constructed exceptional terminals – state-of-the-art facilities! Grain was then transported around the world by sea. The idea emerged in 2007, and it took us a year and a half to study the Dnipro and the Southern Buh to determine what vessels to build. In 2010, the first barges were completed. I've never been afraid to make decisions, but I did worry about not letting the company down.

We planned to build 24 NIBULON barges. Mykola Romanchuk, the director of Okean Shipyard in Mykolaiv, learned of our plans and persuaded us that he needed this order to make the project mutually beneficial. The two Heroes of Ukraine came to a common agreement that brought a more optimistic outlook. They settled on a fair price and favorable terms, and, best of all, everything was nearby, in their hometown of Mykolaiv. We purchased metal and components. Production was launched. In the end, we successfully built all 24 barges. We managed to finish only one tugboat; the second one was never completed. When the regionals came to power, Okean Shipyard was essentially "raided." The key figure behind this was Vadym Novynskyi, a Ukrainian citizen, and I always believed he was an agent of putin. In 2012, the new management demanded a 15 percent increase in the contract price: "Either you pay, or we won't do anything for you."

The new "authorities" held firm, so we had no choice but to take all the components and terminate the agreement. At that point, we began building our shipyard from the ground up. We started with tugboats,

completed the second one, and built four more, bringing the total to six. However, they never returned the metal we had delivered to Okean Shipyard under the original agreement. We were simply "sent away." Oleksiy Opanasovych was a man of his word and always honored his promises.

He could never understand how someone could take what wasn't theirs and never give it back. Despite the significant financial loss, he knew he had to move forward. That was a time of regional tensions, and the threat of war with the Russians was palpable. You could sense that trouble was looming, that the Russians weren't just our adversaries, but something far worse – they would kill us all. Although I wasn't an eyewitness, I was told that back in 1999, the Russians set Oleksiy Opanasovych up, and he vowed never to do business or cooperate with them again. In 2013, we built the self-propelled floating crane "St. Mykolai" in Romania. We were fortunate not to build it in Kerch, where I had traveled with the boss. In Constanta, the Romanians offered a better price, and, moreover, they were much easier to work with. They kept their word, and 2014 proved that Oleksiy Opanasovych had made the right choice. We delivered the crane before the war broke out, and it operated at full capacity.

The chain of operations was simple: we owned barges to transport grain to the sea, and we owned a crane. However, as it turned out, "St. Mykolai" alone wasn't enough. We began constructing a double-headed crane at our own yard. The construction was incredibly complex. Oleksiy Opanasovych was there every day to supervise. It took us a year to complete it. The vessel was 140 meters long and 28 meters wide. He was immensely proud of it, as it was the first river-sea class vessel built under the Ukrainian flag at a Ukrainian shipyard since our independence. We used the latest technologies and high-quality components. Delegations from all over the world visited us and left astonished by what they saw.

He once told me, "When I retire, I will remain the director of the shipyard and continue enjoying the work we do." He was a true patriot of Mykolaiv. When someone asked for help, he never donated to foundations; he preferred to help personally. His principle was: "Let your good deeds remain a secret." In 2014, during the early days of the war, the Luhansk border detachment urgently needed barbed wire. Vadaturskyy personally purchased it for them. This crucial support allowed the military to hold their ground and prevent the Russians from seizing Ukrainian land, as they had planned. The commander of the Luhansk detachment now leads the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine.

He also played a crucial role in defending Mykolaiv – helping set up the first checkpoints, which were decisive in ensuring our city didn't

fall. He never hesitated to spend money in defense of his homeland: when they requested communication equipment, he invested a fortune, ultimately saving the lives of our young defenders. That was always his way.

On February 24, 2022, Oleksiy Opanasovych had scheduled planning briefs for 10 a.m., but many of our colleagues didn't show up. Some called from the Lviv region, while others informed us they had to flee abroad. The boss was disappointed. Some of them returned soon, but not all. Such is life – unpredictable. Vadaturskyy said we would not flee but stay with the team to the last as Mykolaiv was our land. We identified the most urgent matters.

Someone recommended that he go to Romania at least and wait there. He always refused such offers! Raisa Mikhailovna was always there, as if she were married to a military man. She was supportive and had the right words to say. She took care of all the landscaping at the plant, in the terminal, and in the canteens She was a loyal life companion, ensuring a strong and reliable support system.

When Oleksiy Opanasovych sent me to find locations for grain elevators on the Danube, I found five in Reni and two in Izmail. He then came, assessed the locations, and approved the site in Izmail. He met with the mayor, rented a land plot, and launched construction. The boss also went to Romania, where he made an agreement with the largest barge company to organize grain delivery to Constanta by water. The last time I spoke to him on the phone was on July 30. He was traveling back from Izmail. We discussed the first pontoon purchased in Türkiye. The day before, when he was leaving the city across the Varvarivskyi Bridge, a missile hit the pedagogical institute. He called me: "How are you, is everything okay, is everyone alive, is no one injured?" He emphasized: "Don't forget to go to the bomb shelter." I found out that he had called at least seven other people and asked the same thing.

Earlier, Oleksiy Opanasovych had visited Istanbul, Türkiye, where he arranged for the two pontoons we needed at the port of Tuzla and also held a meeting to discuss the grain corridor. His next trip was supposed to be focused on Ukrainian grain. We bought one pontoon from the Turks, as there were no equivalents available anywhere in Europe, and kept the second one in reserve, planning to buy it later.

I learned that they murdered Oleksiy Opanasovych and Raisa Mykhailivna from the head of the security service who called me at six a.m. People like Oleksiy Opanasovych are born once every 100 years. The Lord sends them where they are needed the most. Those who had the privilege of communicating and working alongside such a leader, who will serve as an example for several generations of Ukrainians, are truly the luckiest.



Petro Gadz

(agricultural entrepreneur, Head of the GADZ farm, Head of the Supervisory Board of Buchachagrokhlibprom LLC, Hero of Ukraine).

The path of life... We all should walk it with dignity. What and where will it be? Somewhere in a foreign or a native land? One for some people... The only one... Most precious one...

Andriy Malyshko created his final work, his swan song, "The Path," on February 8, 1970, just eight days before he passed away. The poem, which later became a song, is a gem of Ukrainian literature, a masterpiece from a patriotic poet. It is the most masculine song, unmatched by any modern ones. The only one that could be compared to it is "My Way," one of the most popular pop songs of the mid-20th century, written by Paul Anka for Frank Sinatra. On December 30, 1968, the American artist recorded the studio version, and by early 1969, the song was introduced to the public. It topped the music charts in both the USA and the UK...

My sweet, young hope, I'm aware:
My whole life shouts for the world, entire
That very path in our country, fair,
The only one by the turnstile.
That very path in the commonwealth
The only one by the turnstile...

Platon Maiboroda set the poem to music after the poet's death. Today, the song seems a symbol of our painful memory of a bright and unforgettable image of the great Man, who has become our Ukrainian sun, the grain captain of the country, to Oleksiy Opanasovych Vadaturskyy, a quick-witted and smart person who always spoke his specific, fiery, sometimes too straightforward but honest mind of a leader on any current matter. He could not have been anyone else, as the Lord gave him the unique gift of being a pioneer. And he never missed an opportunity. No one who followed the path of Oleksiy Opanasovych, who believed in being his disciple or follower, was interested in villas in Switzerland or Spain, luxurious royal palaces on islands, offshore companies, personal planes, or an army of security guards. Native and solely Ukrainian products were his highest priority!

Oleksiy Vadaturskyy and I often met at various state events dedicated to agriculture, both business-related and festive ones. In the winter of 2007, when NIBULON celebrated its 16th anniversary, we got to know each other better. We were both at a health resort in Truskavets at the time. His deeds had already been duly recognized by the state, and he was a Hero of Ukraine. In our agrarian sector, everyone knew NIBULON and its constant reformer-leader. Of course, I approached Oleksiy Opanasovych and introduced myself. He was pleased to meet his colleague, so we agreed to have dinner together the next day. Vadaturskyy was in Truskavets with Raisa Mykhailivna, who seemed to be glowing with happiness, as the couple rarely went on holidays. Work was their priority, and everything else seemed insignificant.

I was looking forward to our meeting, so I arrived early. The Vadaturskyy family also came earlier. When I saw them approaching, I knew it would be a real holiday. It turned out that this was true not only for me, but for everyone. The first thing that made the meeting feel warmer and built trust was our beautiful, melodious native language. We shared common views and a similar path, and it felt like we had known each other for many years. Oleksiy Opanasovych told me about his path in the agricultural business and then gave me the opportunity

to share my story. At that time, I owned about 8 thousand hectares of land. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy suggested expanding my land bank to 20-30 thousand hectares to become a major player in the market. He had a finger on the pulse of the times and knew that the agricultural sector, as the driving force behind Ukraine's economic development and the future of the state, needed large agricultural holdings. He believed that only such companies could introduce advanced technologies and modern equipment, as well as create jobs in Ukraine. He was the first to make his business 100% legal. NIBULON never bought grain for cash.

I asked him if he was planning to open branches in the Ternopil region, and he replied, "We can't move that quickly; we need more funds, and they are hard to earn. Money is expensive in Ukraine." Reforms were implemented within a year or two, resulting in no free, uncultivated land remaining, which allowed businesses to develop. Earlier, no one talked about exporting Ukrainian wheat as collective farm production was recognized unprofitable and a road to nowhere. Times changed, and agricultural production developed to an extent no one could have ever imagined. At first, we focused on developing the infrastructure and logistics, and then we introduced new technologies, which enabled us to export grain. It was incredibly easy to communicate with both Oleksiy Opanasovych and his wife. Their kindness was also captivating. Together, they made a monolith. I didn't feel any hint of arrogance or disrespect from Vadaturskyy back then, despite him already being a well-known leader. We couldn't get enough of the conversation that evening. He was interested in the development of our businesses in Europe and the USA, including what we could learn from them and what we should avoid.

He appreciated the Galicians, as they were always smiling, friendly, and welcoming. Everything was clean, the courtyards were neat, and the buildings were spotless. He talked to the locals and admired how well they knew the history of their land, lineage, traditions, and customs of their village, city, or nation. All these things make us Ukrainians. Vadaturskyy felt comfortable in Truskavets, where he enjoyed the local mineral water, which gave him strength, energy, and improved health. That evening, I was so excited that I took the microphone and sang a few songs.

The Vadaturskyy family cheered me on the most. They were impressed; just minutes ago, they had been speaking to an agrarian and had no idea he possessed such a voice! I mentioned that I graduated from a music school where I learned to play the bayan. When I was

the director of a music school, I also enrolled in the department of distance learning at the Kyiv Institute of Culture.

...I will never forget singing the "May Waltz," accompanied by an orchestra of folk instruments. After the performance, the legendary opera and pop star Mykola Kondratiuk came up to me. At that time, he headed the Kyiv Conservatory and was one of the honored guests at the concert. He took my hand (I can still feel the warmth), said a lot of kind things to me, and concluded: "I would like you to transfer to our conservatory and study at the vocal faculty. But as a full-time student." When I returned to Buchach, I told everything to my wife, who always supported me and was my most loyal friend and advisor. Maria understood me. However, my two young daughters who were messengers of the Lord, mattered more. I stayed and became rooted in my native Buchach forever. Thus, my wife and daughters changed my fate. I believe I have become the man I was destined to be. The Lord had His plans for me...

Oleksiy Opanasovych appreciated that I transformed from a creative person into an agrarian with a unique and original way of thinking, which allowed me to achieve outstanding results. Vadaturskyy shared that he mastered the harmonica and later the accordion on his own.

That brought us closer, and we even planned to play together... Later, we met in ministries and departments, at seminars and forums. When I was awarded the title of Hero of Ukraine, Oleksiy Opanasovych was one of those who were especially happy to see me. I am infinitely grateful to him for those life lessons he taught me.

I followed him as we walked together along the difficult agrarian path in Ukraine. He was slandered more than once, just like me. Throughout our careers, we were annually approached with offers to sell the business, both formally or informally.

There were all kinds of threats and warnings. Strangely, the same happened regardless of the president. Yet, Oleksiy Opanasovych remained big-hearted: "I believe that one day, all those who offered or were interested in that will realize the impossibility of such actions in a civilized country."

On the last day of July 2022, the front-line city of Mykolaiv, which had become Oleksiy Opanasovych's home, endured the most massive missile attack since the war began. We never fully considered the crucial decisions we made calmly in peacetime. Even in our wildest dreams, we could never have imagined that our generation – our children and grandchildren – would one day have to defend our homeland from a ruthless, cruel neighbor in the heat of battle. As

a result, our homes were built near military training grounds, units, oil depots, power stations, substations, and railway tracks. This was exactly the case with the Vadaturskyys' family estate in Mykolaiv. In the early 2000s, the Mykolaiv City Council allocated land plots in the Levanivskyi microdistrict, which was located on the site of a former military unit. Only someone extremely naive would believe that a missile could hit precisely the part of the building where the couple was sheltering, without guidance from a spotter. Someone had broken the rules. The strike was carefully planned, not an accident.

Since 2014, from the first days after russia started the war against us, Vadaturskyy had been actively donating funds to the Armed Forces of Ukraine. He knew that the times ahead would be difficult, but he also knew that the Lord was with us, and he saw it as his sacred duty to support the military in the fight for the victory of good over the unprecedented evil the world had never seen before! They all knew that Vadaturskyy was not only one of the leading agrarian players in the country, a key figure in the region, and a major employer, but also that he did everything in his power to ensure that Ukrainian grain reached global markets, even in these difficult times, where famine could strike.

Oleksiy Opanasovych was also planning a business trip to Türkiye to discuss grain exports. He wanted to personally participate in negotiations at the highest level. He was always eager to be on the front lines of the fight, as he had always been.

Before his tragic death on July 31, 2022, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was not as famous as he deserved to be. He was well-known within his field, particularly among agrarians. Today, all progressive-minded people are talking about him as a role model, as a standard. He was not only known for his resistance to Russian aggression, but also as a businessman and patriot with firmly established spiritual, moral, and national values. He was, and will remain, a man of his era with a broad worldview, blessed by the Lord. He saw Ukraine differently than many of those at the top of power. I can still hear him saying: "If a German can, if a Frenchman can, if an American can, why can't we?!" Had Vadaturskyy completed all his plans, Ukraine would have been a wealthier country today.

One day, we will all come to you, Oleksiy Opanasovych, but not Ukraine!



Lidiia Herasymenko (Sarafaniuk)
(saleswoman, pensioner, classmate of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy).

The elders told us that the name 'Bendzary' comes from the craft of our ancestors. They kept goats, sheep, and made white cheese (brynza). The village became a center of cheese makers. It would be more logical to call it Brynzary, why it became Bendzary is unknown. Our nature has always been incredible, in any season or time of day. The village is quite large, with more than 1,000 residents.

The surname Vadaturskyy is the most popular in Bendzary. It has always been so here. Currently, there is only one Oleksiy Vadaturskyy in the village, along with the young Andriy Oleksiyovych Vadaturskyy I don't know the exact number of people with the same surname according to the census, but there may be about a hundred, nearly one in every ten. It should be noted that there was Lidochka Vadaturska in our class, and Oleksiyko had a crush on her during those eight years of study. They were not meant to be together; the Lord had other plans. Still, if the first love had proved viable, the bride would not

have changed her surname. In Bendzary, there are couples who both had the Vadaturskyy surname before marriage. In Soviet times, our postwoman had a tough task not to mix up the addressees. She had to be precise.

During the Soviet regime, there was a rule that children born after September 1st would start school a year later. This was the case with Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, who was born on September 8th, 1947. So, he began school in 1955, along with those born in 1948. We studied in the old building of the seven-year school. Oleksiy lived at the far end of Bendzary (he walked over a kilometer to school every day), while I lived much closer. There were 11 girls and 10 boys in our class, 21 of us in total. As sad as it is, all the boys have passed away (some earlier, some later), and only three girls are still alive. For some reason, our classmates went to meet their Heavenly Father at quite a young age.

Our first teacher wasn't a woman, as is usually the case, but a man named Ivan Myronovych from the city of Balta. Our class was friendly, thanks to Oleksiy, who was then called by his Russified name, Aliosha. It so happened that we didn't even have nicknames, except for our smallest classmate, Ivanko. They called him Kutuzov, although I still don't know why. He was quite peculiar. When he recited poems, he would also mention the period and the comma. It was fun to be around him. However, he couldn't understand why we were making fun of him. He had a difficult fate and tragically passed away in an accident.

I guess there was no subject in which Oleksiy couldn't excel. Both the humanities and the exact sciences came to him as easily as shelling peas. There was also one thing that earned him admiration and respect: he allowed others to copy his assignments. He helped those who were falling behind. In the fifth grade, our best and most accomplished student was awarded a summer trip to Artek in Crimea. You can only imagine what that meant to him. It was a big deal for all of us.

Larysa Yosypivna taught us singing, and Vasyl Prysiazhniuk, who was a year older, played the accordion. There were no music schools back then, so we all learned to play the instrument on our own. Oleksiy later mastered the harmonica and accordion as well. He succeeded in everything he did, and he achieved his goals solely through hard work. It was never easy for our generation. With each passing year, the teachers realized that he was a true talent and that Oleksiy Vadaturskyy would certainly become a great person. The Lord had blessed him with a brilliant mind.

There was a time when he was interested in flowers (he planted

a variety of them), and then he became fascinated with rabbits. He couldn't just sit and do nothing. We all lived modestly and dressed and wore shoes accordingly. Oleksiy had very kind parents, which was evident from his character and manners. His Mother would always give him bread with rendered pork fat, which he would share with us. He was never stingy. From first to seventh grade, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was an honors student. Two other boys, Tolia Vadaturskyy and Zhenia, were on par with him... Oleksiy loved to play football, like all his peers, dance at school events, and sing in the choir. We were all small in stature, little ones, and he was like a giant – sturdy, muscular, and big. It wasn't surprising, as we were only seven years old, and he turned eight on the eighth day of the school year! In senior school, he would carry the first-graders who rang the bell during school assemblies on his broad shoulders. There was no school event where the name of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy wasn't mentioned, both as a successful and exemplary student.

In our free time or on vacations, we all helped our parents, worked on the farm, and harvested sugar beets. We dug potatoes at home, pulled weeds, and herded cattle. The village children were good at everything; we never shied away from any work. We also helped the elderly, the lonely, the disabled, and the crippled. We grew up kind and generous.

Oleksiy liked Lidochka (she also passed away, unfortunately). They were seen everywhere together: during breaks, after school. They went to the cinema, the library, and the club together. On the Soviet holiday, February 23, we bought gifts for our male classmates. What could we get? Something inexpensive, as no one was into lavish gifts back then: cologne, a comb, a handkerchief, a "Moidodyr" toilet set. Each girl chose a boy to give a gift to, and naturally, Lidochka always congratulated Oleksiy.

On March 8, they congratulated us. Oleksiy was attentive and disciplined, so he gave gifts with special kindness, whether it was a small bottle of the cheapest perfume, a plastic flower, or a bar of fragrant soap...

In senior school, our class teacher was Oksana Opanasivna, a math teacher. She knew the subject well, knew how to convey knowledge, and demanded a lot from us. We all loved her. When she fell ill, Vera Vasylivna Kucher was appointed our class teacher. I remember only good things about our teachers. I've already forgotten some surnames, but not their names and patronymics. Hence, they were truly remarkable.

Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, who was sturdy and the tallest in the class, always sat at the last desk. His brother had the same build. Their parents gave birth to two sons.

We all read a lot back then, striving to gain knowledge, and we devoured books from our village library. Oleksiy was an avid reader. He was not only an honors student but also ahead of all of us, both in development, as he was the oldest in the class, and in knowledge. It seemed like he had read the entire library collection. Of course, no one had books at home. How could they appear there after the war? Thus, state policy focused on supplying books to library collections. Today's youth and schoolchildren can hardly believe this. In the early 1950s, they published a book that almost every boy dreamed of having, "Dirk." "The Headless Horseman" was published in the "Library of Fantasy" series. We read the books immediately, finishing them by morning, and if a book was thicker, it took us one more night. We returned books in the same condition we had borrowed them. The girl working in the library could ask us about the contents of the books we returned.

Almost one hundred percent of the village residents were Ukrainians, so we studied in our native language. Only the teachers spoke in literary language, while we, the children, spoke mainly in surzhyk, just like our parents and grandparents.

The senior Vadaturskyy (who were Christians and patriots of their native land) worked hard all day on our collective farm "Batkivshchyna" (we called it "Rodina," the name it had until the second half of the 1960s): Mom worked in the field team, with the beets, in the field, and Dad (they called him Afanasii, also in surzhyk): worked on the farm, at the thrashing floor, he was a handyman, like most village residents. Oleksiy's older brother, Volodymyr (unfortunately, he also passed away), worked as a farm machinery operator and a driver on the collective farm. In 1961, we, the sixth graders, planted an apple orchard for the collective farm. There was a wide variety of trees: White Winter Calville, Green 'Udal' (which we called 'green apple' or 'green perseverance' in surzhyk), Tyrolka, Antonivka, Papirovka (we referred to it as Paperovka)... In spring, the orchard was particularly beautiful when the trees were in bloom, with countless bees tirelessly collecting honey for their hives! And in the fall, the harvest was amazing. Apples from the orchard were delivered all over the state and even abroad. We were friendly and had a great time together. I will always remember Oleksiy's warm smile and his unforgettable laugh. During our school years, we were all young, each with unique memories. Our orchard was named after Yuri Gagarin, the first person to fly into space and land successfully. Soon the collective farm in Bendzary was renamed after

the first cosmonaut. After the seventh grade, Oleksiy continued his studies at a senior school in Balta, which borders Bendzary. Later, he moved to Odesa for the institute, then to Mykolaiv, and eventually to NIBULON. Whenever I heard anything about him on the radio, on TV, or read about him in the newspapers, I felt proud of him. I stayed in the village and worked as a saleswoman for 50 years, with half of that time spent in the sporting goods department. Our classmate's success was truly impressive. One day, he opens a grain terminal, then launches a newly built vessels, and after that, he delivers watermelons along the Dnipro River to the capital! How and when could one person manage to cope with all that?

Obviously, we never gathered for traditional alumni meetings. There was no organizer in the village, and Oleksiy never had time. We understood that well. I cried with joy, and tears flowed down when he became a Hero of Ukraine. Not only me as our village became famous!

He visited Bendzary with his wife, but sometimes he rushed alone to his native land from Mykolaiv or wherever he had been. Again and again, despite the lack of time. He wished to build a church in the village. He had other plans nurtured in his head, plans that only he knew.

Oleksiy always visited his Fathers' graves. He tried to come to the cemetery on Remembrance Sunday (the first Sunday after Easter) every year. After prayers and services, he was always surrounded by our men. They asked questions, sought advice, and showed genuine interest, both in NIBULON and state operations. He explained things to them and always found some precious time for his fellow villagers. Every year, all those who wished to talk were interested, and the village "politicians" came to the cemetery in advance, waiting for Vadaturskyy to arrive. Those who were late would greet each other and ask: "Is Oleksiy here yet?" "He'll come soon!" they would reply. When that damned war began, when the Russians attacked our native land in 2022, Oleksiy failed to visit Bendzary on Remembrance Sunday. However, he preserved the village family nest, his Father's house. It was always a clean, tidy, and well-kept home.

On that tragic July 31, 2022, we were struck by an unutterable shock. It is impossible to describe the grief of the villagers who were consumed by it. Misfortunes never come singly. The war took away one of our country's best sons, who was intentionally, cynically, and cruelly murdered... Every time I recall Oleksiy, tears well up in my eyes. How could that happen? Why couldn't he be saved? He had no right to die! He could have done so much more good for Ukraine...



Lidiia Honcharuk (Bila)
(collective farm worker, goddaughter of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy's Father).

I was lucky that a midwife lived nearby, just in the neighborhood. It was 1945, and the land was grieving and devastated, we were cold and hungry. Mother went into labor. There was neither an ambulance nor a vehicle in the village. That's why I was born at home, not in the new maternity hospital, which was opened in Balta after the war, and the midwife did everything right. Our grandfathers were brothers, and Oleksiy (Aliosha) and I were second cousins. His grandfather was Fedir, and mine was Hryhorko, and there were six of them. The others were Yustyn, Makar, Ivan, and Davyd.

I am two years older. Afanasii, his Father, was my "nanashko" (godfather). He held me during the christening ceremony. In Bendzary, people called him my godfather, but I always called him "nanashko." Being neighbors enabled us to know every event and offer help at the right time. In our village, the most honored participants in the christening ceremony were the midwife and the godparents, who were

responsible for raising their godchildren in the ways of the Lord and their parents. Maria, my Mother's cousin, was my godmother. I was christened in Bendzary, in our village church.

We played together with Aliosha from an early age, he always came to our place. When he grew up and became an adult, he still visited me. We always had something to discuss. His Parents were wealthier, and I grew up half-orphan. I had no Father, only Mother. Aliosha never refused help, he took on any rural household work. He never divided chores into those meant for women and those meant for men.

When his parents worked with ducks or sheep or were involved in various collective farm activities, he always went with them to help and support.

At every school parent-teacher meeting, they praised Aliosha and set him as an example for others. He was obedient, attentive, and learned everything "on the go."

He had his first love in school. The beautiful Lidochka Vadaturska was his classmate, and Aliosha often said he would propose to her after graduation. However, things didn't go as planned. Lidochka got married while he was studying at the Balta secondary school. That unreturned love hit him hard. He had to come to terms with it. He was neither the first nor the last to experience such a situation. First love isn't the first person you give your heart to; it's the first person to break it. Things come differently in life. You shouldn't be upset or treat it as a tragedy. It happened the way it should, and time proved that the Lord had something different, better, and more fitting in store for him.

Aliosha was an honors student at our Bendzary school, and they praised him at the Balta secondary school as well. When he entered the institute in Odesa, I was already married, and my husband and I were moving into a new house. Aliosha took care of the wiring through all our rooms, hallway, and porch, and installed sockets and switches everywhere. I offered to pay him, but he refused to accept any money! The elderly used to say: 'Never get involved in electricity or politics, you'll get hurt!' But Aliosha was skilled at both.

Later, he married and visited the village with his wife, Raia. Whenever he visited his Parents, he never forgot to come see me as well. Aliosha's wife fit into the family perfectly because she was from the village and knew how to handle everything. She loved to talk, never shied away, and was equal to all of us. Whenever we saw them, our hearts rejoiced because they were the perfect couple, despite what people say about such things being impossible. They were above that rule. It seemed as though she breathed for him, and he lived for her.

We were related and there was not even a hint of being offended, storing up anger, or becoming strangers over all the years. I would love to say so many kind things about my 'nanashko'. I grew up without a Father, and my Mother lived alone. My godfather always helped us with everything. Afanasii butchered pigs, built a barn, and did all the carpentry work around our house and in the yard. He was friendly, attentive, and always kind to me. Apart from him, my mother and I had no one else to rely on for help.

Sometimes, my Mother would go and help Aliosha's parents with their chores. Most often, she would whitewash their house. They always paid her for the work. At first, my Mom flatly refused any payment, as we were family, but "nanashko" insisted. He believed it was difficult for her to live alone without a husband. He knew how hard her fate was. Well, everyone understands the grief of such women, but not everyone offers help. Mom and I were lucky to have Aliosha's parents, who were a real family to us.

When we didn't have a cow, they would bring us milk. My godfather never forgot to give us his delicious honey. He had so many beehives that they even sold their honey.

There was never a year when my godfather forgot to congratulate me on my birthday. He bought me everything I needed to dress nicely as a child, and when I got older, "nanashko" would pick out different dresses for me, which made me so happy. My Mother could not afford such gifts. My godfather always looked after me. When I got married, they all came to my wedding, including their sons. Afanasii Fedorovych and Fenia Ivanivna gave me money, a double blanket with a duvet cover, and an absolutely beautiful tablecloth. Both of them supported me, and I always tried not to let them down, so as not to disappoint them and to ensure that their attention and love didn't fade. We lived harmoniously; they were our closest relatives. Although Aliosha and I were related in the third generation, even closer relatives couldn't always boast such warm relationships as we had, thank the Lord.

When Fenia Ivanivna fell ill, Raia took a leave and often visited her mother-in-law because she loved her so much. That love was mutual – they were truly people of Lord.

After his wife passed away, Afanasii Fedorovych remained alone for many years. When he could no longer manage on his own, Raisa visited him and took care of him. My "nanashko" didn't remarry; he couldn't betray his Fenia. He was monogamous. Even if he had remarried, who knows if any woman could have pleased him as she did, given how capable and self-sufficient he was. I often brought him lunch, and he

would just smile as I could smell freshly baked cabbage rolls or potato pancakes. Their taste was unforgettable! The washing machine that Aliosha bought came in handy. The house was always perfectly clean and tidy. Not every housewife could boast such order in her closets and chests as my godfather did.

I remember all these good things for a reason, as "nanashko" was an example for all of us, especially his two sons, who have followed his example in everything. Volodia, the elder one, was drawn to car repair rather than science, while Aliosha, the younger one, was always studying.

For 17 years, I worked on the collective farm, weeding fields of beets, corn, and sunflowers. Later, I worked hard with calves and on the hen farm.

When Aliosha established his company in Mykolaiv, he chartered a bus, and we – his family and fellow villagers, nearly 50 people – traveled to the grand opening of a large warehouse. He had built enormous, high-rise grain tanks. There, barges would dock, and grain was loaded onto them. It was a celebration like none I had ever seen before. A large crowd attended – not just ordinary people, but also ministers and high-ranking officials from Kyiv and Mykolaiv. The long tables were piled high with food and drinks, a clear sign that Aliosha had welcomed everyone with open arms. Bendzary residents still remember that unforgettable event.

And then, we floated along the Dnipro River on boats. At least once in my life, I had such a holiday. Aliosha was a great man, known worldwide. We always knew, and later saw the proof, that the Lord had blessed him with an extraordinary mind to bring good and benefit to people. Though he didn't miss his chance.

I believe we, his family, were the most cherished guests of all those invited. He was never a braggart, never looking down on anyone or seeking praise; he remained the dreamer and romantic we all knew so well from our childhood in Bendzary.

Some of the old-timers who remember little Aliosha are still around. He was always interesting and talkative. He dreamed of becoming a pilot when he was only three, four, or maybe five years old. During the war, they took all the men from our village, and over a hundred of them were killed. In Bendzary, you would meet only women. Aliosha would often comfort the grieving widows sitting on benches, waiting for their cows to return from the herd. "I'll grow up, learn, and become a pilot," he would say, his voice filled with excitement. "I'll land the plane in the garden, set a long table, and Dad and Mom will treat us. And I'll tell you

about the things I see from up there." He was always so full of humor. The women, who had watched him grow up during such hard times, would ask him about everything in the world. Despite his youth, he was wise beyond his years, quick-witted, and his thoughts were those of an experienced schoolboy.

His love for people, especially for the elders, was one of his defining traits. He believed in the equality of all people. He often remarked that the Lord loves everyone equally.

Aliosha knew many fairy tales, likely because his Mom and Dad read them to him or told him stories themselves. I can still hear him reciting in his childish voice, "I was thirteen. I herded lambs beyond the village on the lea..." The senior Vadaturskyy instilled in their sons a deep love for their native language, and from an early age, they knew Taras Shevchenko's poems. We all recited them at our first events, standing on stools. Aliosha did the same.

During his school years, he traveled to Balta to participate in school amateur art reviews, where he also showcased his talent as a reciter. He was entrusted with the most important roles, as he was always reliable.

Throughout the years, whenever Aliosha visited the village or Balta, he never passed by churches and monasteries without making a donation. He was known as a patron, for whom spiritual values were always a priority.

When the Russian forces tragically took Aliosha and Raia's lives with a deadly missile on the last day of July 2022, we all mourned their loss deeply.

We arranged a memorial service in Balta for the 40th day, at the monastery and the cathedral...

We grieve, remember, and regret, and we will never forget... Some things cannot be repaid or prayed for...

May his memory live forever...



Mykola Gorbachov

(economist, Director of the New World Grain Ukraine LLC trading company (since 2005, Soufflet Group), President of the Ukrainian Grain Association (UGA, since 2017)).

I met Oleksiy Opanasovych at the turn of the 2000s. At that time, I saw him as a major authority in the agriculture industry – not just as a businessman with vast experience, but also as a person of great character. I was over 30 and I could not help but pay attention to ways to develop, persons to take as an example, and to choose ideas I wished to follow. One of those people was undoubtedly Oleksiy Vadaturskyy. His uncompromising stance on fairness and transparency in business was truly impressive. I was fascinated by it too – wondering if we could ever resist a state that hadn't yet fully taken shape. He was never intimidated by any state agencies – whether the president, the prime minister, the tax inspectorate, ministers, or anyone else. He walked a clear and transparent path that he believed in wholeheartedly. No one could do anything to change that.

Let's face it: almost every head of regional administration, industry

minister, regional police chief, or mayor sees themselves as a demigod or prince in their own domain. They all believed they had the right to pressure businesses, thinking every entrepreneur should report to them and share profits. Vadaturskyy was never like that. He paid his taxes, built his company, and developed it from the ground up. There are very few agricultural producers who have created such a vertical in a billion-dollar industry as he did. You could count them on one hand.

When Yanukovych and his party came to power, they repeatedly demanded that Oleksiy Opanasovych share his business with them, making them shareholders. But he was not afraid of these crooks. He stood his ground and told them exactly where to go. He once complained to me: "Mykola, can you imagine, they took 15 tons of paper documents this year to audit my company. Who will go through that? They know my company's accounting works like a Swiss bank!" He repelled every attack and never doubted he was on the right path. He never compromised to take anyone on as a co-founder just to avoid trouble. His principles never allowed him to do that. And he proved he was right. That's why NIBULON emerged from all that muck, clean, beautiful, and untarnished.

I have been trading grain for nearly three decades, starting my career in both Swiss and Ukrainian companies. For 18 years, I've headed New World Grain Ukraine (Soufflet Group) in Ukraine, and for the past 7 years, I have served as the President of the Ukrainian Grain Association.

Soufflet Group is a French family-owned agro-industrial conglomerate, founded in 1897, with a strong international presence. In 2001, Jean-Michel Soufflet, the fourth-generation representative, became Chairman of the Board of Directors. For many years, Groupe Soufflet has been a global leader in the agricultural market, with operations in France, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Serbia, Romania, Poland, and Kazakhstan. Soufflet Group Holding is also the largest private grain trader in France.

The Ukrainian Grain Association (UGA) is an organization of grain producers, processors, and exporters, founded in 1997. It advocates for the collective interests of its members and works to support the development of the grain market in Ukraine. Our association has long been a partner of both the European Business Association and the American Chamber of Commerce. We should give credit to Oleksiy Opanasovych,

NIBULON was one of the founders of the Ukrainian Grain Association, and the company got the certificate number one. Vadaturskyy once said, "I will pay the membership fees, and we

should unite!" As of 2017, the Ukrainian Grain Association's members accounted for about 90 percent of Ukrainian grain exports. I met Oleksiy Opanasovych at work every week, especially after he started investing in elevators and it became clear that logistics would open the Ukrainian grain market. Companies with billion-dollar turnovers, like Cargill and ADM, did not invest nearly as much in logistics. For Oleksiy Opanasovych, growth was impossible without it. In the last 10 years of his life, he developed the most efficient logistics system. I often visited him at different elevators, and I was always amazed at how well he knew the security personnel by name. We're talking about a person who employed 7,000 people. He didn't just invite the authorities; he also welcomed schools and kindergartens to tour his elevators. He created a network of people who shared his vision in the regions where NIBULON and its branches operated.

His approach was to develop infrastructure not just as a technical factor but as a cultural foundation, setting the groundwork for transparent business practices in the regional context. Children, students, and teachers who visited the facilities were amazed at what they saw. Additionally, he was incredibly generous, sponsoring schools and kindergartens. He built football fields that rivaled those in the capital city, let alone in regional or district centers. His goal was to inspire children to stay in their communities, showing them that justice existed in the world through NIBULON's efforts. This left a lasting impression on everyone. He was a remarkably modest person. Even as a millionaire, he lived in a nine-story building, parked his car in a public lot, and walked home. "I'm used to this life; I'm at home, and that's enough for me," he once said. "I can't be anyone else." His wife, Raisa Mykhailivna, shared the same mindset. He always attended all official events he organized alongside her. They were not the type of businesspeople solely focused on money. In fact, money was the last thing on their minds. He built NIBULON with the same care and affection one would show a child. He dedicated himself fully to ensuring the company's success and worked tirelessly to make running the company an enjoyable endeavor, something he could be proud of. This mindset helped him build a highly efficient and modern company. His team was always friendly and highly professional. He had a deep appreciation for young talent, and many bright young people worked for him in various roles. He had a rare ability to inspire and engage them. He was the first to conceive and implement a project for transporting millions of tons of grain along the Dnipro River. It was an effective solution, but not just for show. He understood the technical details in ways that even surprised the engineering departments

of many companies. For example, he knew exactly how, where, and why to deepen parts of the Dnipro, and what specific equipment was required. He understood all of this and ensured that others followed his lead. He wasn't the type to simply hire employees and pay them to carry out tasks without being personally involved. Vadaturskyy understood the subtleties and nuances of his work. He could simplify or improve processes so that people could work more efficiently. He was generous, exceptionally generous. I never once saw him regret the money he spent. If something was necessary, he would simply pay and never mention it again. When people were discussing where to find the funds, he would just go ahead and build a dormitory for the military. Or a hospital from scratch, or a European-level exemplary hospital departments equipped the cutting-edge devices in old, abandoned, and emergency buildings. He just went and did it.

Oleksiy Opanasovych invited me to the opening of new grain elevators, and I attended more than 15 times. He enjoyed hearing and seeing that the Ukrainian Grain Association stood by his side, supported him, and celebrated his successes. The guests included not only people from Ukraine but from all over the world. They saw that we were working together and achieving real results. That NIBULON was not only a leader, but at the forefront of the industry.

On one occasion, we purchased a train of 3,500 tons of grain for the Soufflet company. It was unexpected, but the grain delivered didn't meet the quality standards. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy personally called me and said: "Don't apply a fine, I will send another train." I replied, "But the grain wasn't from your elevator." "They loaded it from my elevator," he reassured me. "Don't worry, I'll send you a quality shipment." This came from a billionaire who, at the time, had considerable influence in state politics. Oleksiy Opanasovych was always aware of everything and was the first to address any misunderstandings to make things right.

When he was over 60, some banks started suggesting that it was time to hire a younger manager to run the company. They argued it would be far more effective if the new manager came from a Western country with a European education. This caught him completely off guard. It was a bolt from the blue. He had never considered such an idea since he still felt full of strength and energy. Nonetheless, the banks insisted, and he knew he had to do something. He asked me to arrange a meeting with Michel Soufflet, the owner of the company. The Frenchman agreed, and I organized a meeting between the two billionaires in Paris. Oleksiy Opanasovych presented Michel with an embroidered shirt and NIBULON promotional brochures. During their

conversation, Vadaturskyy, who was 16 years younger, asked Michel an unexpected question: "Do the banks also demand that you step down and hire a younger manager?" Soufflet shrugged and replied, "I'm the owner. It's all mine. Who can demand anything of me!" You should have seen Oleksiy Opanasovych after that – he was as happy and cheerful as I had ever seen him: "I'll tell the banks, no problem! When Soufflet steps down and hires someone, I'll do the same. However, in 16 years!"

When Oleksiy Opanasovych met with Soufflet in Paris, he didn't come alone but brought an entire delegation, including the CFO and other key employees, to address various related matters. Michel invited his managers. They talked at their level. Soufflet and NIBULON always maintained a mutually beneficial partnership. On one occasion, I was short 4,000 tons of grain to load a vessel. The grain could only be delivered by barges, so I reached out to Oleksiy Opanasovych to use his elevator. I called him, explained the situation, and he gave me the go-ahead. However, when I was arranging the barge, I was told it was Vadaturskyy's elevator, and they doubted he'd allow me to use it. I just smiled and said, "He'll let me in!" He even provided a crane for the reloading. Soufflet, like NIBULON, is a family-owned company. Michel's son had also managed the company, and now Andriy does. In Paris, Oleksiy Opanasovych Sr. was curious about how the Father and son cooperated, how they communicated, and how they solved pressing issues.

On the eve of February 24, 2022, we held a grain congress where Oleksiy Opanasovych was the main speaker. I sat in the audience, thinking to myself: "People around the world pay a lot of money to listen to this brilliant man. And yet, here he is, speaking to Ukrainians with a sparkle in his eyes – open, businesslike, and sincere. He believed that the more people follow this path, the more the critical mass, and the more chances we have to achieve much more. There were moments when it seemed he would say something that would move him deeply, almost to tears... Vadaturskyy was immensely proud of his team and the company's accomplishments, as they worked selflessly and shared his values, business philosophy, and approach to work.

Of course, Andriy has his own vision for the business. But, he is his Father's son. I'm confident he will maintain the company's operations as planned. Andriy skillfully manages operations, oversees loading, and communicates effectively with financial organizations. He will continue the political and social path his Father began. Being younger, I believe Andriy will bring in innovations that will help NIBULON maintain its leadership position and become a player the entire world admires. It is difficult to be a son, especially with such a Father. He will cope with everything. Still, it is difficult to be a Father as well...



Andriy Hordieiev

(lawyer, People's Deputy of Ukraine of the 8th convocation, Head of Kherson Regional State Administration (2016–2019)).

I met Oleksiy Vadaturskyy in Washington in 2015. The year before, I was elected as a People's Deputy of Ukraine from a district in Kherson region, and in November, I took the oath of office. On my very first day in office, my colleagues and I submitted a draft law to restore irrigation in southern Ukraine. The project required a massive investment for its introduction and implementation. Thus, we agreed with the leadership of the World Bank Representative Office in Ukraine to meet at the highest level in Washington, USA. They were also interested in the project and agreed to help us. To speed up the allocation of funds for Ukraine, we needed to confirm the project's importance and necessity. That was the purpose of the business trip for the three People's Deputies of Ukraine to the World Bank. That's how we arrived at the institution. While waiting for the meeting, I first noticed a sturdy, gray-haired man sitting next to me, who seemed visibly upset. We were told where to wait and that we would be speaking with the head of one of

the bank's departments. We were expected to explain the purpose of our visit. I didn't like that, so I asked, "Could I speak with the president of the bank?" "Of course not," they replied. "He's a powerful and busy person; it would be very difficult."

The World Bank, founded in 1945, is one of the largest global institutions providing development aid. It is co-owned by 187 member countries, represented by the Board of Governors and the Board of Directors, which is based in Washington, D.C. At that time, the president was Jim Yong Kim, a U.S. physician of Korean descent.

I didn't give up. I vividly remember walking down the corridor, finding the sign, and, with determination, opening the door to enter. In my broken English, I tried to explain that I was from Ukraine and the purpose of my visit. By that time, a war was already ongoing, one that the entire civilized world was aware of and discussing, which made the doors of respectable and prestigious global organizations open to us.

Jim Yong Kim greeted me with a warm smile and said, "Okay, you have 15 minutes." We proceeded to the negotiation room. I was surprised when the gray-haired gentleman who had been sitting with us in the corridor also entered. We explained the importance of irrigation and its economic impact on Ukraine and the region. The project required USD 1.5 billion in funding. After we had exhausted all our arguments, the stranger spoke up and, in our native language, said, "I don't know these gentlemen. This is the first time I've seen them. I'm Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, the General Director of NIBULON from Mykolaiv, the company serviced by the World Bank." They are young and energetic, and I fully support them. They're thinking in the right direction." Then, he offered additional convincing arguments that we hadn't even mentioned. Instead of the scheduled 15 minutes, the President of the World Bank spoke with us for 40 minutes! It felt like a fairy tale: we came, we saw, and we succeeded. We succeeded, thank Lord!

Later, at an economic forum organized by the Americans, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was the speaker. He talked about the Mississippi River, our Dnipro River, and the restoration of shipping in Ukraine. He drew comparisons with the Nile River in Africa and highlighted Ukraine's immense potential. I listened and thought fascinated: "Hey, that elderly man is great. Wow! In Ukraine, we have people like this – state-builders with profound and visionary thinking!"

I had to travel to the ends of the earth to meet such a unique and extraordinary Ukrainian! I tried to approach Oleksiy Opanasovych and get to know him during business lunches, but I was unsuccessful;

he was always in conversation with someone and was never alone. It turned out that Vadaturskyy came to Washington specifically for the forum, aiming to address the financial challenges facing his company. NIBULON had encountered trouble in the volatile grain futures market, so Oleksiy Opanasovych visited the World Bank to assure them: "I'm not hiding. I'm here, and I will fulfill all my obligations on time." He was a public figure with an impeccable reputation globally. He could have avoided visiting the bank, but that was not his way. They were obviously well aware of his problems. He chose to take a proactive approach, ensuring guarantees and confidence. On our way to the airport, we had the chance to get to know each other better on the bus and exchanged phone numbers. We discussed the restoration of the Dnipro River to ease the pressure on the roads. The idea resonated so deeply with me that it felt like it required further action; it seemed that our meeting was no coincidence.

As for the World Bank, they promised to allocate funding, but first, they would send a team of specialists who had worked on similar projects in other countries. We, as members of parliament, were tasked with preparing the legislative and technical framework, along with everything else needed for the project's implementation. They assured us that the process would take some time – at least a year or so. We returned home with a sense of accomplishment. Some time later, I was appointed Head of Kherson Regional State Administration by the Decree of the President of Ukraine on April 28, 2016. Kherson region was in a difficult situation. It faced numerous challenges following the annexation of Crimea. We were seen as unpromising, and people were hesitant to come to us, which meant we didn't consider investments at all. Later, we came up with the idea of securing at least one investor, hoping that this would attract others. After a meeting with the deputies, we decided to reach out to Vadaturskyy. I called him. On the other end, I heard a familiar voice. "Do you recognize me, Oleksiy Opanasovych?"

"Of course, you're in my contact list," he replied. I briefly explained the investment challenges in the region. "Unfortunately, I am currently busy in Mykolaiv region, still, come and see me, maybe we can figure something out." That gave me hope, at least, Vadaturskyy did not refuse outright. So, I decided to visit him, hoping we could collaborate on something.

He was open and honest, admitting he had no plans for Kherson region. Indeed, NIBULON was completing the transshipment complex in Voznesensk. I came there with my deputies. Oleksiy Opanasovych greeted us with a smile: "You've impressed me by organizing everything

so quickly. The head of Mykolaiv Regional State Administration has never come to see me, and you traveled from the neighboring Kherson region!" He introduced us to his team, and I did the same with my deputies.

"Since you're here, let's consider the options," the head of NIBULON concluded." He gave us a detailed tour of the elevator. We walked through all the areas – facilities, machinery – it was incredibly informative. Later, we sat down and spread out a map of Kherson region. Oleksiy Opanasovych said, "I'm particularly interested in the Holoprystanskyi district, on the left bank of the Dnipro River. Pick a location, and I'll come over to take a look. We'll make a decision then."

When evaluating potential investments, he outlined a strategy for sourcing grain from up to 100 kilometers away from Hola Prystan, believing it would be profitable to build a grain terminal there. The next day, which was Sunday, we identified five potential sites. On Monday, Oleksiy Opanasovych arrived. He carefully assessed all five locations. He chose the most successful one. There, he met with the landowner. They negotiated for two hours before finally shaking hands. We finalized all formalities at the Hola Prystan City Council.

The preparatory work took three months, and it took the construction team just 100 days to build the state-of-the-art NIBULON facility! During this time, an immense amount of work was completed. The construction of a transshipment terminal for grain and oilseeds at the Holoprystanska branch (Kherson region) was financed by the European Investment Bank (EIB). USD 74 million of the loan funds allocated by the bank allowed the company to make an investment package in the amount of USD 200 million.

These funds were allocated to support the NIBULON investment project. The opening ceremony took place on June 14, 2017. Since the beginning of the war in 2014 against the Russians, Oleksiy Opanasovych has been a courageous leader who was not afraid to invest in Kherson region. His example inspired others, and as a result, we attracted over USD 3 billion in investment funds to the region. That "elderly man," as I thought of him in Washington at the World Bank, with his "open visor," was fearless – he never backed down and always moved forward to achieve his goals.

Oleksiy Opanasovych also stood out for his exceptional transparency. He never tolerated backroom deals, "grey deals," "kickbacks," or "sharing boards." Everything was done openly, through taxes. They supported the communities, etc. No cash, everything was transparent. NIBULON was one of the exemplary companies in Ukraine, and I witnessed this firsthand on more than one occasion.

Those who work in the shadows always fear the light, but Vadaturskyy radiated transparency and integrity. We also planned to expand into Belarus, to transport vegetables and fruits from southern Ukraine. lukashenka promised friendship and assured us he would never be our enemy, but he turned out to be just as deceptive and dangerous as the Russians and their terrorist leader, putin. We intended to extend the river route to Belarus with the help of NIBULON.

At one point, Vadaturskyy proposed river passenger transportation. In Kherson, we built a pier to accommodate "Raketa" boats traveling along the Dnipro River in both directions to Nova Kakhovka and Hola Prystan. Later, the route was extended to the Kinburn Spit.

We aimed to enhance the tourist appeal of Kherson region. On my birthday in 2017, Oleksiy Opanasovych inaugurated a tourist route to a unique site in the nature reserve. Visitors could reach it in the morning, enjoy the natural surroundings, and return home by evening.

Vadaturskyy faced a challenge with his cargo barges going down the Dnipro and returning empty. He collected grain from all over Ukraine, and NIBULON consistently used river transport to deliver agricultural products to the sea. That's when we came up with the idea of transporting watermelons, a product his vessels had never carried before. They all called us dreamers back then. However, we didn't just promise but did it. The entire civilized world knows that where rivers exist, failing to utilize river transport is a missed opportunity.

The last time I saw Oleksiy Opanasovych was in Mykolaiv, just before that tragic day, in a café near his office. We arrived at the same time, and as soon as I walked in, I saw him. We hugged and talked for 40 minutes. He had a quick snack, but his schedule was packed with meetings, so time was short. Despite the war and employees working remotely, he remained focused and continued his work. He was optimistic and said:

"It's okay, we'll cope, we'll defend our land, and we'll be victorious!"

It's almost impossible for me to imagine my life, or Ukraine, the Kherson region, Mykolaiv region, or Zaporizhzhia region without him...

There are few people of such scale in the country. With his knightly, wide-open visor, Vadaturskyy faced off against "short-sighted" individuals obsessed with stealing. They harassed him several times, and he had moments of despair, but he never gave up. Each morning, he would rise as though nothing had happened and say, "Forget them... We'll move forward and do our job!"



Maria Hrachova

(doctor, Director of the Municipal Non-Profit Enterprise of the Mykolaiv City Council "City Hospital No. 1" (since 2019)).

I don't think there's a day that goes by when I don't recall Oleksiy Opanasovych. First and foremost, I feel immense warmth, as I was fortunate to know such a remarkable person and work alongside him for the benefit of the people. During challenging times, Vadaturskyy and the united team of thousands of NIBULON employees successfully elevated the Mykolaiv medical institutions to a new, higher technical standard, allowing our healthcare professionals to provide qualified care in proper conditions.

On the other hand, there is an indescribable grief of loss, as I have never met another person quite like him. He was a competent person with a big heart, a professional of the highest level. We met during the coronavirus pandemic, and whenever I had an urgent issue to resolve, his concern was evident. It would only take him two or three minutes to come up with a solution, as it seemed he was intimately familiar with the complexities of the healthcare industry and all its challenges. The

hospital building, though it's hard to even call it that, resembled more of a shelter or even a barn. It was old, dating back to 1889, and had been neglected for decades, thus requiring urgent, major repairs – repairs that neither the local authorities nor the hospital itself had the funds to carry out. Oleksiy Opanasovych looked at that disgraceful ruin and made a decision that resulted in a swift and unexpected turnaround for all of us. For everyone but not him! The only thing left standing were the walls, but by the very next day, Vadaturskyy arrived with a team of builders and designers. Day after day, they worked tirelessly to create what we now call a miracle for the people, for the residents of the city. Not all of our patients know the full extent of the efforts or the person behind it, but, as with all things, time reveals the truth. We watched as the walls took shape, the floors were laid, and the roof was covered using cutting-edge technology.

It only took three months to build an intensive care unit for patients with COVID-19, strokes, and heart attacks at our hospital!

I wouldn't say everything went smoothly from the outset. Oleksiy Opanasovych was quite emotional when he first visited the hospital after an unfortunate incident in the infectious disease unit. He scrutinized me, having been burned more than once in situations where he acted in the best interest of others, only to be hurt. He wasn't willing to go through that again. But a few days later, he was a different man – he looked me in the eyes, trusted me, and believed in me. He visited every Saturday after 5:00 p.m. since he was too busy on other days, and for that, I'm deeply grateful. It's worth mentioning that he always had a cup of black tea with me. His assistant once admitted that the boss didn't do this with just anyone. We were aligned in our views, and by the grace of Lord, our mutual understanding produced results. What a result! Together, we built a hospital that seemed like something out of a fairy tale – a dream hospital.

In the Mykolaiv city program "Person of the Year – 2020," Oleksiy Opanasovych was awarded the "Citizen of the Year" title. The people loved him. He had rightfully won the "Entrepreneurship" (2002), "Charity" (2004), "Patron of the Year" (2006), "Investment and Innovation Project of the Year" (2009), "Aid to the Ukrainian Army" (2014), and two "Person of the Year" awards (2005 and 2007).

In 2020, Oleksiy Opanasovych was the only candidate for the "Person of the Year" award. While we were hopeful, we knew he had no real competition. After the ceremony, he came up to me and said, "Finally, I see you without your white doctor's coat! You're still young, with many days ahead of you! You have plenty of time to achieve great things!" It's worth mentioning that Oleksiy Opanasovych was initially

cautious about engaging with politicians. He knew I was a deputy in the city council, which made him wary at first. However, once he learned I was primarily a healthcare professional and saw that we shared the same values and goals, our relationship improved significantly. We became good friends, and our shared vision helped our work thrive. I was always impressed by his clear thinking and common sense, despite his age.

Although I'm not originally from Mykolaiv, I come from the Luhansk diaspora in the city. I finished school there, and my Father worked as the manager of a large mine. When I first met Oleksiy Opanasovych, he reminded me a lot of my father, who also had grand plans. Oleksiy Opanasovych never had populist, unrealistic, or merely promotional ideas and he never engaged in similar activities. Everything he proposed was well thought out, carefully weighed, and rational. He knew exactly what he could do and how to accomplish it. The scale of his vision was truly impressive.

I was the youngest of five children in my family. My father always dedicated a great deal of time to me. Whatever I asked, he knew the answer, down to the smallest detail, even to the capillary level. Besides holding two higher degrees, my father possessed an innate wisdom, something that couldn't be easily understood by others – only known to Lord. Oleksiy Opanasovych shared the same remarkable quality. I was particularly impressed when he, a non-medical professional, explained to me – head doctor and physician – what needed to be done in the healthcare sector. He showed me what would benefit the patients. He personally oversaw the creation of several very comfortable wards for our patients. He emphasized that everyone receiving care should feel at home, comfortable, and welcomed. I witnessed a man from the agrarian and industrial sector – someone with no medical background – yet he understood healthcare as if he were an expert, an academician.

It was always a pleasure to talk to him about any topic. He often asked about my child, who was studying and working in Europe. He would share his visions for the future of medicine. He regularly emphasized his healthy lifestyle, and I even saw him playing football with his grandchildren. Vadaturskyy found the best in every day; he knew how to appreciate and enjoy life, savoring every moment.

Beyond our professional relationship, I was fortunate to know his wife and son. I felt the positive energy that radiated from his family. At the ceremony honoring the head of NIBULON, I remember the women discussing clothes and jewelry, talking about how time passes uncontrollably and can never be reclaimed... Meanwhile, with Oleksiy

Opanasovych, we focused mainly on the country's future, the challenges we faced, and the prosperous future we all hoped for. He was the spark that ignited a great flame – one that could never be extinguished. At least, that's how it always seemed. That fire emitted so much energy and positivity, and you couldn't help but bask in its warmth. We would always exchange well wishes on holidays – Christmas, Easter, New Year, and birthdays. In all the years I knew him, I never once heard anything negative from him. Even when he was exhausted. I've never heard him raising his voice. I saw him find understanding and manage people who perfectly knew their job, he never had and could not have chaos. It reminded me of a termite mound, where thousands of ants scurry around, each knowing exactly what to do and how to do it to achieve the desired result.

During the coronavirus pandemic, Vadaturskyy followed the vaccination schedule and wore a protective mask, just like all health professionals. Despite being vaccinated three or four times, many of us, including Oleksiy Opanasovych, contracted Covid, but in a milder form that didn't require hospital treatment. This wasn't surprising, as we were in constant contact with patients. He, too, was not exempt from this, and it was only natural. Following his example, all NIBULON employees were vaccinated as well.

Oleksiy Opanasovych personally gave me a tour of the production facility, and I had the opportunity to visit the laboratories. At the time, we were building an infectious disease department at the hospital. I witnessed the construction process and observed how it all functioned.

If any of Oleksiy Opanasovych's employees contracted the coronavirus, our hospital was always ready to help. Whenever an employee was admitted, Vadaturskyy would personally call to inquire about their condition, whether they were from the main office or the accounting department. Access to the wards was restricted, but I recall a moment when one of the NIBULON employees was on the third floor, and Oleksiy Opanasovych was in the yard speaking to him.

He had to see them alive and healthy – even if it meant standing by the window. He morally supported everyone as best he could. We often met with our main donor on weekends, usually on Saturdays in the afternoon. My husband knew this, so for three months, he refrained from scheduling anything during that time. During our working meetings, we addressed all the pressing issues. Each conversation was unforgettable, memorable, and truly pleasant for me. He understood how tired we were, and we knew he was exhausted too, but there was no choice – we had to accomplish everything we had planned. These were tasks as essential as air itself. He despised PR campaigns, especially those by people who would show up, take photos or videos,

and then write self-congratulatory pieces for the newspapers. Oleksiy Opanasovych performed good deeds quietly, his money was wisely distributed and invested. He had a pressing idea, it was needed, and it had to be done on time. He involved partners who purchased all the necessary equipment for resuscitation. For example, the Koreans brought the high-end medical equipment. Vadaturskyy wished to do everything to ensure that Mykolaiv had world-class medical equipment and care. I have never met a person and a statesman like him, neither before nor after. I met many entrepreneurs thanks to him. They all remained not only in my memory, but they all helped our military, whom we treat, our defenders. When Vadaturskyy left, a group of people remained, a monolith of like-minded people. He left us with some kind of guidance, the strength that unites us in the darkest times, and we can no longer work in any other way. Which is also unusual. Oleksiy Opanasovych loved Ukraine, dreamed of it, lived for it, created for it, and the actions the terrorist country started on February 24, 2022, were a mere shock to him. He realized and felt that the moscovites would never let us go, and that war was unavoidable. He wished to save his enterprise and employees: some remained under occupation, some fled abroad, and some would never leave native Mykolaiv for any money. We all had our problems, but we discussed that. He always asked: "How are you, what are you? Maybe you need anything?" I knew we needed a lot, but I did not dare to ask for anything as Vadaturskyy was helping the military. We treated wounded defenders and made every effort to cope on our own. I reassured him: 'We have everything, don't you worry, Oleksiy Opanasovych. Take care of yourself!'. Still, his moral support, precise, balanced, and timely words were crucial.

We have a large bomb shelter, and refugees and displaced persons spent nights there. The last time I talked to Vadaturskyy was two weeks before the tragedy. We had not yet recovered from the shock, we were on adrenaline and had one common goal – to defeat the damned enemy as soon as possible. We had a lot of plans, not military by any means – peaceful, not destructive, but creative.

If he had been wounded, we would have made every effort but save his life. Still, he was murdered. I will never ever believe in anything, that it was some kind of coincidence. We have lost a person who did a lot for the city and Ukraine, but could have done much more. He was an example for others, of how to help like-minded people. How to develop and grow.

He must be remembered. As a deputy of the Mykolaiv City Council, I will make every effort so that the name of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, the Hero of Ukraine and one of the most worthy city residents in the city's history, lives in our hearts and the hearts of our descendants.



Volodymyr Groysman

(statesman and politician, 12th Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (2014–2016), 16th Prime Minister of Ukraine (2016–2019)).

We all remember our image of Vadaturskyy. Undoubtedly, I see Oleksiy Opanasovych as an outstanding personality in national history and on the Ukrainian path. A man with a core. As a grandmaster, he not only kept up with the times but even was ahead. His wisdom and mindset allowed him to see decades into the future. This is the blessing our Lord grants only to the few chosen ones. Not only in business but in all other spheres of life. He was the chosen one.

Let's face it, many people of his age become hostages of their previous experience. He took the best of the accumulated expertise to become an innovator, allowing him to pursue paths that most would overlook. Not him, though.

I visited Oleksiy Opanasovych at his enterprises several times, where we discussed the future and the projects that should become beneficial to the state, in his opinion. His ideas about the revival of shipping,

river transport, seafaring, and brand-new logistics were impressive. Thus, he added a new and significant economic and business page in the history of Ukraine. NIBULON played a crucial role in the recovery of river freight and passenger shipping and shipbuilding. Previously, this transport was quite important. Moreover, Vadaturskyy proved that we can use our country's river potential to transport goods around the world to conquer foreign markets and supply high-quality items to the domestic market. River transport is not a one-year investment or constructing one vessel for certain purposes. Oleksiy Opanasovych built vertical integration, which was profound and deep.

He needed new legislation to support the river fleet. It should be noted that the company has its shipbuilding capabilities. It means there is a huge demand for the development of river transport in Ukraine. We are a maritime and a river state, and we definitely should make use of such a combination.

I can't help but recall all those jokes about barges with watermelons heading to Kyiv, which became memes. Vadaturskyy calculated everything and implemented the project. It seemed like nothing special: so, he delivered Kherson watermelons to the capital city along the Dnipro and significantly reduced their cost. However, the whole country discussed it! They were trolling Oleksiy Opanasovych and NIBULON, they also mentioned me and called the barges by my name. Some believed it was a trifle, but that was a great project implemented!

He was a true manager who could cope with anything, was never afraid to take on something new, and overcame all the related challenges.

He set the rules and laid the foundation for anything planned, still, unfortunately, he did not have time to implement and complete everything. He had a strong, highly professional, and well-coordinated team. I believe it will manage to continue all the plans its leader had for the post-war country. The enemy blockade of our ports was a serious blow to the state economy.

It seemed as if I and the Prime Minister of Ukraine visited Oleksiy Vadaturskyy at the opening of his company's transshipment river terminal in the village of Bilenke, Zaporizhzhia region, just yesterday. I wished to visit the NIBULON shipyard, and I did. I observed the detailed production operations of the yard and the new facilities, namely the metal warehouse with a cleaning and priming section and a metal processing shop with the most modern equipment from the global leading manufacturers (Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany), which were built during a major reconstruction of the enterprise.

There are no similar production facilities in Ukraine. The company's plans to expand the production line, implement new projects, the capacities and advantages of tugboats built at its yard, passenger transportation routes, as well as plans for dredging the Dnipro River were fascinating. There were 700 people employed at the shipyard. Those were new jobs. Therefore, I realized the importance of the authorities establishing acceptable conditions for businesses to develop smoothly. Unfortunately, there were a lot of obstacles set for entrepreneurs and enterprises; however, our task was to remove them... Shipbuilding is a strategic industry for Mykolaiv, where tens of thousands of employees are involved. It so happened that it degraded in Ukraine and the region. Given the development of river shipping and the recovery of our status as a maritime state, I was amazed by the cutting-edge technologies used in Ukraine thanks to Oleksiy Opanasovych.

I could always go away from the route or cancel a meeting with someone. I love people, Ukraine, and Ukrainians. I loved communicating with people most. When I learned I would meet Vadaturskyy and see his work, the first thing that came to mind was "order." He was stable, balanced, and flawless in everything. Everything worked and spun like a sophisticated mechanism of a Swiss watch. How could you not love that! Then, there is an uncontrollable desire to live and create, to create and live. I always wanted to help such people, I wished that such companies scale up and grow. I am a democrat, and I know that the energy and synergy of millions of people allow us to achieve major results. There is no other similar form of government to let personalities flourish.

He had never been a show-off person, still, he liked to present his achievements, and he performed great state affairs. He was not one of those who would polish their shoes to a shine in front but leave dirt and a perennial swamp at the back. Every responsible step of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy and NIBULON was backed up by profound, fundamental, serious, and coordinated teamwork. Everything was up-to-date. Oleksiy Opanasovych was a modern person from a business perspective. I don't know what he was like in his personal life, as we never crossed paths in that area. He was the kind of person who invoked respect in communication. I met with many representatives of big businesses as I wished to hear the real situation firsthand. Feedback, not one-way communication, has always been crucial and a priority for me.

Oleksiy Opanasovych talked about opportunities and new projects; he saw the prospect. However, we never discussed personal matters,

and he never asked me for anything. Neither for himself nor the company. For years, we have kept a kind of bureaucratic national tradition to hinder everyone and everywhere, instead of helping. To burden and question those who do at least something. Imagine there is a successful enterprise and an impoverished, bankrupt neighboring it. Who would the control bodies visit for inspection? Of course, the successful one!

Cause they can get something form it. For me, that has always been unacceptable, and many business representatives knew it. I never abused or used the same. I tried to protect the businesses so that they were not attacked, and no one interfered with their operations. Hence, Oleksiy Opanasovych was a systemic leader, although they got enough of his blood and nerves.

Therefore, we were like-minded on those issues. We fought against useless and senseless Soviet and post-Soviet regulations that were hotbeds of corruption. We had the same vision and were on the same side.

He invoked respect, both as a leader and as a person. Notable, gray-haired, neat, and sturdy, he attracted people to himself as he was a self-made man. His personality will be admired and serve as an example for decades. This person was a kind of jackpot for the country. If we had more Vadaturskyy (I guess, a dozen would be enough), Ukraine would be a more developed and prosperous country. I believe that the Ukrainian Forbes list should include only such people: honest, fair, and with a spotless reputation.

He had his philosophy and never learned to deceive. He remained a man of honor, conscience, and his word. Oleksiy Opanasovych was natural, as his land and parents made him; therefore, his approach to business was similarly genuine and natural. He never flirted or tried to please anyone or anything. We all respected him for that. He had the gift of reading people like a book. His extensive life experience never let him down.

He was made of self-discipline and hard work on himself. From a young age, he never needed to be urged. He moved only forward and never let himself relax. He was destined to be successful. Clearly, there were risks. Still, business is inherent with risks.

Oleksiy Opanasovych always cared about his reputation. It was crucial to him. They trusted him and wished to do business with him. I was there when NIBULON signed an agreement on a USD 100 million loan for business development with the International Finance Corporation.

We live in a viral environment, and we are all sinners and have certain weaknesses. Vadaturskyy always overcame his weaknesses to achieve the desired result. Some high-ranking officials could stand his straightforwardness; still, he remained himself, spoke the truth, and was not afraid to do it. Whoever he faced. That made me be fascinated and inspired by him. I do not like when they create virtual reality. There is such a virus infecting managers from the lowest to the highest positions. Fortunately, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy had a team that argued, criticized, and proved their points. All that allowed them to move forward; otherwise, there would be no progress.

He was the one who created added value for the country. On a great scale! Based on his results, he is undoubtedly a true exemplary Hero of Ukraine. Even the way he lived and made every effort to export grain in wartime, how the Russian fascists took his life, made him a true hero: he did not betray, did not flee, did not hide, but did everything for our victory without a hint of doubt in our victory. He believed in our Armed Forces and the nation.

I learned about the tragedy that happened to the Vadaturskyy family in Mykolaiv from the news. It was painful and I couldn't believe it. I immediately called Andriy, but he did not answer... He had more important issues...

A huge tragedy for the entire country... There is no doubt that in the lists of leaders of Ukrainian public opinion, titans, whom our enemies sought to destroy as soon as possible, the name of Oleksiy Opanasovych was at the top. He was never the second...

Once, they observed a bitter truth: we always lose the best, the cream of the nation, while our enemy – nothing but biological material. Only a malicious biomass could have started a war against a peaceful country with beautiful and wonderful people. As our great poet Mykola Bazhan wrote: "For this flame there can't be any atonement, For this scorched terrain there's no measure of vengeance. Be damned, anyone tempted to forget! Be damned, anyone who tells us to forgive."

It is an unutterable tragedy that tens of thousands of our courageous defenders, who could have done so much good to our people, have had their earthly journey interrupted.

Many children will not be born... It is a huge trauma for Ukraine for decades, for centuries.



Yevhen Deich

(political analyst, Head of the Informational and Organizational Department of NIBULON Ltd. (2021 –2022)).

Oleksiy Vadaturskyy is an Epoch in the history of Mykolaiv. Almost every one of half a million city residents knew him, respected and paid heed to him. For years, he exemplified that it was possible to accomplish a great deal, even if it seemed impossible to most. He loved to prove that not only to himself but to see his team proud after they had reached a new ambitious goal, when almost no one believed that was possible. A far-sighted strategic vision and an irresistible desire for improvement and development, which resulted in a major growth of the agricultural sector, shipbuilding, and shipping, made Oleksiy Vadaturskyy a prominent figure in the history of modern Ukraine. Despite everything, he always remained a Person.

As it turned out, my journey to meeting Oleksiy Opanasovych began back in school. I guess, in the 8th grade, we had to make a presentation on one of the city enterprises. While fulfilling the task, I

came across photos of huge white hemispheres by the Southern Buh, sparkling against the panorama of the center of Mykolaiv. It was the NIBULON transshipment terminal, the largest grain storage capacity in the world. I was impressed by the photos as they featured a real pearl hidden from the city residents in an industrial water area. I also learned about the largest city enterprise; however, I couldn't have imagined I would work there and shake hands with the Hero of Ukraine.

A firm handshake and address by name was a traditional greeting for Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, regardless of position or location: in the office, at the production, at the elevator, or at the branch. He treated his team as if they were all relatives, and seemed to know each employee. City residents often took pictures with him on the streets, greeted him, and expressed respect for his achievements and gratitude for his good deeds.

I was introduced to Oleksiy Vadaturskyy in 2016 when I worked as an assistant to Andriy Vadaturskyy, a People's Deputy of the 8th convocation. The famous General Director of a world-renowned company firmly shook hands with a young person who had just graduated with a master's degree and was at the very start of his career. A personal acquaintance was a great honor. Later, I got used to his usual greeting: "Good morning, Yevhen! How are you? Is everything okay?" It may seem a trifle, but it speaks much about a person, their manners and politeness, despite their high position and status.

When I got the opportunity to move along my professional path with NIBULON, I got a job in the Information and Organizational Department. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy interviewed me as that department was in direct subordination to the General Director. I started with the simplest tasks, and over time, they became more difficult. I also learned more details about the history, structure, team, and values of the company. Having processed huge amounts of information, I was fascinated by the multi-vector nature of the company's activities and the history and patterns of success in each direction.

When fulfilling my duties, I often saw Oleksiy Opanasovych working, and it made a great impression on me. He was devoted to his work completely and worked at a super high pace from morning to night. He reviewed all the details and read all the letters and memos. He literally ran his finger over every word; he knew the tiniest production nuances in every area of the company's activity. Sometimes it seemed to me that he was almost a fanatic. Later, I realized that a daily routine forged success.

In 2021, Oleksiy Opanasovych offered me to head of the department.

He knew I was not afraid of responsibility and had already gotten attached to the company; moreover, he believed in me. We discussed the details and the direction of development, and I started working. The task of implementing the company's information policy and brand was quite a challenge and a great trust, which gave me the strength to do my daily duties with dedication and a desire to achieve even better results. As I worked directly with the General Director, I was lucky to get valuable instructions and advice, and, most importantly, to see that nothing was impossible and that anything could be achieved if you adhere to certain values and principles.

His schedule was always busy, so we often stayed up late at night to discuss urgent issues and make decisions. When we communicated, his inexhaustible energy was so powerful that I hardly felt any fatigue; on the contrary, I had moral uplift and motivation.

Like in one of the photos from the family archive, where he, a 4th-year student, is digging a trench with a pickaxe at a gas pipeline construction, Oleksiy Opanasovych has been scaling down the cliff all his life to make way for industries. The photo has become a symbol of his life story. To his last breath, he devoted himself selflessly to the cause of his life, NIBULON, and united thousands of people to implement the most ambitious ideas and tasks. Numerous challenges only tempered him to achieve the highest performance and push back the limits. Therefore, our descendants will remember Oleksiy Vadaturskyy for his enormous contribution to the Ukrainian economy and as a Titan of the agricultural sector, a Hero of Ukraine. Still, I wish to remember and tell you about him as a person who was open and sincere, despite his great achievements.

Once, at the end of the year, when we were head over heels trying to prepare and process printed materials, students were helping us sort them. One of them told me that a man in a neat suit entered the room, greeted her, and asked whether he could take several copies for review. The girl politely refused and explained that all the copies had already been counted and arranged in line with the management's task. He praised her for such a responsible approach, smiled, and went on his way. In a minute, she learned that it was Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, the company's General Director and Hero of Ukraine. Later that evening, when spending time with her parents, the girl shared the story of meeting Vadaturskyy, of whom she had heard a lot. It so happened that the student became my wife, and we laugh whenever we recall the story of her accidental acquaintance with a great man. Having gained invaluable experience when working with Oleksiy Opanasovych and

Andriy Oleksiyovych, I was happy to have a chance to learn from outstanding and sophisticated professionals and leaders, whom I sincerely respected, appreciated, and will forever be grateful to.

In December 2021, NIBULON celebrated its 30th anniversary. For the General Director, it was a special day, a triumph of his hard work and a long-term strategy. He was optimistic about the future and was already working on the implementation of a new project. Such permanent movement forward is one of the best characteristics of Oleksiy Opanasovych – he never stopped and moved only forward. He also carried his motto, "Never give up!" throughout his life. We were to organize a major celebration for the team and the city residents, as Mykolaiv has always been a home harbor for NIBULON, where we welcomed vessels and dignitaries from all over the world. The coronavirus pandemic forced us to adjust our plans; therefore, due to quarantine restrictions, we decided to postpone the celebrations to spring or summer next year. Unfortunately, that never happened.

When the terrorist country launched the large-scale invasion, which started when I was ill with the coronavirus, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, as a true leader, stayed with his team and supported the company's operations.

When many enterprises ceased their activities, our General Director could not allow his people to become unemployed as they all had families and children to feed. No personnel reduction or moving of the company was ever discussed. As a Hero of Ukraine, he was well aware of his high responsibility to the people and the country in these dark but decisive times. Therefore, he helped to protect Mykolaiv and the state defense without any public show-off, as he did in 2014. The city stood up against the aggressor, although it was daily shelled for more than 200 days. Despite the circumstances, Oleksiy Opanasovych and his wife Raisa Mykhailivna stayed with their people till the last one. The team continued to work but partially moved to a remote regime.

He made every effort to help NIBULON employees flee from the occupation to the territory controlled by Ukraine, where he ensured their employment at other enterprises of the company. Vadaturskyy's presence and aid morally supported Mykolaiv residents and increased faith in our victory.

Even the war failed to break him. As a true crisis manager, he found unconventional and bold solutions, the implementation of which might have seemed impossible to some. In a country at war, Oleksiy Opanasovych raised enormous investments to construct a new elevator on the Danube. Calculating many steps ahead, he deemed

it strategically important for both the company and Ukraine, as it was one of the alternative ways to export agricultural products and, therefore, to get foreign exchange earnings to support the Ukrainian economy. He managed to convince the partners, organize the process, and even start the construction. Who else would dare such a project but Vadaturskyy? He was like an icebreaker that moved forward not due to but despite, and was not looking for a way but laid it. They took such a person from us. It is a major loss for Ukraine.

The head of the security service called me early in the morning to inform me about the death of the Vadaturskyy family. It was a blow, taking away speech and forcing you to refuse the reality. When I hung up, I could not hold back my tears and emotions. There was almost no time to cope with the grief as the information channels began to share insider information on the network, and we had to act and respond respectively. I informed my colleagues about the tragedy and encouraged them to find their courage. I asked them to be prepared to work with dignity over the next few weeks, as all attention would be focused on the death of the Vadaturskyy family and the future of the company. I heard unutterable pain in everyone's voices.

That day, NIBULON employees became orphans. I can't describe what we felt when preparing the text for the company's official website, selecting photos, and organizing the farewell ceremony. At the same time, we received messages from acquaintances and friends with requests to refute the news, but we never answered until the official confirmation was published. We worked through pain and tears as Oleksiy Opanasovych and Raisa Mykhailivna deserved only the best attitude.

I believe that they will name streets and vessels after Oleksiy Vadaturskyy and that his name will be in the history of Ukraine and the memories of everyone who knew the Hero of Our Time. Oleksiy Opanasovych remained true to his life principles till his last breath. He believed in people, loved his work, and lived it every minute. He was a true patriot of Ukraine and his native Mykolaiv.



Oleksandr Demianov

(neurosurgeon, Director of the Municipal Non-Profit Enterprise of Mykolaiv City Council "City Hospital of Emergency Medical Care" (since 2007).

I have always seen Oleksiy Opanasovych not only as the head of NIBULON, a businessman from the cover of Forbes magazine, and a stranger, but as a friend of my family, my parents, and mine. He never refused to help the Mykolaiv Hospital of Emergency Medical Care and gave more than other patrons. That unutterable and awful tragedy cut short a crucial stage of my life. It became history along with Oleksiy Opanasovych. I have never seen or met people who would not wait for us to call for help before or since. Vadaturskyy would come and ask: "What do you currently need to save lives, for the hospital to function, and for your employees?" Our personnel knew that Oleksiy Opanasovych, together with his friendly NIBULON team, would annually help us get the best modern equipment (just like that, he never spared money!) and repair the equipment available.

It may seem obvious and not even worth attention, even common, but we always waited for the end of the year to get the NIBULON wall calendars we hung in our offices, units, and wards. They were not mere advertisements of the globally renowned company, but also brought daily comfort and confidence as we shared the NIBULON success. We prayed for them, worried, and were proud of them. In 2023, when we gathered to celebrate the New Year, one of the department heads suddenly asked: "Where are the calendars?" We were so used to them that no one could imagine the situation would change someday, that the infinite kindness and the light of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy's soul would fade away...

When we remembered what was behind, everyone felt an indescribable sadness. Oleksiy Opanasovych was the person who created a bright environment around him. It made everyone who knew him or worked with him enjoy the current moment, not tomorrow, be friends, and live properly every Lord's day! He charged everyone around him. He was a self-made man who became successful not thanks to the state but despite it. He exemplified that in this world, despite all the life difficulties and challenges, we have and must make the right choice and make our dreams come true on our native, Lord-given land. Any sandpiper is great in its swamp. A person cannot live without a goal.

On this thorny path, you should be persistent and honest with yourself, your employees, and your surroundings. He followed these principles and encouraged others.

I will never forget the first time I called Oleksiy Opanasovych. It was about his worker's industrial injury. During the examination, our professionals diagnosed a fractured bone. When such things happen, most managers call hospitals to ask them to "close their eyes" and try to persuade them not to register or record the case as the situation causes difficulties. It was not about Vadaturskyy. The first thing he asked was: "What do you want from me?" "Do you know he has an industrial injury?" I answered. "Yes, I know, the case is already registered as an industrial injury. Thus, we follow the legal procedure," Oleksiy Opanasovych summed up.

When employees of the huge multi-thousand NIBULON team were delivered to us (though rarely, but still), I did not doubt the procedure to apply. Only the legal one. I believe that not only I, but also many business leaders, understood that this was a far better solution than resorting to anything outside the legal framework. Oleksiy Opanasovych and his reasonable and balanced decisions were

always an example. Vadaturskyy has never left any of his sick or injured colleagues to the mercy of fate or at the discretion of the hospital. He helped everyone as much as he could. Once, one of his injured workers asked for UAH 30 or 40 thousand for treatment. Oleksiy Opanasovych called me and asked: "How can it be that we help you so much?" To make everything honest and transparent, I asked the doctor and the patient to join the conversation. It turned out that the worker simply lied. Oleksiy Opanasovych issued a verdict and asked to tell the patient that he no longer worked at NIBULON.

The general director always supervised the complete treatment cycle, from the beginning to the end, of his employees. He was very particular about our actions and was always concerned about every step we took to ensure recovery. When he detected a lie, he reacted at once. He did not pity anyone. You could deceive him twice: for the first and for the last time.

The war and Covid pandemic made him an even more important person. He proved he could manage not only the agro-industrial market but also support the state, military unit, detachment, and the Armed Forces of Ukraine. When the coronavirus pandemic began, he called me: "Oleksandr Yevhenovych, we should do something!" I didn't call him but he called me. There was nothing strange about that as he was aware of our hospital needs. I told him that our main goal was to prevent COVID from spreading within our walls. We didn't want any coronavirus in the hospital, as it was a huge threat to surgical patients. They were the priority target for the virus. If we had a coronavirus outbreak in Mykolaiv, it would firstly affect the infectious diseases hospital. I introduced him to the then-chief physician of that hospital, and he did for the residents of Mykolaiv and the region what no one had ever done before. No one was smart enough.

Vadaturskyy built a new infectious diseases department. He renovated the buildings, opened a new oxygen station, and purchased and delivered new equipment. His actions made Mykolaiv more or less prepared to face the coronavirus. Unfortunately, there were various sad situations later. It seemed that Oleksiy Opanasovych was the person who took not only successes but also misfortunes. He was demonized a lot; there was gossip about his relationships, intrigues, and unacceptable and indecent things. It hurt him as they were cutting him alive. He called me several times in despair. One day, he admitted: "I know that is slander, a lie, but we must move forward. I will do for my city and its residents whatever my conscience tells me." He did good deeds in other hospitals; he never stopped. He felt that Mykolaiv

would be left alone with the pandemic and would not be ready to face it. Which would affect everyone without exception, including him, his family, and the company's employees. By the end of the pandemic, Vadaturskyy had renovated as many as three hospitals! That was a goodwill gesture by the head of NIBULON. It should not only be recognized but also be an example for future generations.

Oleksiy Opanasovych was an expert in his field; he found his way, his path in time. Things were not always smooth for him; there was a time when he had to take a "kravchuchka" bag and travel to Poland. To feed his family. There, the Lord let him meet a colleague, a grain trader, who sowed the rational seed that gave the future harvest. Vadaturskyy felt he could also succeed in that. He began with modest beginnings. Having attracted partners, he implemented such huge projects beyond the capabilities of not one but dozens of managers. He established the most influential grain trading company in Ukraine, which was known far beyond its native country.

In my office, next to the icons given by grateful patients, I can see a portrait of Oleksiy Opanasovych from a distance. There are two icons there that were left by relatives of patients who had died as a way of saying thank you; they'd seen what we did for their relatives. My attitude to Vadaturskyy is precisely in this gesture.

My parents lived in the same apartment building as the family of the General Director of NIBULON for many years. Raisa Mykhailivna was my Mother's best friend. My mom was invited to every presentation and every corporate event. She knew everything! The Vadaturskyy family could not imagine celebrating their successes without my mother rejoicing with them.

I was always grateful to Raisa Mykhailivna, as my job prevented me from giving my mother as much attention as I should have. For so many years, Oleksiy Opanasovych's wife gave her the attention and warmth. The whole Vadaturskyy family took care of my mother and encouraged her to live by their example. Raisa Mykhailivna visited my mother the day before the tragedy. My mom also suffered from an explosion in our hospital when a rascist missile hit our facility. It destroyed the trauma unit and caused 108 windows to break! My dearest person was being treated there.

Vadaturskyy never accepted that something could be neglected. He understood the chaos of the war, but managed to bring some order to it, which he was used to at NIBULON. This encouraged our team to face the war as Oleksiy Opanasovych had done. Our hospital has always been a peaceful institution providing surgical care to the

population. We never wished to become a military hospital. However, it turned out that we still became a real military hospital. The days of February 26-28, 2022, were really busy. In the first days after the bombing (barracks, military brigade, regional administration), we faced a massive inflow of wounded. Of the 76 people wounded on the first day, 70 were delivered within three hours. It was incredibly difficult, but we managed. It was a kind of Pearl Harbor for our hospital.

A nightmare. There were many wounded soldiers. It was a test for the paramedics and nurses, whose husbands were also at the frontline. They provided all possible aid to unknown men in Ukrainian military uniforms with such care, as if they were helping their loved ones. The paramedics prevented the vehicles carrying the bodies of our fallen comrades, who had died on the battlefield and been brought to the hospital by their fellow soldiers, from leaving. They did not let them leave as they could not believe that such beautiful young men could be dead. They forced the doctors to climb into the truck and record biological death. When we realized we could cope, we became more confident. We managed to do all the work as if Oleksiy Opanasovych had done it. In a quality manner.

In those days, when hell broke open, I advised Vadaturskyy and Dmytro Stepanovych Ivanov, his friend, to stay as far away from Mykolaiv as possible. They were dead against that. That's what our Mykolaiv residents are! They both had to manage, but stay alive. The head of NIBULON was very demanding of his friends; thus, he had only a few of them. Friends are recognized not only in grief, but also in joy. Not all can pass such tests. Oleksiy Opanasovych believed that if I were his friend, I should meet his standards of friendship and be useful to people.

I want to be like Oleksiy Opanasovych in his memory. That makes me full of energy. It is our turn to wait for Victory, to restore whatever was destroyed, to give people our kindness, and to be grateful for being alive. He watches us from above; therefore, we should make him proud of us.

Andriy, Vadaturskyy's son, a talented individual with an excellent profession and education, should continue along the path his father paved.



Halyna Demianova
(ship constructor, pensioner, friend of the Vadaturskyys).

At first, I met Raisa Mykhailivna, and then Father and son Vadaturskyys. It was interesting and unforgettable. In the early 2000s, we lived in the same apartment house on Potiomkinska Street. They were on the fifth floor, and I – on the tenth. Both of our families had dogs back then: we had a giant schnauzer, Athos, and they – a German shepherd, Lira. At first, we saw each other less often – we went for walks at different times so that our dogs wouldn't meet. We had no idea of who we were; we just lived in one house, thus, it was a nodding acquaintance. No one could ever predict what would happen next. She was the first to move into our house. She slept on the floor with the shepherd as she was afraid, so she felt safer with a dog. That's how she managed the repairs in the apartment. She told me that later. Before that, the Vadaturskyy family lived in a five-story building in Mykolaiv. When our house was constructed, they bought two apartments, a two-room and a three-room apartment, an entire floor. They thought the

idea over, consulted, and remade themselves to get a wonderful four-room apartment. I remember slender Raisa going out into the yard with her dog, and I stood with my neighbors and said: "What a poor woman, she always walks her dog alone..." To which the all-knowing BT (Bush Telegraph) lady told me with irony: "I wish you were that poor too." I knew about NIBULON as Vadaturskyy's name was familiar to everyone, but I could never imagine that this sweet and fragile woman was his wife. That soon, I would not only get to know them but also be friends with their family for almost two decades. We had a country house on the Kinburn Spit. The first year I met the Vadaturskyys, I invited them. They both came on September 9, Oleksiy's birthday, so that no one would find him, and we celebrated together. He liked it there, and his and NIBULON's further stories were connected with this paradise on earth.

Certain people then learned through law enforcement agencies that Vadaturskyy's car was parked in Ochakiv, and he and his wife had sailed somewhere on a boat.

In 2004, my husband died, and the Vadaturskyys' favorite shepherd dog passed away at the same time. I was walking alone with my Giant Schnauzer. One day, Raisa came up to me and asked, "Can I go for a walk with you?" "With great pleasure!" I said. Every evening, around 6:00 p.m., the three of us would walk together. A year later, my dog also passed away. Raia and I were left alone and walked together. We often went to Taras Shevchenko Park. That's when we became closer. She skillfully drove the old "eight," which was quite unusual.

She told me about her student years in Odesa, how she and Oleksiy got married, how they were sent to work in Mykolaiv region, and then, transferred to Mykolaiv. You should have heard how her voice changed when she talked about her husband. It seemed as if she were putting him high up in the sky, and she had all the reasons for that. They were not only an ideal couple. They perfectly matched, they were friends, lovers, and a strong family with well-established principles, and moral and spiritual values.

Although we had a nine-year gap (I was older), we never felt that age difference. We immediately switched to informal conversation and were like classmates or peers. We were also united by children, as we both had only one son of almost the same age. Thus, we had common topics to discuss. We both were blessed with handsome Ukrainian boys, for whom our hearts always rejoiced. We knew we had a continuation in our children, and such a future is not destined for everyone. At one of the meetings held in Kyiv, Andriy met Svitlana, his future wife, who was from Mykolaiv. Raisa and Oleksiy liked their

daughter-in-law; she was like a real daughter to them. The young couple got married when the Vadaturskyy family still lived in our house, and the eldest of their three sons, Mykola, was born then. They often left the grandson with his grandmother, so, in our free time, we mostly talked about him. He was everything to her, just as she was to him. That's how things should be. Oleksiy Opanasovych often went to Switzerland on business trips and brought delicious marzipans from there. Raia loved our grandson and often gave him Swiss chocolate. When I went to the store and asked my grandson, "Should I buy you a chocolate bar?", he would answer: "Only Swiss one, it's my favorite!"

Raisa was characterized by her special kindness. It seemed that if she could, she would even get the moon on a stick for everyone. She never refused anyone who asked her for help. When the Vadaturskyy family bought a private two-story house (and remodeled it to their taste), the lady of the house planted a unique rosary there. There was a river nearby. So much soul and taste had been put into every square meter or even centimeter there that it should have become a paradise. I should note that even in their old apartment, I often visited Raisa, not the other way around. Her place was extremely beautiful and cozy, and I had never seen so many flowers anywhere else. Raisa was a homemaker. In the morning, she baked a pie, Oleksiy had it for breakfast, and then she rushed to me with it. We talked, and she rushed back. She had to cook lunch for her husband. Although his lunch break was from 1 to 2 p.m., he could come home an hour or two later. She then stood by the window waiting for her only one.

When their dog passed away, I asked Raia if they would get another one. She confessed that it was tough for her to get over the death and the loss, that it was a blow for her, and that she might not be able to get over another one. At first, one cat came to their house, then another, and soon there were dozens of them. In the summer, they lived outside, and in the winter, she insulated a place on the veranda. To make it warmer, she laid her old fur coat. She was also the cat's mommy. The cats always stayed close to their savior. I guess, they knew they could not find a better place.

Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was worthy of a lot of good words. I rarely met him as he was a busy person. Still, I saw him at their house, and he was cheerful, cheerful, and lively. He could tell some witty stories in a timely manner, and was positive. He knew about me, my family, and my son, who was a health professional. He made friends with him. He was known for his modesty, which made it hard to believe that he led such a simple, down-to-earth lifestyle despite his considerable fortune. I guess that was genetics, from his parents, who worked very hard

on their land. Most were amazed, and me too, that he walked to and from work. He left at 9 a.m. and returned at various times, sometimes as late as midnight. He never drove a car to work, he always walked. When they moved to a private house, which was far from work, he was forced to drive there. There was a church not far from the yacht club. Raisa went there on holiday and consecrated Easter cakes there. Guest artists visiting Mykolaiv performed in our shipbuilders' palace, and we never missed a single concert. Vadaturskyy family invited me to every event organized by NIBULON. Raia could not imagine me not being there. My Lord, the things he did and constructed that was something unrealistic! Something incredible, America in Mykolaiv, our hometown! Each new object was impressive; it seemed he could not do anything better. But he could. He moved only forward.

When I had a heart attack and caught the coronavirus in the hospital, my friends, whom I had known and been friends with for over 50 years, were afraid to visit me. However, Raia was always there; she came into the ward and supported me. How did she know all those right words? Although she was busy, she never forgot about me. She would bake something delicious and bring it to me. She knew my son and daughter-in-law regularly visited me, still she also came. It seemed that I had finally gotten well when I was hit by a car. I was back in the hospital and had another surgery. Raia was nursing me. She loved books. I had a large library. When I moved to a smaller apartment, I gave some of the books to my son, kept some for myself, and didn't forget about Raia. She had a library in her house. She visited bookstores for the rest of her life. Unfortunately, she was one of the last loyal customers who were still reading books and loved them, who couldn't imagine their lives without them. My friends were leaving for the USA and left me a huge book collection. I gave it Raia. He was her only and faithful love. She didn't just love her Oleksiy, she worshiped him. He was her idol. She protected him from evil. She was a real Angel. She prayed and worried for him. Raisa cooked tasty dishes, all clothing was ironed, all pleated seams were, and the shirts were snow-white. They spent most of their lives together, and they felt comfortable together. They never got bored with each other and found ways to introduce even more love, affection, and loyalty. I never heard either of them raise their voice a bit in conversations. They were a family in the broad sense of the word.

Oleksiy was leading a sober and healthy lifestyle. He never drank alcohol, neither vodka nor wine. Raia and I liked wine and champagne. We never drank much, just for the mood. She was always waiting for her son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren to visit her, as they lived

separately! That was the greatest holiday of her life. She was happy and proud, and she loved everyone. However, there were not so many such holidays. Sometimes she called me to say that Oleksiy had fallen ill and could barely get up to go to work. "Why didn't you call my Sasha? He's the head of the emergency service," I asked her.

"I didn't want to bother him, he's so busy," she said. Both Raisa and Oleksiy were modest and tried not to bother anyone. Vadaturskyy couldn't be sick for long; he stayed at home for a day or two and then rushed back to work.

Envious women often asked me: "Raisa has a huge house, so many flowers, who cleans it up? She probably has a dozen maids?" No one believed she did everything herself, as the Vadaturskyy family had never had any servants. She lived a modest life, just like him.

We communicated a lot via Viber, where we texted each other. When I was hit by a car and had surgery, I was in intensive care; thus, she couldn't reach me. She called my son and came to visit me. I had a faithful Lord-given friend. Raia visited me the day before the tragedy. On Saturday evening, Sasha said she had called me, and I told him I would call her on Sunday morning.

At 9 a.m., July 31, 2022, Raisa's phone didn't answer, and there were no beeps. I knew she and Oleksiy should have just finished their breakfast. At 7 a.m., Raia could be at the market to buy fresh products to cook a delicious breakfast later. We could talk after breakfast when Oleksiy left for work. I could even come to her place, and we would walk together in the fresh air, and then she would take me home. That tragic Sunday morning, my son came to my ward and said nothing. He was afraid, worried, and anxious. I had just been transferred from the intensive care unit. I heard the tragic news by chance from my surgeon... I don't know how I survived and endured...

I don't know how to live on, to get over, and to learn to live without Raisa and Oleksiy, how to realize that they are gone... The Lord sent me such people, such bright and good people... I pray for them and thank the Heavenly Father for sending them into my life...



Yuriy Didenko

(engineer, politician, candidate of historical sciences, People›s Deputy of Ukraine of 4th convocation, head of the Mykolaiv regional organization of the People Movement of Ukraine (since 1992)).

I have known Oleksiy Opanasovych since 1990. I was the director of the small enterprise Oranta and was engaged in assembly and adjustment works back then. He knew me in absentia as I was one of those who initiated the establishment of the Green World City Organization in Yuzhnoukrainsk in 1987. The organization opposed the construction of the Kostiantynivka and Tashlyk reservoirs and the destruction of Cossack shrines and unique Buh rapids. Since 1989, from the very foundation, I have been a member of the People's Movement of Ukraine and the head of the Yuzhnoukrainsk City Organization. Vadaturskyy then worked as the deputy head of Mykolaiv Regional Administration of Grain Products. Our area of common interest was production, and we could never imagine it would be replaced by political processes in the future. In the memorable December of 1991, after the Act of

Proclamation of Independence of Ukraine and the first democratic elections of the President of Ukraine, Oleksiy Opanasovych founded his NIBULON. I was a trusted representative of Viacheslav Chornovil and a coordinator of groups involved in campaigns to support the Act of Proclamation of Independence of Ukraine in Mykolaiv region. Maybe someone thought that Vadaturskyy was from the cohort of "red" communist directors and would support the communist Leonid Kravchuk in the elections. This was not the case! During those first days, months, and years of the young state, he actively supported and campaigned for democratic transformations and sided with the democrat Viacheslav Chornovil. Moreover, Oleksiy Opanasovych was the main and largest patron of the People's Movement in Mykolaiv region.

Today, it is even difficult to list all the good deeds he financed, owing to the multitude of them. Perhaps it's easier to recall everything that his mind and his active, pro-Ukrainian democratic position did not contribute to.

I learned that Vadaturskyy was a democrat at the first Mykolaiv rallies in the early 1990s held in support of Taras Shevchenko's Prosvita Society and the People's Movement of Ukraine. Although he never rushed to the stands or made pathetic speeches, he was always with the progressive people. As a like-minded person. Oleksiy Opanasovych participated in any event related to the Homeland, Ukraine, or native land held in Mykolaiv. He was proud that December 1, 1991, the birthday of an independent Ukraine, was almost the date the sense of his life, NIBULON, was founded. The company that became globally renowned in the future.

In 1992, I was elected head of the Mykolaiv regional organization of the People's Movement of Ukraine. I still hold the position. I guess I am the last of the Mohicans in the movement, an old-timer. I participated in 26 congresses of the People's Movement of Ukraine, the first World Forum of Ukrainians, and also initiated the commemoration of the victims of the Holodomor – Genocide in Mykolaiv region.

When I planned certain events, campaigns, or festivals, I knew that the NIBULON head would always support and help me. I never asked Vadaturskyy for a lot of money, as he knew the Ukrainian word "treba" (there is a need for) and did not spare his honestly earned funds on Ukraine-related matters. He believed in the things I was doing and trusted me. Our offices were nearby, and he often visited me, especially if he had a hard time. I was proactive as I wished to move mountains for Ukraine. I was developing a lot of national-related ideas, one after

another. By the 60th anniversary, I initiated the establishment of a memorial complex for the victims of the Holodomor of 1932–33 in the regional center of Mykolaiv region.

In 1993, I initiated the Mourning Procession to the Memorial Complex for the Victims of the Holodomor, with tens of thousands of Mykolaiv residents participating. Since 1996, as President of the "For the Children of Ukraine" Foundation, I have been organizing regional competitions and various events to revive Ukrainian culture, customs, traditions, and history of our people. The events are intended to promote patriotism and spirituality of the younger generation: the Ukrainian patriotic song competition "Chervona Kalyna"; since 1997, the Shevchenko poetry competition "Zapovit"; since 1999, the Ukrainian humor and satire competition "Smihoslov"; since 2001, a review of Christmas nativity scenes, carols, and schedrivky; since 2002, a competition of folk and instrumental music and folk singing; since 2011, the Valery Boychenko Ukrainian Patriotic Poetry Readers' Competition; and since 2019, the Dmytro Kremin Poetry Readers' Competition "Mykolaivskyi Oberih."

Oleksiy Vadaturskyy and his NIBULON helped us both financially and ideologically. He liked our slogan, which one of our smart lads created as the decoding of the word "RUH" (MOVEMENT): Riatuite Ukrainu Hloptsi (Save Ukraine, Guys)!

Since 1993, I have been the permanent editor of the "Ukrainian South," a Ukrainian-language nationwide weekly. In 2001, I initiated the Viacheslav Chornovil Contest of journalistic works in the "Ukrainian South" newspaper. Let's face it, our newspaper has never been profitable, but it promotes Ukraine-related matters and proudly shares patriotic ideas among the people. I was often thinking that each issue could have been the last one, as we were cash-strapped, but still, we managed to raise funds once again. It was a miracle! As if the Lord were helping to make the native language closer to the people. Nowadays, I thank many Ukrainians and Mykolaiv residents, but mostly – Oleksiy Vadaturskyy.

I will never forget the first major inflation. We turned to our main sponsor, and Vadaturskyy gave a million karbovantsi for the needs of the regional Movement! We were naive to think that amount of money would allow us to last for a long time, and do many good deeds. The collapse was so quick that we managed to buy only several padlocks with that million. I didn't even know why we needed them...

In the 1990s, Vadaturskyy was mostly focused on the NIBULON development and supported me, and in the early 2000s, he became

a more active movement member. There was even an idea to get Oleksiy Opanasovych into our government. I was already a People's Deputy of Ukraine and organized a meeting with the decision-makers responsible for the fate of the state. At first, it seemed that they misunderstood either my efforts or Vadaturskyy's. Over the years, I realized that the head of NIBULON only benefited from that as he was a born businessman, and he would have wasted his time as a civil servant.

Oleksiy Opanasovych got involved in politics only in 2006. We ran for the regional council from the People's Movement of Ukraine together with Our Ukraine on party lists. It cost a fortune! Only the lazy forgot to announce that the People's Movement of Mykolaiv Region was not participating in the elections. Oleksiy Opanasovych and I failed to get 0.3 percent to pass. Some years later, I learned the real situation with "calculations": "What voting? We didn't bother to open those boxes. We simply threw them away, and put the "correct" ones." That was the bitter truth of our reality. In Domanivka, where Oleksiy Opanasovych had a business, his rating was over 80 percent. They "counted" barely 20! The same was in the Bashtanskyi and Snihurivskyi districts "They just threw us away!" noted the popular Kuzma Skriabin, the true core of those "voting."

A fortune was donated to priests of different affiliations for their churches! They promised mountains and marvels. The swore. At that time, computer classes were popular. Vadaturskyy financed 20 such new devices for secondary school No. 41 in Mykolaiv. He made modern repairs. We held two meetings there involving Dmytro Kremin, Shevchenko Prize laureate poet, Mykola Shytiuk, academician, Holodomor researcher Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, a renowned businessman, who was a brand of Ukraine, and me as the head of the regional Movement... There were two polling stations there. At one, we got as much as... 50 votes, at the other – 40. For example, Natalia Vitrenko, the odious pro-Russian progressive socialist, got 440 votes at one of those stations, and 500 at the second! As the Perets magazine once wrote, no comments!

It should be noted that they loved Vadaturskyy everywhere, except for his native Mykolaiv, the city he served faithfully and truthfully for more than a dozen years, and paid huge taxes to the local budget without hiding a single penny. Fairly and transparently. Our people don't like successful and rich people... In the central Ukrainian church of Mykolaiv, there is an iconostasis of amazing workmanship sponsored by Oleksiy Opanasovych. He never refused Ukrainian money for

Ukrainians to implement Ukrainian matters. He did it without extra pride or advertising, almost secretly. Let your good deeds be a secret. Dmytro Kremin had very close relations with Vadaturskyy, as they both were like-minded and lived in Ukraine. The head of NIBULON was proud that the poet was recognized by the state much earlier than him. In 1999, the People's Movement of Ukraine and Viacheslav Chornovil supported him, and he deservedly became a Shevchenko laureate. Years later, Dmytro congratulated Oleksiy Opanasovych with the Star of the Hero of Ukraine. Once, Kremin helped publish the "Ukrainian South," our Movement newspaper, and wrote many materials specifically for us.

When the Russians attacked Ukraine, Vadaturskyy supported my idea of the People's Militia. He allocated funds for the militia's activities. His aid allowed us to set up checkpoints on the roads leading to the city, where representatives of the People's Militia, military personnel, and police were on duty on four BDRMs that were on the balance sheet of the People's Movement but were acquired by NIBULON. Vadaturskyy used to say that if all the oligarchs acted as he did, Donetsk and Luhansk would never have been occupied. They wished to benefit from the unrest but lost everything. In 2014, he threw everything Russian into the trash. Language, culture, network, joint businesses, or drawn plans that never came true. He had nothing in the russian language at NIBULON, only in his native language.

The sinful and lying Kremlin propagandist happily declared that Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was murdered as he "sponsored punitive battalions," that "it was denazification in action," that he "got into the Russian sanctions lists in due time," and that "was another one crossed out."

Oleksiy Opanasovych and Raisa Mykhailivna were civilians, and their intentional murder by an enemy missile in the peaceful Mykolaiv was an act of terrorism. Nowadays, no one is surprised that the moscovites are a nation of war and the main sponsor of terrorism in the world. I believe that an entire gang of murderers and paranoiacs will be duly convicted by the Hague Tribunal. It is not up to the terrorists to decide on "another one to cross out."

Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was a true Hero of Ukraine, and he will remain a hero in the grateful memory of Ukrainians forever.

Cherished and eternal memory...

The Kingdom of Heaven...



Tetiana Dmytriieva

(lawyer, Master of Laws, legal advisor of the legal service (since 2004), leading legal advisor of the general legal practice of the legal department of NIBULON Ltd. (since July 2023)).

I guess the night of Sunday, July 31, 2022, was the most terrible for the whole period of active hostilities in Mykolaiv, when more than 40 fascist missiles were aimed at our native and peaceful city. I managed to go to bed only in the morning; thus, the call from my acquaintance about the death of Oleksiy Opanasovych and Raisa Mykhailivna was a total shock. My first reaction was: no, I don't believe it, I will never believe it, it's impossible! Then there was the shock, and everything seemed like a bad dream. I wished I had woken up, but the pain was unutterable, and tears welled down when I cried. In a while, it turned into despair, and then into anger and hatred towards those who did it, our murderers, the world's number one terrorists.

The last time I saw Oleksiy Opanasovych was a few days before his death. We were drawing up letters on operational issues, and he said: "Let's continue on Friday." Then, he thought for a moment and added:

"No, I won't be here as I go to Izmail. Then we'll meet on Monday..." However, that Monday meeting was never held. And will never be. When we came back to the office in June 2022 (we worked remotely before), we discussed some non-work-related topics. Among other things, he asked about the Kinburn Spit as he knew I loved the place and went there every summer to relax. In summer, there were hydrofoil boats, the "Raketa", to travel there. It was then that we concluded that the Kinburn Spit, after it was destroyed by the invaders, would not soon become a place for recreation.

I met Oleksiy Opanasovych more than 20 years ago, when I was working in the land department of the Mykolaiv City Council. I clearly remember that Volodymyr Dmytrovych Chaika (the former city mayor, by the way, he and Oleksiy Opanasovych were good friends) scheduled a meeting for Saturday. We were not told the agenda and participants, and I did not know Oleksiy Opanasovych personally back then. So, I was in the reception office when Oleksiy Opanasovych came in with a smile. He was dressed simply, and I realized who he was later. At the meeting, he was concentrated and was listening very attentively.

Since November 2004, I have been working at NIBULON as a legal consultant dealing with land issues. Given my official duties, I had to attend various meetings and gatherings with Oleksiy Opanasovych, including meetings with heads of administrations and local councils, and also with landholders from whom NIBULON leased land. When Vadaturskyy expressed his opinion on a particular issue, everyone in attendance listened to him as if spellbound. They were very attentive as he had a remarkable ability to explain complex matters straightforwardly and to propose relevant solutions. At such moments, I was extremely proud to be a member of his team.

I am grateful to Oleksiy Opanasovych for the opportunity to work with him, in his team, all these years, and for the knowledge and experience I gained. He went through a rather complicated path to establish the company and ensured it reached the European level, unattainable for many. He was smart, wise, honest, with a kind and sincere look, and self-confident. He never rested upon the laurels.

Oleksiy Opanasovych was a true patriot of Ukraine and our Mykolaiv. Once, he launched a large-scale investment program to restore sea and river transport, as well as cargo transportation along the Southern Buh and Dnipro rivers, the main shipping arteries of Ukraine. The investment program was financed by renowned international banks and corporations, who trusted him unconditionally and knew he was a slave to his word. When he promised to do anything, he would do it within set deadlines. The program objective was to decrease the road

traffic used to supply agricultural products to settlements. Modern high-tech transshipment terminals were built in cities and other settlements of our country to implement this program. Therefore, the lack of need for road transport to get to these settlements resulted in an improved ecological state of the regions and reduced environmental pollution.

Since 2016, we have been submitting related proposals to the city council to implement our idea. However, the process has faced delays due to the need for new urban planning documentation, which took considerable time to develop, and later because of the war. As a result, our idea has not yet been realized. Due to his investment program implemented and achievements, Oleksiy Opanasovych was awarded the title of Hero of Ukraine. He was also a well-known and iconic figure in our city; many residents knew him personally.

He was always there to help the residents who turned to him in any matters, and also the city authorities in case of force majeure in the city. In general, he loved Mykolaiv and believed it was his duty to help solve certain problems.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, Oleksiy Opanasovych immediately and without hesitation joined the related activities and provided significant material aid to the city's medical institutions. He made every effort for the city to cope with this disease. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy and his NIBULON team devoted a whole year to ensuring regular aid to the medical sector of Mykolaiv region, which helped save the lives of thousands of people. Later, the city community unanimously supported the candidacy of Oleksiy Opanasovych in the nomination "Hero of the Year" within the "Person of the Year. Citizen of the Year – 2020" Program for his significant contribution to the city's healthcare during the coronavirus pandemic. In May 2021, he won the "Heroes of the Year" Special Project.

In September 2021, by a decision of the Mykolaiv City Council, Oleksiy Opanasovych, Hero of Ukraine, General Director of IBULON, was awarded the "Honorary Citizen of the City of Mykolaiv" title for his significant personal contribution to the development of the city, its engineering and transport infrastructure, improving the agro-industrial complex potential, distinguished services for the social and economic growth of the city and charitable activities, contribution to the infrastructure of inland waterways and the recovery of shipbuilding, continuous expansion of river transportation and active construction of the river transportation fleet, attracting investments into the economy of the city and Ukraine. It was a special decision, since the entire deputy corps voted for it unanimously (which is quite a rare

situation for our city council), and another proof of his merits and achievements for the benefit of the city's territorial community. I was also lucky to communicate with Raisa Mykhailivna. She was always calm, balanced, caring, and wise.

I remember, in December 2021, Oleksiy Opanasovych and I were to go on a business trip, but the weather was bad, with slippery driving conditions, and heavy snowfall, and when I drove up to their house, she came out to see him off, wished us a safe journey, which was quite relevant given the situation, and told us to take care of ourselves.

Oleksiy Opanasovych was a talented leader and a motivated businessman who never gave up and implemented whatever he planned. In Ukraine and abroad, they knew and described him as a socially responsible leader, a determined and strong-willed person, a professional with a capital letter, and a patron who helps by deed, not by word. This is how I will remember Oleksiy Opanasovych for the rest of my life. I will always be proud that I have worked with him in the NIBULON team for so many years.

Shortly before his death, he told me: "It's okay, Tetiana, the main thing is to live through August, and then everything will be ok, I have so many plans..." Unfortunately, the plans of our guru and the heart of our company, Oleksiy Opanasovych Vadaturskyy, will never come true.

It's a pity and it hurts a lot. I thought my life was divided into "before" and "after" February 24, 2022. I was totally wrong! It was divided on July 31, 2022. I still can't believe that Oleksiy Opanasovych and Raisa Mykhailivna died. It has been more than a year since the dear person passed away, and still, when I leave my office (it is on the same floor as the boss), I involuntarily look at his, and it seems that he will come out, smile, and yet again say in his pleasant, unforgettable voice "Good morning, Tetiana!" Much to our regret, this will never happen again.

Despite the death of Oleksiy Opanasovych, his spirit and his virtue still live, and his faith in an invincible Ukraine, in the power and strength of our indomitable people, shines like the evening star.

Oh, never seek the bitter honey of glory!

The honey is not good and made by stingy bees. Seek to say at least a few words people need.

Seek to live modestly and vibrantly. Seek the patience to endure everything.

True glory is a beautiful woman who will bring flowers to the grave.

I am uncertain whom our great Lina Kostenko referred to, but Oleksiy Opanasovych's grave in Mykolaiv is adorned with flowers year-round.



Bohdan Yehorov

(Doctor of Technical Sciences, Professor, Academician of the NAAS of Ukraine, President of the Odesa National University of Technology (since 2022), Rector (2003–2022)):

For me, Oleksiy Opanasovych is not just a famous person but a true citizen and patriot of Ukraine. His whole life and activity aimed at the development of the national agrarian business proved his high calling long before the war with the Russian Federation started. Moreover, Vadaturskyy is one of the most famous graduates of the Odesa Institute of Technology. On October 20, 2022, we celebrated the 120th anniversary of our Alma Mater. In 1902, it was the Odesa Flour Milling School. Nowadays, we are the Odesa National Institute of Technology.

He studied in one of the most complex and responsible specialties, automation of technological processes. It makes students think systematically and encourages them to be highly organized to make responsible decisions on managing complex technological facilities.

Before I met him personally, I knew a lot about Oleksiy Opanasovych, about the grandeur and greatness of Ukraine in that powerful person. He was a kind of agrarian pillar, and his mind allowed him to hold our sky on sturdy shoulders. When I was appointed a rector, I sought to meet Vadaturskyy face-to-face to get some first-hand advice and support. That meeting took place in the Mykolaiv central office of NIBULON in 2005. I remember the smallest details of it. The meeting was organized by his student friends, Viktor Khobin and Heorhiy Stankevych, our university professors. That day, I met a person who was not just involved in grain-related activities, grain business, and export, but a unique person who talked about his plans with such enthusiasm and energy that I wished to believe in them, although at first glance they all seemed unreal, unattainable, though awesome! His dream of shipping on the Dnipro and the Southern Buh sounded just like that. The strong arguments the head of NIBULON gave were the following: it was the cheapest type of transport, and enterprises should be built along the rivers, so, they would benefit and serve the people. God has thought of everything – we should use it effectively! Few people understood Vadaturskyy back then, to tell the truth. He dreamed of restarting passenger transportation between Ukrainian cities along the Northern Black Sea coast using hydrofoil boats. His idea was based on the use of the maximum human intelligence and determination combined with the technical capabilities of the modern world. Oleksiy Opanasovych showed me his pride, the flagship of Ukrainian grain exports, a grain transshipment complex, for which he was awarded the State Prize in the field of architecture and construction. And the apogee of everything, his masterpiece, dome-shaped elevators, which the world had never seen before.

We spent the whole day at the production facility, and in the evening, we sat down to have a chat. “So, you plan to restore shipping, but where will you get the fleet, which no longer exists? Who do you count on?” I asked Vadaturskyy. He smiled and answered with confidence: “Only on myself.” “So, you will build vessels?” “I will!” To tell the truth, I did not believe it as it was the direction he had never been engaged in. He had a different specialty, though he got a quality education at our institute. I can say so as I studied here myself. Our education is powerful. It allows students to think in other fields, both related and distant ones.

At that moment, I realized that I was with a creative person, who thinks unconventionally. A true and realistic one. He made the impression of a very strong man who had repeatedly experienced

blows, problems, misunderstandings, and perhaps even losses in his life, I was not aware of. He was strong-willed, with a unique core, though he looked like a young romantic wishing to turn the whole world upside down. To make it a better, kinder, and brighter place. He knew how to do that as long as no one hindered him. The most important thing was that he succeeded!

Oleksiy Opanasovych visited me, and vice versa. Over time, we developed friendly, partnership, and business relations. During our meetings, we discussed the future of Ukraine, the agricultural sector, his company, and the development of the state. Vadaturskyy never separated himself from his native country; he lived in it 24/7. Yet again, I admired this eternal dreamer and always wondered: "How is that possible?".

Once I asked him: "Do you believe that the Dnipro will become navigable? It requires so much work: dredging the bottom, equipping ports, and building terminals. Where will you get investments? That's a lot of work and enormous expenses!" My counterpart calmly and confidently replied: "I want to invest in Ukraine. Whatever we earn is not for spending but for further development."

By drawing a parallel to the Mississippi River in the USA, one of the world's most extensive and well-developed transportation networks, Oleksiy Opanasovych has restored navigation on the Dnipro and Southern Buh and implemented a large-scale investment project. He had a promising plan for the development of shipping, grain production, storage, processing, and export of Ukrainian grain. Now, with time, I realize that Oleksiy Opanasovych was the key person whose character and will made us successful in grain exports, and allowed our country to get to one of the leading places in the world. We became the ones ensuring food security around the world.

It is one thing when dozens of intermediaries profit from our agrarian sector, and quite another – a powerful company that cooperates directly with the UN and its programs, and other international funds, and allows our farms and foreign consumers to establish direct contacts. Thus, we reduced the burden on business and improved our positions in international cooperation and trade. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy and NIBULON made all that possible.

He managed to restore Mykolaiv's fame as a city of shipbuilders. He invited me to his holidays – the launching of vessels. These were tugboats and barges of five thousand tons each. Later, NIBULON got involved in producing dredging installations and loading cranes.

I saw the first self-propelled floating crane manufactured in the

company's history. It was "St. Mykolai," built in Constanta, Romania. In terms of its capacity, it could replace three Hungarian Ganz floating cranes, the oldest floating crane models in the world. The high-tech automated vessel reloaded powerful Panamax-type sea vessels at the roadstead offshore. Barges did not have to enter the port. It was a real miracle! I went online to find analogies, but there were none! Vadaturskyy became a pioneer in the area. It is difficult to assess the impact on further technical progress and the company's development. That also raised the authority of Ukraine! Oleksiy Opanasovych showed me his patents, where he was the developer and the main author. There were related to various control system devices for shipbuilding. He was also a scientist. That impressed me even more.

Once I witnessed the real ritual of launching a vessel. When they break a bottle of champagne and start construction of a new vessel at the neighboring shipyard at the same time. It was breathtaking. It inspired everyone. I thank Lord for such moments of my life. If Oleksiy Opanasovych can hear me, I wish to express to him my sincere gratitude for everything. There were a lot of such moments.

During that celebration, I asked one of the NIBULON employees why he had bags under his eyes. He said he had hardly slept for three weeks. "The boss doesn't sleep, and we don't," he told me. As it turned out, Oleksiy Opanasovych had a cabin of his own aboard the vessel and never once set foot on land until the work was done and the deadline met.

When the head of NIBULON paid a visit to our university back in 2010, we had an honest conversation about our most pressing concerns. I took him through our labs – Soviet-built, unchanged to this day. Since the time he graduated in 1971, and I in 1981, almost nothing had changed. We were falling behind and failing to inspire confidence, teaching our students on outdated equipment. It wasn't the quality of our teaching – we had excellent, highly skilled lecturers – but rather the lack of modern laboratory practice that held us back. I traveled the world and saw how leading companies placed their laboratories within universities not just for show, but to promote themselves while also contributing to the training of top-tier specialists. Together, we outlined a plan for the development of our Alma Mater. Oleksiy Opanasovych took it all upon himself, without seeking any additional approvals from the relevant ministry. "We do everything ourselves, and we count only on ourselves," he concluded firmly once again.

It was envisioned that new, state-of-the-art grain laboratories would be established – focusing on grain quality and the automation

of technological processes – within the very department he had once graduated from. Just two years later, five laboratories were opened. Now, even mentioning the amount spent feels daunting – it runs into hundreds of thousands of dollars. First, the premises were renovated, after which they were equipped with cutting-edge technology that met the most recent scientific and technical standards. For example, five multiplexers arrived aboard a chartered aircraft from the U.S. Oleksiy Opanasovych called me and said, "Bohdan, get them through customs and use them!" Only later did I learn that in 2012, General Electric – a major American conglomerate and the world's leading manufacturer of various types of equipment – had produced 55 such multiplexers under Vadaturskyy's patent. They were intended for American corporations and companies, ordered to meet U.S. needs – but five of them ended up coming to us. Our researchers spent two years integrating them into the educational process. Now, we use them in teaching, scientific research, and training programs.

It's easy to talk with someone who dreams. But with Oleksiy Opanasovych, many found it difficult – he was exceptionally demanding and a professional of a level no one could outwit. He knew everything down to the smallest detail. I turned to him in difficult situations. We had a harsh year in 2013 when a storm tore the roof off the building housing the department where he studied. The contractor completed part of the work, but unfortunately, the stormy wind tore everything away. We had difficulties getting the certificate of completion accepted. I called Oleksiy Opanasovych and said, "I'm in trouble, I want to come over, and I will talk about money." He listened to me and fully covered the cost of the roof repairs for the academic building.

I had the honor of knowing Raisa Mykhailivna, the steadfast and faithful companion of Oleksiy Opanasovych's life. I have great respect for those married couples who walk through life together. In sorrow and in joy. I can relate – I've shared 45 years of life with my wife. And in this, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy set an example. Sadly, their lives were cut short so early and so tragically.

They destroyed him for his stance, for his unyielding spirit. For being a conscious Ukrainian. In 2012, the Academic Council unanimously elected Oleksiy Vadaturskyy as an Honorary Doctor of Science of our university. If all leaders were like him, Ukraine would be among the most developed and wealthiest countries in the world.

At NIBULON, the core moral essence of its leader remains: his spirit, his word, and his vision. They are unshakable; they inspire faith and hope for the future.



Volodymyr Zhmur

(Deputy Director of Production (since 2013), Director of NIBULON Shipbuilding Yard (2019–2021)):

Before joining NIBULON Shipbuilding Yard, I worked at Okean Shipyard in Mykolaiv, one of the three largest shipyards in Ukraine. It had two production lines: one for medium-tonnage shipbuilding (barges, pontoons, and tugboats) and another for large-tonnage vessels (such as bulk carriers, tankers, and container ships). The plant was the pride of the city, located in the southern part – in the Korabelnyi district – downstream along the Southern Buh River, on its left bank. Between 2009 and 2010, Okean Shipyard built 24 non-self-propelled, two-hold dry cargo vessels designed for mixed (river-sea) navigation. The customer was one of Ukraine's largest grain traders – NIBULON. They also ordered six tugboats, which, unfortunately, were never built. The shipyard was changing ownership, and the new owner pursued a policy incompatible with Oleksiy Vadaturskyy's position, even though he had a signed contract. Yet, through joint efforts, four out of the

six contracted tugboats were completed at Okean Shipyard. At Okean Shipyard, I worked in the chief builder's department, specifically handling the trials of the vessels built for NIBULON. At that time, we had just begun experiencing delays in salary payments, so Oleksiy Vadaturskyy eventually offered the key specialists – the ones who formed the backbone of the team and handled his projects – to join him as direct hires. He paid the salaries of those who were building those four tugboats. Later, the management of Okean Shipyard began pressuring NIBULON and demanding additional funds not covered by the contract. It was that pressure, along with the two unfinished tugboats, that pushed Oleksiy Opanasovych to make the bold decision to build his shipbuilding yard. That's how he came to purchase the old Lyman shipyard. The equipment was relocated, and the two tugboats were completed there. In 2013, NIBULON Shipbuilding Yard, located in the closed waters of the Southern Buh River near the transshipment terminal of NIBULON LLC, began operations. In that, Oleksiy Opanasovych proved to be a business innovator, turning what was primarily an agricultural exporter into a company that successfully builds its fleet!

Oleksiy Vadaturskyy invited me to join his shipyard as a vessel commissioning and testing engineer. Dmytro Horbenko was appointed as the first director of the NIBULON Shipbuilding Yard. Besides him, another early team member was Volodymyr Medun, the Head of General Services. It so happened that Okean Shipyard never returned the metal intended for the unfinished tugboats, so we had to purchase it all over again. The legal proceedings led nowhere, and no positive decision was ever reached. Thus, the new NIBULON shipyard – whose story began with those two tugboats – slowly began to gain momentum and build up its capacity.

Production was expanding rapidly, and Oleksiy Opanasovych appointed me as Deputy Director of Production.

Before the war, our NIBULON shipyard employed up to 700 full-time workers. For comparison, I should mention that in 2008, Okean Shipyard had up to 2,500 workers. Oleksiy Opanasovych was building a more compact production facility, equipped with the latest technology and state-of-the-art software-controlled machinery. He wouldn't hear of buying anything used. Most of our equipment comes from European manufacturers. The Rösler preservation line (handling sheets up to 12 by 2.5 meters) is German-made, with their specialists supervising its installation and assembly; the two ESAB plasma cutting machines (with plasma cutting thickness of up to 50 mm, gas cutting of up to

150 mm, and cutting tables measuring 24 by 2.6 meters) come from Sweden, one of the world's leading manufacturers of such equipment; while the shipbuilding press SBP 275 and the frame-bending machine SBK 275 (where metal took on the shapes of shipbuilding components) were supplied from the Netherlands. We also had equipment from Spain and Portugal. Before the war, all the equipment operated in three shifts.

Oleksiy Vadaturskyy chose only the best equipment suppliers; sadly, our local manufacturers couldn't keep up.

The metal processing workshop was the first to be upgraded, as it serves as a starting point for the supply chain and, essentially, the production process. Rösler – a shot blasting and priming line for metal structures – is a massive piece of machinery. Primed metal does not corrode and can be stored for several years. After the reconstruction, the plant not only achieved a fully self-contained metal processing cycle (without involving external industry contractors) but also greatly expanded its metal processing capacity. We processed over 6,000 tons of shipbuilding metal from Ukrainian steelmakers annually – an amount that would fill 92 grain hopper cars.

Importantly, the metal, both sheet and profile, was of Ukrainian origin, primarily sourced from the Mariupol, Dnipro, and Zaporizhzhia plants. All vessels built by NIBULON were designed by engineers from Mykolaiv-based design bureaus. All our vessels were registered in Ukraine, each proudly flying the national flag! All of them are registered with the Shipping Register of Ukraine (SRU).

With the shipyard's upgrade and support from the European Investment Bank (EIB), our company was able to produce up to 15 cargo fleet units each year. In addition to hundreds of shipbuilders, the company also provided jobs for about 250 workers from construction and other professions.

What's remarkable is that, back then, Mykolaiv's shipbuilders worked at many European shipyards. We stayed in touch with them and sought their advice regarding the equipment. They told us what was worth taking and what was a firm no. Together, we discussed which items from the list we could purchase and master.

Oleksiy Opanasovych held direct talks with every supplier, negotiating and agreeing on the equipment configuration. Even when we were tempted to choose something cheaper, he would say, "No, it's better to pay more here and get higher-quality and more functional equipment that will last longer. Who knows what tomorrow will bring or what it holds in store?" And he was right, as always.

At the end of 2018, our crane fleet was expanded with a new, more powerful crane from the German company Liebherr-MCCTEC Rostock GmbH, which became an essential link between the shipyard's new section assembly workshop and the building berth.

The floating crane of Project P-140, NIBULON MAX, is the longest vessel ever commissioned in the history of NIBULON Shipbuilding Yard. It marks an entirely new, higher level of the company's shipbuilding capabilities and stands as the longest "river-sea" class crane vessel under the Ukrainian flag built since Ukraine gained independence. The construction of the P-140 vessel, which has become the flagship of the company's existing fleet and undoubtedly the pride among all the shipyard's achievements, represents not only a completely new and significantly higher level of the company's shipbuilding capabilities but also the skill and professionalism of the shipbuilders – true craftsmen and workers who are building the modern fleet of Ukraine. The construction was carried out with financial support from the International Finance Corporation, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the European Investment Bank. Thanks to the cooperation with these institutions, the conditions were created for the vessel's launch – namely, the large-scale reconstruction of the company's shipbuilding yard.

Oleksiy Opanasovych loved the plant dearly; he was constantly drawn here and spent all his free time at the facility. From Monday to Friday, the boss focused on the agricultural sector, but on Saturdays – and sometimes even Sundays – he always made sure to visit the shipyard. When they were building the P-140 NIBULON MAX, no matter how busy or demanding his workday was, he would rush to us at seven or eight in the evening. Every day, something new was born, and he couldn't bear to miss the birth of his firstborn – his brainchild! He watched as the metal came to life and turned into a vessel.

Our communication with Ukrainian migrant workers in Europe was not in vain. Thanks to Oleksiy Vadaturskyy's foresight, dozens of them returned to their families, to their native Mykolaiv, and found employment at our NIBULON Shipbuilding Yard. And this was significant, as we gained fresh energy – qualified and certified specialists with European experience.

And the way Oleksiy Opanasovych handled tech and electronics was impressive! He could grasp the essence of a mechanism "on the fly" and come up with a solution to improve it if needed, often finding an unconventional approach. I was convinced of it time and again, having witnessed it myself. At times, he could look over the drawings and

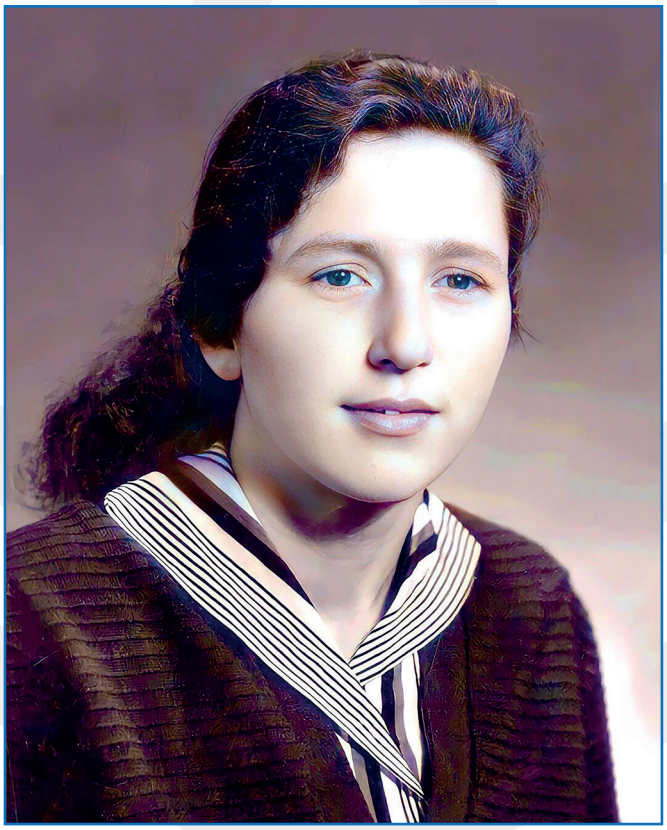
make rational yet original simplifications. Everything he did seemed to succeed, which only drew people to him even more. At meetings, he enjoyed debating with his subordinates, listening carefully to their views. Even if their ideas were unconventional and different from his own. When decisions were made, he demanded they be carried out within the set deadlines. That was his firm principle.

Once, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy tasked someone with creatively devising and finding a solution for painting the modernized tugboat, in which all the old mechanisms had been replaced and the vessel fully restored. Everyone rushed to the Internet, and there were millions of ideas. They thought of all sorts of possibilities. When they showed Oleksiy Opanasovych those "childish" sketches, he looked them over and said, "They don't resonate; no one will like them. That's all been done before; what we need is a spark – something unusual for both the eyes and the soul." I still can't quite understand how the idea came to him, but it stunned everyone. Oleksiy Opanasovych suggested using a corrugated effect by pressing folds on the edge, creating rows of parallel wavy folds and bends. He chose a color scheme ranging from dark blue for the convex stripes to light blue for the concave ones. As a result, a marvelous modern vessel was created from what was once an old wreck. Everyone stared at him with their mouths wide open.

Oleksiy Opanasovych loved talking with the workers. He listened to complaints, requests, and suggestions. He remembered even the smallest details and demanded solutions from his subordinates. He never overlooked or forgot anyone or anything. He could call someone, and after talking with him, the person would feel reassured. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy hosted an Open day aboard the newly built floating crane P-140 NIBULON MAX. Workers could bring along their children, relatives, and acquaintances. Over 10,000 eager visitors took advantage of the opportunity.

A sailor's work and life at sea are limited by the size of the vessel. And the cabin is the place where one has to live for several months at a stretch. The psychological state and, to a large extent, the success of the entire voyage depend on how well it is arranged. It's ideal when the vessel is designed to high standards, featuring spacious living quarters, relaxation areas, and comfortable amenities. On our favorite vessel, we built the owner's cabin – a sacred space, as is customary worldwide. Equipped with a bed, a work desk, and all the essentials. Oleksiy Opanasovych never once used it. As always, it was clean, cozy, neat, and warm...

Now it sits empty, quietly waiting for the boss...



Olena Zalevska
(collective farm worker, pensioner).

Everything in our lives comes from the Lord. Love, parents, children, and friends. And I would also add neighbors to that. Throughout my life, I've listened to many tales about neighbors, some good and some not, yet for me, it was an idyll. Our family and the Vadaturskyy family lived side by side in Bendzary, garden touching garden, as they say in the village. I was seven years older than Aliosha, and I saw all his first steps in life. Who, back then in the villages during those harsh, hungry, and cold post-war years, even knew what a kindergarten was? And maternity leave was so short, only three months. Mother would leave the little child with grandma and grandpa (the Vadaturskyy seniors, Aliosha's paternal grandparents lived with them). When he was about four or five years old, they would bring him to me whenever I was free from school or on vacation. Aunt Fenia, Aliosha's mother, born in 1910, was three years older than her husband and worked at our collective farm "Batkivshchyna." Father returned from the war with a leg injury and walked with a cane. Afanasii (as everyone called him in the local village dialect) couldn't do hard work; for example, even digging the

garden by the house with a shovel was beyond his strength. His innate wisdom and knowledge, along with his crystal-clear honesty, earned him his daily bread. They trusted him with the most important thing – the harvest. He was in charge of the warehouse at the village grain elevator. That's where the grain and seeds were stored. He also worked as a weigher, sending grain off to the railway station – it was brought in by carts fitted with special wooden sides. Throughout all his years of work, Afanasii received only words of gratitude – there were never any thefts or shortages. Inspections confirmed it – he never feared them. He was a local, while his wife came to the village as a daughter-in-law. I clearly remember Aliosha's grandfather, Afanasii's father.

Afanasii was a jack of all trades. When a house was being built for his elder son Volodia, he made all the windows and doors himself. Grandma Yustyna left a very warm memory. There was a certain special kinship of souls among the Vadaturskyy men. Fedir would frequently drop by the threshing yard or the collective farm's weigh station to visit Afanasii – he seemed to miss him at home. They could never get enough of talking to each other. Aliosha had the same deep attachment to his father. Since his early years, people in Bendzary used to say the son would take after his father – just as principled, demanding, and honest, someone who would achieve things beyond the reach of most.

Five-year-old Aliosha once brought us a bond and said to my mother:

"Grandma, Dad bought a bond, he'll win a car with it, and I'll take all of you for rides in it." He grew up smart and curious. Everything caught his interest. Back then, everyone lived modestly, but kids found joy in their games. Sometimes we played hide-and-seek, sometimes we played soldiers (we had watched so many war movies!), and sometimes we drew hopscotch grids on the ground and jumped around. Boys also kicked the ball around when they had free time. And there was never much of it – they were either herding cows or helping the adults. Aliosha himself didn't like to boast and never tolerated show-offs. He grew up different from the others. There was a mystery about him, one that only revealed itself with time. He had no trouble at school, studied hard, stayed disciplined, and did well. He was a role model for others.

The Vadaturskyy family attended church and lived by Christian values. Aliosha, like all the other kids, went caroling. With no lights in the village, he'd go out caroling in the afternoon as a child, and in the evening when he got older. The singing outside the window was so loud, even the lamp seemed to jump. They'd give the carolers two kopecks, sometimes three, and on rare occasions, a whole five. Those who didn't have money gave sweets, gingerbread, or apples instead. All the children were baptized. When Aliosha's elder brother Volodia got married (he was born in 1938), he was wed in our church. All four of my brothers were also married in the church. And what a celebration

Easter was! We went to the all-night Easter service, and in the morning, just as dawn was breaking, we blessed the Easter bread. Somehow, I remember my childhood in the smallest details, but what happened yesterday or the day before – that doesn't come to mind right away. One of the relatives gifted Aliosha a harmonica. He worked out the tunes on his own; not everything came easily, and there was no one to help. But his persistence began to show. Already in the early grades, he could play a few popular waltzes by ear – melodies he'd caught from the radio wire, the only music around.

And the winters we had – so much snow would fall. Aliosha was lucky – his father had built him a big wooden sled, (the only one around), and every kid would take turns riding it down the hill. How our feet would freeze, and the biting cold kept always creeping in – those are memories that never fade. We didn't have much when it came to shoes back then. Just some miserable cold rubber boots, feet hastily wrapped in cloth rags – we called them portianky. Only a few lucky ones had real felt boots. The Vadaturskyy family were kind and good-hearted people. Aliosha tried not to take money from his parents – not that they had much to give. When his scholarship wasn't enough during his student days in Odesa, he'd work nights unloading freight cars.

The first and hardest blow for the son was the death of his mother. Feodosiia Ivanivna passed peacefully in God on June 13, 1982. Oleksiy hadn't yet turned thirty-five.

At the time, Father kept six cows. He cared for them as if they were family. He pampered them, stroked them gently, and spoke to them. He did the milking himself and had his secret recipe for fermented baked milk (ryazhanka), famed across the whole village. He'd load it up and take it to the market in Balta, where he sold it himself. There was never anything left over. He'd bring home empty jars, wash them, and wait for fresh ryazhenka. He built a small outdoor stove in the yard (we called it a kabytsia, the summer kind, used when it was too hot to light a fire inside) where he boiled milk in large pots. On top, a tasty, creamy layer would form – the starka – which he tasted first. He had everything cooked and ready. He was always waiting for his sons, whether the elder, who lived nearby, or the younger, whose fate had taken him more than 250 kilometers away from their childhood home.

People also loved and respected Afanasii for his tidiness. Not every housewife kept things as spotless everywhere as he did. And he was so proud of the first washing machine that Aliosha brought him. For him, it was almost the greatest invention of mankind after the wheel. Try washing bedsheets, duvet covers, curtains, towels, and work clothes by hand. And that aching leg made itself known, so he was careful with it. He never divided chores into those meant for women and those meant for men. He buckled down and did the job. He never put off things until tomorrow. He washed the dishes right away, just like everything

else – here and now! And Oleksiy was the spitting image of Afanasii. His father passed away eight years after his mother's death. He was sorting strawberries when a stroke cut him down. It was fortunate that someone entered the yard and alerted Volodia, the eldest son. By the time he got there and the ambulance was called, the time was lost. They didn't take him to the hospital, but left him to die at home. When Oleksiy arrived from Mykolaiv, he found the finest injections, and each day an ambulance would come from Balta five times. They found a retired nurse in the village who tended to him. Until the very end, he remained conscious and of clear mind. When he looked at Aliosha, his eyes filled with tears. He understood everything, yet could no longer speak. He barely lasted two weeks in bed. And was gone.

What heartfelt letters the son wrote to his father. Whether he was studying or already working in Mykolaiv, he never forgot about his father. All the letters, all the holiday cards preserved. There were telegrams too. The senior Vadaturskyy must have read and reread them dozens of times – those worn pages... Christmas, Easter, birthday greetings. Or his worries about not coming home to help dig up the potatoes, because his group was sent to harvest grapes for two weeks. It's all there in the letters. Who knows if anyone else ever had a bond quite like that in their life?

Afanasii Fedorovych lived for 77 years, and Fenia Ivanivna for 72. Not all that many. Both worn out from hard work. Both were laid to rest with a priest's blessing, carried by hand to the cemetery, though it was quite a distance. The son had modest headstones placed for his parents, just like everyone else. It seems there was nothing extraordinary about it, but before the war, he told me he wanted to modernize them – he could already picture how. He didn't get the chance...

I had a son, born in 1962, who from almost the very beginning of NIBULON worked as a driver for Aliosha for 17 years in a row. When Yura returned from the army, and he started working as a tractor driver at the Mykolaiv port. After a while, Oleksiy came to the village during his vacation. The two of them met and decided that my son would take driving lessons. He got his license and started driving Oleksiy around. It seemed they worked from dawn till dusk. Times were hard for everyone, but Oleksiy would reassure, "Just hang in there a little longer, it'll get easier!" He saw further and clearer than most, and losing was never in his nature. He followed through on everything he started. But it was never easy. You should have seen the sparkle in his eyes when Yura told me about Aliosha and the important work he was doing for Ukraine. They shared a bond of trust that needed no words. My son understood Oleksiy without a word, at a mere glance, a wave of the hand. And Yura never let anyone down. But then tragedy struck – my son's kidneys began to fail. For eleven years, he fought for his life. Oleksiy did all he could to help us. An surgery was required, but we

couldn't find a donor kidney. He passed away at just 47... Aliosha was abroad at the time and couldn't make it to the funeral. But there was Raisa Mykhailivna and the team from NIBULON – they took care of everything, arranged it all, and helped in every way. My Yura is buried not far from Oleksiy's parents...

Oleksiy and Raia's wedding was modest. Father made three liters of home-distilled horilka and went himself, leaving mother to tend the household. Only their closest friends came to celebrate. I read about it in one of the letters. They got married in winter, just before the New Year. Raisa came to the village in the summer. Fenia was just herding the cows out to pasture when she said that Aliosha had come, and not alone. They went out into the garden, and so did we. There, we started talking. The Vadaturskyy's daughter-in-law was very pleasant, kind, and hospitable. Aliosha was lucky to have her as his wife, and she was lucky to have him.

How delighted grandpa Afanasii was when his grandson was born! Andriy would come more often with his mother Raia, and Oleksiy was always busy with work. Andriy was a lively little boy, always tagging along with his grandfather wherever he went. When Afanasii was building a house for Volodia, his grandson was always right there by his side. One moment he'd grab a saw, the next – a hammer. "Andriy, don't climb there – here, take these blocks and build something!" he gently coaxed the little boy. "Grandpa, look what a beautiful house I've built," he called out in no time. Those rustic "blocks" were scraps cut from wooden blanks.

For the first ten years after his father's death, Aliosha planted beets, potatoes, and carrots in the garden. He could've easily bought everything in Mykolaiv, but those things carried the scent and taste of childhood, his father's home, and the dearest land of all. And then, when he saw he couldn't keep up – more work, more problems piling up – he handed me the keys. He entrusted me with the garden and the homestead. I unlock, open up, and let the fresh air in. Oleksiy carried out the necessary repairs. Everywhere feels cozy, bright, and tidy. Every year, he was either sent or came to collect homegrown walnuts, homegrown grapes (the simple, rustic, deep-blue kind), and homegrown pumpkins. I learned about Aliosha and Raia's tragedy from the news on television.

Everyone was grieving. I thought I was losing my mind, unable to pull myself together.

After his parents died, I was the closest person in the world to Aliosha. I envy myself for that and rejoice, for the Lord blessed me with such a radiant soul. Sometimes, even with family, you're not lucky enough to have a bond like that. I was at the funeral in Kyiv...

I still can't believe he's gone, as if he might return any moment...



Tetiana Kviatkovska
(engineer-economist, senior payroll accountant
at NIBULON Ltd. (1992–2023)).

After graduating from the Mykolaiv Shipbuilding Institute (specializing in economics) during the Soviet era, I was assigned to the design and engineering bureau "Progress," where I was later laid off due to downsizing. In the late 1980s, work was scarce, no one was placing orders, and entire departments were being laid off. The ruthless Soviet machine of that time was breaking apart. I got a job at the Bread Administration, which no one was planning to cut back; at most, it might be reorganized. After all, bread is the head of all things – always needed, by everyone. There, I worked as an economist at the computing center of the Mykolaiv Regional Administration of Grain Products. At the very same place where Oleksiy Opanasovych began his career, first as head of the production department, and later as deputy head of the department. That's how things turned out for me in life, even though bread and vessels aren't easily connected at first. But

how masterfully Oleksiy Vadaturskyy and NIBULON managed to bring them together, where I was fortunate to work for three decades! The company was just in its infancy, with only six people working there – I was the seventh. My friend Larisa Buryk recommended me to Oleksiy Opanasovych. He invited me to meet with him. We talked. And I was hired.

Interestingly, they were all still officially employed by the Regional Administration of Grain Products at the time, and simultaneously working at NIBULON. Since I came from outside, I became the first full-time employee of the newly established company. For many years, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy himself repeatedly emphasized this at various meetings, saying that it all started with me. Although everyone clearly understood who was the very first and most important – the driving force and brain behind NIBULON, so to speak, right from its infancy. What irritated Oleksiy Opanasovych the most in his government job was the bureaucracy. He loved setting goals and achieving them, not just wasting time during the workday. He craved concreteness – something that could be found in private business. He had reached that boiling point where he was no longer afraid to take on any task and be accountable for its final outcome. At the grain products plant, he realized that working for a company without capital – armed only with knowledge, will, desire, and creativity – didn't interest him. He saw his path clearly and wasn't afraid to follow it.

I started working in the accounting department, where there were only two of us at first, but we had to handle a variety of tasks. The accounting side, however, was always there. The company grew stronger and expanded. This period was the most exciting – everything was new and unexplored, and youth added its energy.

For a while, I worked as a cashier; later, I handled reporting and suppliers. It wasn't until May 2000 that Oleksiy Opanasovych promoted me to senior payroll accountant. He trusted me to manage this area for 23 years. I started alone, but over time, I had five employees under my supervision. Notably, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy had a sharp eye for people and always chose the best. One of the first people he trusted the most was Valentyna Semenivna Doroshenko, the company's chief accountant. A woman of rare kindness, with a genuine God-given talent for accounting. I say this not because she is gone – may she rest in heaven – but because it's true; that's how it was. It's hard to imagine NIBULON without her. She was the reliable keystone that inspired confidence in the future. Valentyna Semenivna had known Oleksiy Vadaturskyy since their days at the grain products

administration, where they all came from. Oleksiy Opanasovych was demanding in his work. He taught us to never give up. If he set a task, there was no question it wouldn't get done. No matter how difficult it was. Even when everything seemed lost and you felt like giving up in despair, at some moment your mind would kick in, and you would find a solution. Using a car metaphor, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy didn't know how to drive in fourth or fifth gear – only sixth, and always at full throttle. And he expected the same from those under his command.

We never had situations where you couldn't succeed or failed. NIBULON was a school of life and a test for everyone. And this helped a lot; we were raised with traditions that made a person better, stronger, and more confident. Those with the NIBULON spirit reached their goals at every crossroads in life.

When Oleksiy Opanasovych faced challenges or difficulties, he lived through them, sought the best solutions, feared nothing, kept learning, and was in constant pursuit of knowledge. That life drive was always within him, setting him far apart from other leaders.

Always well-dressed, he radiated not only health but also a vibrant zest for life. He was a great lover of life. He lived by a noble creed, creating according to his own formula:

"My life is proof that when you have a dream to win and become a leader, there are no limits to human potential." And that was the essence of Vadaturskyy.

And what a strategist he was! He had incredible foresight – his mind was like a computer that never succumbed to viruses. Like a great chess grandmaster, he could see very, very far ahead. He was, above all, a very wise person.

Our salary levels were always high. Much higher than average. I remember how in the 1990s, Oleksiy Opanasovych would come in and ask us, "Why aren't you taking out loans?" Take from the company. Why don't you? Go ahead, take it!" NIBULON offered interest-free loans. And we listened to him. I remember using my first loan to buy a Philips TV, a foreign vacuum cleaner, and some other home gadgets. A small amount was deducted from my salary, and the loan was quietly paid off. Plus, with inflation and rising pay, I was paying back pennies. Loans were given to our employees for various needs, even for buying homes. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy allocated a lot of money for medical aid and health care. He was a benefactor not only to our employees but also to everyone who came to him for help.

Financial aid was provided to employees, and in the 1990s, before September 1st, funds were allocated for children so families could

buy everything needed for school. While many companies paid wages in goods like underwear or socks during the crisis, we received real money. We hardly even felt it – we had good salaries, solid payments, and material support. It felt like we were living on an island, in our own sheltered bay. Oleksiy Opanasovych shielded us from the negativity that the whole country was going through. When the company grew to seven thousand employees, it was natural that the scale of such support would shrink. I always coordinated salary levels with the boss and was also in charge of the staffing plan. People stayed with the company and worked hard, but they were paid well and on time.

I can confirm that at NIBULON, there were never any "off-the-books" or "envelope" salaries – everything was transparent and above board. And it's been that way since the very first days of the company's existence. Oleksiy Opanasovych used to say it was a matter of principle for him. All taxes were dutifully paid, and the employees received their salaries clean and clear. Thanks to this, those NIBULON employees who had worked for many years now receive generous pensions. Endless gratitude to Vadaturskyy for that.

NIBULON under Oleksiy Opanasovych was all about pace – everything had to be done at full speed, bold decisions were the norm, and your mind had to stay razor-sharp at all times. Some said Vadaturskyy was difficult, not easy to work with, but given the scale of his ambitions and the country where he was born, and had to make his mark, he couldn't have been any other way. Otherwise, he wouldn't have become the man he was. Only the Lord knows how Oleksiy Opanasovych managed to keep up with such an intense pace. He once shared, "I've always been fascinated by how vessels are built, how it all comes together. I decided to dive into it all, and once I figured it out, I realized I could do it too!" And that's how our shipbuilding plant was born. NIBULON became the first and only agroholding in Ukraine to build its vessel.

He was curious about everything. The Spirit of the Lord guided him, the Lord chose him for this, and he had to walk his path and bear his cross. When Oleksiy Opanasovych said these words as part of the Big Money project:

"If someone wants to leave, we simply let them go. But when they come back, they aren't accepted. If a person writes a resignation letter once, they'll write one again tomorrow, the day after, and even three years from now, because they know how to do it," I immediately thought of myself. Guilty, I lost my temper once, and a conflict with the chief accountant flared up out of nowhere. I wrote and submitted

a resignation letter. Oleksiy Opanasovych was also a rare kind of psychologist. He looked people in the eyes and read them like a book. He smiled, looked at me, understood everything, and said, "Don't make me grow gray hair today. Go and get to work."

I'm calm and even-tempered, always able to find common ground with everyone, so the moment I heard those words of support, I instantly felt at ease.

When I finally reached retirement age, I came to him and said it was time to take my well-deserved rest. To that, he replied: "Keep working – we'll retire together."

He took it very hard whenever someone called him an oligarch. It hurt because, unlike them, he had achieved everything on his own, with his mind and hard work. It pained him that Ukrainians reacted to successful people like a bull to a red flag. For years, our people couldn't believe that a business could be built without corruption and kickbacks.

He loved and supported Mykolaiv. During the coronavirus epidemic, he renovated the hospital's infectious disease ward, paid salaries to the city's defenders in 2014, ensured every employee mobilized from the company to the front since 2022 – there were many of them – and maintained the average salary.

A few days before February 24, 2022, after work, I left the office and saw Oleksiy Opanasovych. He was talking with my husband, who had come to pick me up. I joined their conversation. It was very long. It felt like Oleksiy Opanasovych had some bad premonition and couldn't get everything off his chest. He recalled how we got started in the 1990s and shared various stories. We laughed a lot, and then he thanked us for listening and said, "How lucky I am to have met you – now that I've talked with you, I feel lighter..."

Now I feel a deep sadness without Oleksiy Opanasovych. I wish I could see him once more, hear his voice, and say the words of gratitude that were left unsaid.

On July 31, 2022, I was in Germany when I read about that immense and irreparable tragedy in the morning online. Though I was far away, my homeland ached in my heart every day. That threw me completely off balance.

That night, my house was damaged – the ceiling collapsed, and the windows were blown out... Neighbors called and sent a terrifying video.

We will rebuild...

But we are alive. We have to live...



Ivan Kyrylenko

(politician, first Minister of Agrarian Policy of Ukraine, 2000–2002; Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine for Agrarian Affairs, 2002–2005; People's Deputy of Ukraine, 2nd–9th convocations).

"The great is seen from afar"; "The true size of a tree is known only when it falls" – these classic aphorisms perfectly capture how we should now recognize the talent of the great Ukrainian Oleksiy Vadaturskyy. We still have the duty to duly appreciate his merits and contributions: who he was for Ukraine, for Mykolaiv region, for the agricultural sector, and, perhaps sounding grandiose, for the global economy, into which we are already integrated at a molecular level.

In the history of independent Ukraine, I was not the first Minister of Agriculture; however, due to public administration reform, not only the name but also the very essence of this institution changed. Previously, the Ministry dealt with production, food security issues, cultivation, and procurement... For my part, I had to be present at the very beginnings of sectoral agricultural policy.

I recall that incredible time with a mix of awe and anxiety: as the ancient classic said, "God forbid you live in times of great upheavals and transformations..." And indeed, on the threshold of the third millennium, nearly ten years into independence, most sectors of the economy (industry, trade, transport, services) had already grasped the basics of market relations and were finding their footing. Only the agricultural sector – nationalized both in form (collective farms, state farms, agricultural cooperatives) and in substance (instead of market prices and money, there was nothing but barter) – was worn out, barely hanging on, and lay almost lifeless on its side. A terrible end – or a horror without end – the dilemma was resolved by the radical Presidential Decree of December 3, 1999. Its essence was a fundamental reform of the sector, starting with new private forms of management. Simply put, the collective farm administrative system was abruptly dismantled, and it was necessary to immediately create fundamentally new entities in place of the 15,000 collective farms – private farms, companies with varying levels of liability, cooperatives, and so on. Add to that the meager state support budget of UAH 200 million, the bankrupt Agricultural Bank 'Ukraine', the near-collapse of the State Joint-Stock Company

'Bread of Ukraine', and the dire state of the State Reserve... In short, the mood among farmers at the time teetered between confusion and despair." On January 10, 2000, during this dramatic time for the sector, I was appointed Minister of Agrarian Policy. There was every reason to throw up one's hands in despair! In just a month or so, fieldwork was already set to begin in the South. There was no time to think. Instead, the situation called for swift, clear, well-considered, and consistent action. But where to find such a recipe, formula, or model?

There were certainly some preliminary developments. Leonid Petrovych Kozachenko, an active reformer and market advocate (then serving as Deputy Prime Minister), was a great help to me. I also had close cooperation with Pavlo Ivanovych Haidutskyi from the Presidential Administration, a true expert in his field and an excellent analyst. But only a hands-on practitioner, seasoned by personal experience, could truly know what to do and what to avoid...

And he was found! In the first days on the job, the then-head of Mykolaiv Regional State Administration called and asked me to meet a very interesting person. And indeed, the next morning, a gray-haired man firmly shook my hand. At first, I thought the meeting would be just a routine, formal introduction. But Oleksiy Opanasovych Vadaturskyy turned out to be someone quite different.

This meeting and informal conversation remain vividly in my memory, down to the smallest details and intonations. He could

already feel the pulse of time, of what would come tomorrow and the day after. Even then, he struck me as a kind of grandmaster of the smartest moves – the ones that would yield the best result.

Oleksiy Opanasovych began by saying that Ukraine is an agricultural country – it was, is, and always will be. Moreover, one of the key players in the world! Its geography, climate, soil, and traditions – everything confirms this truth! No matter what anyone says, the agricultural sector will remain the main driving force of the national economy. And most importantly, we don't just trade raw materials, because they require the highest investment: technologically preparing and tending the soil, buying quality seeds, treating, sowing, fertilizing, caring for the crops, harvesting, drying, transporting to the elevator, and then to the port. These are huge costs, costs, and more costs... Someone else then takes the finished product, under closed roofs, wearing white coats, and turns it into dozens or hundreds of types of products that generate incomes beyond anything we could even dream of! And what about the jobs, the budget, the foreign currency... That's where the conversation began. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy spoke sharply and brilliantly, laying everything out clearly and to the point. He didn't read from a script; everything was organized in his mind like a well-read book. "There will be no reform, and no one will get it moving, if the owner doesn't have a clean slate," he told me. "If we don't start everyone off on equal footing." And what did a "clean slate" mean then? Massive debts to the budget, banks, and the Pension Fund. Unpaid wages go without saying. In most cases, it came to the point where they had to slaughter livestock to settle their debts! So, it was urgent first of all to write off the debts to start the reform; otherwise, agriculture would be completely doomed. No private farmer would agree to come and start working with debts that had been accumulating for years! And how to pay them back?

Second, the state had no money, and banks were giving exorbitant credit facilities with interest rates of no less than 40 percent. To take them, you had to have both good collateral and profitability of 50% or more. Such a thing was unthinkable. And what about the resources: fertilizers, crop protection products, quality seeds, machinery, fuel – all of which require huge amounts of money? The key question was clear – a preferential loan was needed! The third thing Oleksiy Vadaturskyy proposed was new mechanisms for material support: let's immediately pave the way for leasing, forward contracts, and reducing resource costs through state reimbursements. This would multiply the effect of every hryvnia invested. It is also necessary to address subsidies per hectare for critically important crops, for livestock heads, and for the development of the devastated orchards

and vineyards, especially irrigation in the South. Just like that – word by word – I felt that before me stood a true professional, a person ready and capable of accomplishing serious things. During that conversation, I noted down the 10 priority points for implementing the reform we had begun. And although I had to go through a serious school of life – as head of a collective farm, as a manager, and dealing with the social development of the village when I was the first deputy head of the regional administration... all of that was also a chapter in a book already read, yet no one had prepared us back then for a market economy. But he was already prepared for it – and, importantly, not to resist it, but to act!

The 10 reformist points proposed by Oleksiy Vadaturskyy required the urgent adoption of 10 laws by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. I was fortunate that the Agrarian Committee was headed by Kateryna Vashchuk, a person with progressive and pragmatic views. She understood the essence with barely a word and gave the green light. Back then, we held weekly conference calls, and it was a great joy to tell thousands of agricultural workers: "You asked, we delivered!" And indeed, the new laws were revolutionary. There was strong resistance from many agencies, but we went to the President and said, "Sign it – after all, this is your reform. Without this, nothing will happen!"

And he signed! As a result of that conversation with Oleksiy Opanasovych, we managed to write off all the debts that stood in the way of the newly established reformed private farms. We were able to temporarily suspend payments to the Pension Fund for several years to allow everyone to get back on their feet. The Fund assumed the state's obligation to pay pensions to rural residents without requiring the corresponding contributions.

A leasing company was established to provide access to state-owned agricultural machinery. Those who could afford to purchase domestically produced machinery outright were offered a 30% discount. We settled matters with fuel producers. I went to the Kremenchuk oil refinery, and together with the director, we agreed on acceptable fixed prices for diesel fuel for the sowing campaign and the harvest.

This is what was done immediately, within a few weeks – just as Oleksiy Opanasovych had proposed. This had a significant impact on the entire agricultural policy of the country. He truly guided and helped take the necessary steps. We also discussed the longer-term outlook, including subsidies for specific crops, support for livestock farming, and VAT exemptions. These essential measures were also accomplished: though taxes were levied on the farmers, the funds remained within their grasp, providing the means for equipment and

supplies. Additionally, VAT from the sale of livestock products was refunded to further support the sector's development.

More than that, we achieved something almost incredible: for many years, a single fixed tax was established for all agricultural producers. For nearly a decade, they paid into budgets at all levels six times less than other business entities. The reform was unfolding in difficult times. After all, when has it ever been easy for us? I remember that in the year 2000, we harvested only about 22 or 24 million tons of grain. Such a meager yield...

But Oleksiy Vadaturskyy held his ground: "If we start from a clean slate with no interference from the state, just wait and see what agriculture will look like in three or four years." To me, he seemed like a dreamer out of touch with reality! How could I see it any other way, when all around lay desolation – fields left fallow, untouched by the plow? And he didn't stop talking. He spoke about his plans, which seemed like pure fantasy. He dreamed of becoming a grain trader. At that time, everyone looked at this idea with apprehension, believing that traders exploited farmers for their own excessive profits. That was our typical

But none of that unsettled or held him back. How can we assist you? "At least at the start, don't get in the way, and make sure others don't either." The wish was timely, because back then the minister had a lot of power... And there were plenty of those eager to obstruct him, especially as he started achieving real breakthroughs... Today, one can say that Vadaturskyy succeeded not because of, but despite it all! He had visited countries where no one got in the way, where the established rules of the game were respected. He wanted to see the same happen in our country.

Just as Oleksiy Opanasovych had foreseen, within three or four years, the agricultural reform began to take root and come to life. Investments started to flow in, and funding was finally found. What was not prohibited became permitted. Large agroholdings with vast land banks began to emerge. Because it wasn't prohibited or restricted. And we went through that school ourselves. Large capital has no love for 50 hectares – that's just not its playing field. But small-scale farming must also grow: it's about employment, a way of life, and stability. This is how it works in most countries – and it will be the same here.

Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was eager to live; he was the kind of person who made you feel like a craftsman by his side. He belonged to those creators who break through the routine logic of existence, intolerant of clichés and stagnation. Here and now! Because tomorrow will be too late! Thanks to such builders, we are living. They burn themselves out, sacrificing everything to pave the way for others...



Leonid Kozachenko

(Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine for Agricultural Affairs (2001–2002);
President of the All-Ukrainian Agrarian Confederation;
scholar; public figure).

His number remains saved in my phone's contact list. I just can't bring myself to delete it. I fully understand that keeping it won't bring the person back, yet I can do nothing about it. How I miss his voice, his advice, his comforting words. I want to call him in Mykolaiv and ask, "How are you doing?" "What's new with you, Oleksiy Opanasovych?"... An unspeakable sorrow, a painful ache – because it's all in the past now, only memories remain.

We first met at an event organized by the League of Agro-Industrial Entrepreneurs, which I was leading. Interestingly, fate brought us even closer together in Hanover, Germany, at an international exhibition in the late 1990s. He hadn't established a serious business yet, so his presence there even came as a surprise. So I asked him, "What are you doing here?" Oleksiy Opanasovych calmly replied that he had too many

issues he wanted to resolve. He was always eager to learn, seeking to deepen his knowledge and meet people who would be important for his journey. He told me then that he planned to invest huge sums into the development of agriculture, confident and hopeful that it would become a reliable source of income. Honestly, I found it hard to believe that he would manage to accomplish any of what he told me back then. At that time, Oleksiy Opanasovych spoke Russian. And he likely began speaking exclusively in his native language only from the moment he was deservedly awarded the title of Hero of Ukraine. He believed he had to be a role model, a standard to follow – and it no longer seemed fitting for him to speak any language other than the one he had absorbed with his mother's milk, on his native land, granted to him by God. And whenever a Russian word slipped into my speech, Vadaturskyy would immediately correct me, firmly insisting that such things were unacceptable. Even during the war, when I read something factual or news in Russian to Oleksiy Opanasovych (he sometimes asked for certain information), I made every effort to translate it properly into Ukrainian. So that it would be pleasing to him. Just as it was for me.

There were eight years between us – I was the younger one. We were always on formal-you terms. And always addressed each other with special respect. He never missed a single one of my birthdays; he would travel from Mykolaiv to Kyiv just to congratulate me. He had misunderstandings with one of our major agricultural businessmen, and at the celebration, I tried to mediate between them. And it worked! And he was always the first to raise a glass to that. He wished for me to do everything possible to strengthen Ukraine. His homeland was always and everywhere his top priority.

When I served as Ukraine's Vice Prime Minister for Agrarian Affairs, I understood that a person like Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was truly worth investing my time in. He was always full of ideas. He was always focused and purposeful. What took others up to five years to achieve, he managed to accomplish in just three. He worked by the principle: it's too late to live tomorrow. He could never be told that I didn't have certain information, or that I would respond later after gathering and preparing the data. He would object, saying, "Why do you need as much as three days?" There were times when he would ask again, "Is that Leonid Petrovych or someone else? That's not you!" And he would add, "Confirm for me that it's really you!" I had to know everything – and immediately! He often scolded me because there were 1,500 commercial enterprises in the agricultural sector, and back then, 900

of them were under the Ministry's control. He couldn't understand the need for the State Reserve and as many as two agricultural funds. And on top of that, there was the State Grain Food Company. All of them taken together pay less in taxes than his NIBULON alone. In the entire European Union, there were only about 200 such enterprises across 28 countries! He knew everything. And he was right. He could accuse me of being in cahoots with them if I didn't implement the necessary reforms. "Prove it!" I said to him. "I don't have the proof yet, but I'll find it," he insisted. He couldn't wait long for change. He wanted them now, and only now. Such potential as Oleksiy Opanasovych possessed in the country's agricultural sector was hard to find in anyone else. For him, there were no weekends, holidays, or vacations. Most importantly, it was the work he did and accomplished. Now, looking back in time, you can feel how eager he was to create. Creator! That was his Lord-given purpose. Sometimes even he didn't fully realize what he was doing. The Spirit of the Lord was guiding him. He once complained to me that the Dnipro's riverbed near Kaniv needed deepening – then his barges could travel not only as far as Kyiv but beyond. Yet, the State River Fleet hadn't carried out any dredging. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy created a project and wanted to handle the deepening himself, but the funds spent were supposed to be credited against future payments for passing under the bridges during lock navigation, where the hydroelectric stations are located. Such a move would have been beneficial for the state. I looked into the matter and, as it turned out, the state agency wasn't interested – Oleksiy Vadaturskyy's proposed costs were half as much as what the State River Fleet intended to spend. NIBULON did it three times faster, too. They wouldn't even allow him to deepen the Dnipro at his own expense, which frustrated him. He accomplished a lot despite the obstacles.

Oleksiy Vadaturskyy never forgot to invite me to the openings of his new projects – be it elevators, terminals, or the launch of barges and tugboats built in his yards. He often asked me to come and speak in English at various events where many foreigners were present.

By the way, I was amazed at how quickly he could strike a deal with the International Finance Corporation, persuading them to support him and provide the initial funds for building logistics centers. I was familiar with this organization, as its representatives had approached me on more than one occasion. And not only regarding matters related to NIBULON's operations. Right after the first tranche, they were surprised that Mr. Vadaturskyy fulfilled his commitments; they trusted him and weren't afraid of any risks. They provided him with

additional funds, and soon other banks joined this noble endeavor, lining up eagerly to offer financial support. It was a time when powerful companies in agriculture were finding their footing, building their businesses from the ground up. I knew them all well and did my best to help in any way I could. They used completely different approaches and tools from Mr. Vadaturskyy, but he was the one who amazed the most. Alongside agriculture, he was also involved in shipbuilding and a robust logistics operation. New investors had entered this field before, but they hadn't succeeded. Meanwhile, Oleksiy Opanasovych – who until then had hardly been involved – was working wonders.

In shipbuilding, he managed to preserve the team of specialists who had previously worked in Mykolaiv. He actively supported and promoted educational institutions that trained specialists for this vital sector of the national economy.

Honestly, I don't even know when Oleksiy Vadaturskyy ever took a break. Like a power plant, he constantly recharged himself and was always on the move. Everything he touched grew like mushrooms after the rain. At first, there were just two, three, five elevators... He designed and built new, ultra-modern barges and tugboats unlike any others in the world. The plans included selling such products to European Union countries. One time I asked him, "Your company is valued at nearly a billion dollars." And yet, you only have a single car that you use everywhere. Every time, you cover vast distances. What takes you three days to travel by road, a helicopter could cover in just three hours. You can fly from Mykolaiv to Kyiv. And get to Kaniv, to your logistics centers along the Dnipro. He immediately asked, "How much would that cost, and what would be the pilot's salary?" "A helicopter of the class suitable for you costs around $250,000. Pilots earn well, at least two thousand dollars a month..."

"That's a huge amount of money! I only need to fly to Kyiv five times, and the pilot gets paid two thousand a month? And the helicopter, costing $250,000, would just be sitting there? No, I won't switch from the car. The money saved will go back into the business," Vadaturskyy concluded. He was fortunate to have a wonderful wife. She had a remarkable influence on him and was always there to support him, no matter where or when. The couple was lucky with their son. Andriy is also strong-willed; he, too, will work with the same intensity. In recent years, he has been gaining European training and experience. It helped him evolve in modern business trends. I'm confident he'll handle everything. A tremendously difficult time, but he wouldn't be Vadaturskyy if he didn't continue his parents' work at the highest

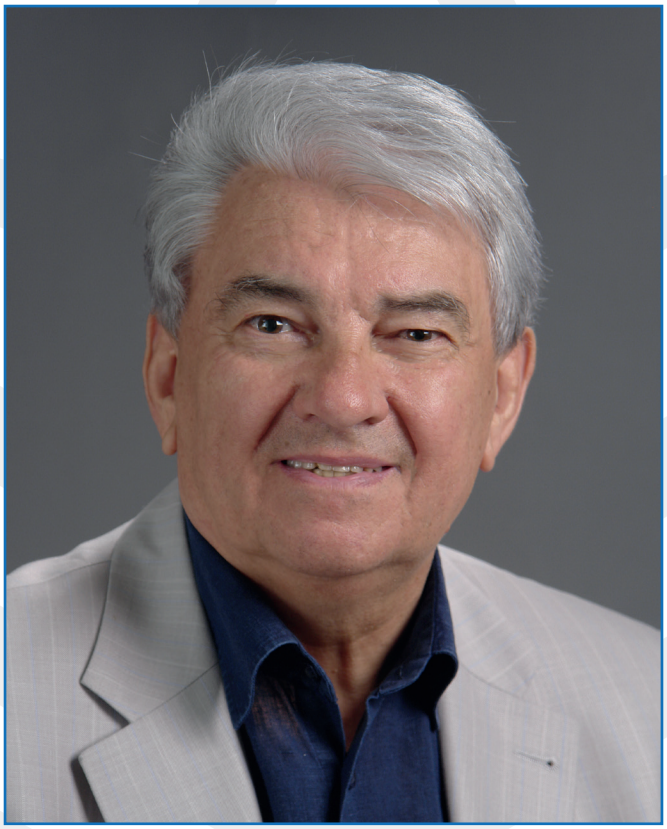
level. And it couldn't be any other way. I remember the year 2015. The sanctions on Iran over its nuclear weapons program. And we were supplying a great deal of food there. According to UN conventions, sanctions do not apply to food, medical supplies, and equipment. I flew to the U.S. and convinced the relevant authorities. The Americans asked me to provide a list of companies that would be working with Iran. Our list included ten companies with an impeccable reputation, or so it seemed to me. They chose one. Mykolaiv-based NIBULON! Interestingly, that's when I was lucky to learn the truth about the other nine. I was told, "NIBULON's authority is unquestionable – second to none."

According to their records, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy's company had never resorted to dirty tactics – not a single violation on its record. It operates cleanly, openly, and transparently. That didn't surprise me in the least. But when it came to the others, I was stunned. The Americans opened my eyes – their depth of knowledge was astonishing. They know everything!

NIBULON has always had the best global reputation. It always ranked first in all international grain supply tenders. I believe that Andriy Oleksiyovych will not only preserve but also enhance the legacy of his renowned father's company.

While Vadaturskyy was successfully developing his business, he was offered to launch a similar project in Russia, on the Volga. It was as if he sensed something – he never accepted such proposals. His suspicions were fully confirmed in 2014, when the issues with Crimea, Luhansk, and Donetsk began: "I was right. I'll never invest a single penny there! I would have never forgiven myself if I had ever set foot there!" He didn't even consider Russians to be human. And rightly so! Delegations from different countries came to see him, considering it a great honor to cooperate with Vadaturskyy. He always told everyone the same thing: "When I've done everything in Ukraine, then I'll go abroad."

I kept in constant contact with Oleksiy Opanasovych throughout the war, and the last time we spoke was just three days before his death. "Why are you in Mykolaiv? Why don't you leave?" I asked him. "I will not answer your question. You've asked me that question more than once. I've already answered you many times," he told me. And he said only one thing: he couldn't leave and wouldn't leave the place where his employees were. He had to stay close: "Why should I leave my native land?!" What I must do, and what I can do, I will do! This is not a whim of mine – we must save Ukraine..."



Vadym Kryshchenko
(poet, patriarch of Ukrainian song, public figure).

Once, Maksym Rylsky spoke words of gold: "If you write poems, then write – but never call yourself a poet, just as a builder does not claim the title of architect, and those who tend orchards don't call themselves gardeners, nor does a farmer call himself a bread giver. This is like the air you breathe – something you can't live without. Let others be the ones to give you that name." Throughout our lives, we encounter such remarkable and, sadly, rare individuals whose very names speak volumes. For example, Andriy Malyshko, Volodymyr Sosiura, and Maksym Rylsky are great poets, but whenever Oleksiy Vadaturskyy's name is mentioned, the well-deserved word "khlibodar" (bread giver) naturally comes to mind – a term that perfectly captures the trajectory of his earthly journey. All the honors he received in his lifetime faded beside the glory of this extraordinary figure. Not even the highest state honors changed a thing. It wasn't the Hero's Star that gave weight to the valiant work of this great Ukrainian – it was he who gave it honor. Everyone knows and understands it.

Once, I gave one of my poetry collections to Oleksiy Opanasovych, and he chose a poem for himself. We all know it well – with Hennadiy Tatarchenko's melody, it became a beloved song, brought to life by the unforgettable voice of Nazariy Yaremchuk.

When you listen to the lyrics, the image of Vadaturskyy comes vividly to mind. It's fascinating how things sometimes unfold: a poet doesn't seem to write with anyone specific in mind, yet years pass, and someone comes along who embodies the very soul of what was written. I recently listened to it again and thought that Nazarchyk was singing about himself. For he truly was a leader in the community of professional singers. And now I realize that Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was just as much a solitary leader in his grain farming field!

He rushes forth to save lost faith again...
A leader longing for what once had been,
To spread a broad and fearless wing
Upon the wind's resilient spring.
He calls the young, the spirited and bold,
But traces of the white-winged ones have rolled...
And soaring high on hope's elusive air,
His tired cry fades softly into despair.
Lonely leader, lonely leader flies alone,
Lonely leader, wings spread but on his own.
And then, with every sinew strained,
He broke from earth's enduring chain.
A swanlike surge, so bold, so bright,
He followed wings into the light.
He soars... But can we catch this fleeting flight?
A bird in flight is a bird indeed...
And no greater joy does it need than
to greet the day in the open sky.

One great voice once said: for one's native land, it is still unknown which son stands closer to its heart – the one who crafts its laws, the one who sows and gathers its wheat, or the one who gives it songs. What strikes me most in this reflection is that song and bread stand side by side with the word "law" – and, in a broader sense, with the word "life" itself. This is what is common between Nazariy Yaremchuk and Oleksiy Vadaturskyy – that law, invisible to an indifferent eye, of preserving and multiplying the good on their native land.

I never took the path of purely "creative bread," but had steady work. That "bread" provided the means to live on. I have only one entry in my employment record. I served as the Executive Secretary of the

Main Committee for the Exhibition of Achievements of the National Economy (VDNG) of Ukraine. I could have built a great career in that position. During the Soviet era, I was repeatedly offered to join and work at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine. I faced a choice: career or poetry. I'm glad I chose the right path. Though creative work is very challenging. One time, I heard these words from Platon Voronko: "I always thought that once I stepped into 'creative bread,' I would write more, since time was always scarce. And then it all stalled!" As it turned out, he wrote the most while he was working. When there was "no time." Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was of modest height, with a strong build, always energetic, active, and everywhere at once. I first saw him at the Exhibition in the early 1990s, at the dawn of our independence. He was holding a promotional campaign in support of agricultural enterprises – a true pioneer in that field.

Together, we managed to carry everything out successfully. Naturally, Vadaturskyy knew every detail and nuance – nothing escaped his attention. Later, the grateful

Oleksiy Opanasovych held a ceremonial event, where he organized various awards and personally presented each one. He invited me to the role of the master of ceremonies. I'll be honest – anyone who had the chance to work, even once, with a man so deeply rooted in both word and deed never forgot the experience. His eyes would always light up at the word "bread." More than anyone, he understood that grain must not only be harvested on time and stored properly, but also sold wisely – on the best possible terms – and delivered to the consumer. He spoke Russian at the time (after all, the capital was still under Moscow's influence, and we were to blame for that), but I could sense his inner struggle. His native language – the language of his mother – was alive within him, and it felt as though it was about to boil over and break free. It happened soon enough. And by that decision, he drew me even closer to himself. Now, it's simply impossible to even imagine Vadaturskyy speaking Russian, as he was a true, passionate Ukrainian to his core. And time confirmed this.

How could anyone trust someone who spoke about national issues yet switched to Russian? Oleksiy Vadaturskyy had a deeply rooted Ukrainian spirit within him. This also made me like him even more. He was always moving forward, constantly improving himself, and made sure never to miss any international agricultural exhibition around the world where he felt it could benefit both him and Ukraine. Everything Vadaturskyy did for the honor and welfare of Ukraine was close to my heart. I never saw him downcast; he was always friendly, smiling at me, and his noble spirit was unmistakable. He spoke not in a heavy way,

but with positivity, easily captivating his conversation partner with the topic. He listened attentively to others' opinions. And it happened dozens of times when he came to visit us at VDNG.

When I began my career after graduating from the Faculty of Journalism at Kyiv University, there was a true boom of exhibitions. Each region had exhibition departments within its regional executive committees. During Soviet times, the VDNG of Ukraine had the authority to encourage and award the best enterprises. Both industrial and agricultural. These could be cash prizes or cars.

I began back in 1958 (just as Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was starting fourth grade) as the chief editor of the exhibition radio. There were eight employees on our staff. The entire Ukraine knew the two main announcers. To this day, it's acknowledged that Petro Boyko was the best at reading Lina Kostenko's poetry, while our Yevheniya Kruglova was the first Ukrainian radio announcer to earn the title of Honored Artist. I had two literary staff members, a cameraman, and a sound engineer... Back then, I earned 120 karbovantsi, and with my very first salary, I bought a pair of domestic shoes that seemed to be the latest fashion craze worldwide.

The exhibition was like a whole city, a miniature state. Besides the pavilions, it had its own post office, restaurants, public eateries, grocery and industrial stores, workshops, a savings bank branch, and even its buses. The total area spanned 366 hectares. I was the one who wrote the first guidebook.

Years passed, eras changed, and so did the nature of promotional work. Whenever I heard something innovative about Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, I recalled the beginnings of his business and my modest connection to it. I am a child of the pre-war educational system,

and the war swept through my early years. I was born in Zhytomyr, surprisingly, in a student dormitory. My parents were studying at the time – my mother was in her fourth year, and my father (who enrolled later) was in his third. They were teachers. When Western Ukraine was united with the East in 1939, my father was assigned to work as a district party secretary in Lutsk. We lived there for two years, right beside the Styr River. The war came suddenly. On June 22, 1941, my mother went to Lviv. My father and I had to return to Zhytomyr region. There, my mother joined us as well. My childhood passed on the banks of the Khomora River, with my grandmother and grandfather in the village of Hlybochok, Baranivskyi district. I am familiar with all rural life – its twists, turns, and hardships. I remember very clearly how the fascists came to our land. So much blood was shed, so much destruction brought upon us. The Russian invaders brought to our

land horrors very much like those, even more terrible than wild beasts, with no respect for anything sacred. An army of looters, rapists, and murderers. The bloody Russians, full of sin and cruelty... The same tears, the same blood, the same destruction. I stayed in the capital, and from sorrow and pain, I write my poems. I still carry within me a deep, unhealed wound from the cynical murder of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy and his wife in Mykolaiv. In the first days of the tragedy, I wrote this poem for a great Man, a true Ukrainian.

MAY THIS NAME SHINE BRIGHT FOREVER

In memory of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, a great innovator in agriculture, Hero of Ukraine, and General Director of the renowned agricultural company NIBULON.

Praise to those who sow and reap on time
– A farmer's art, a practiced rhyme.
But harvest's not just fields to bind,
The bread must reach all humankind.
Few masters walk this humble way,
Yet none could shine more bright today
Than Vadaturskyy, foremost name
– May gold forever crown his fame!
He doubled Earth's abundant store,
and a grain stream flowed from shore to shore.
Among our heroes, brave and true,
This man stood tall, his honor knew.
But Putin's thugs with bullets fired,
The man was lost, the flame expired.
Yet greatness, glory will not die – they wave upon our flag on high!

My beloved Ukraine is wrapped in fire. The ruthless Russian invader seeks to break our spirit. NO WAY!!! Yes, today the nation is forged and united on blood. The nation of

winners! Hold strong! We will stand firm and triumph! We have become a strong, united, and unstoppable nation. And the world applauds us!

The Russians growl with the rage of beasts, but we will never yield or cease!

So let us warm our hearts with faith,
That the VICTORIOUS DAY WILL COME!

Glory to Oleksiy Vadaturskyy! Glory to our heroic Armed Forces of Ukraine!

Glory to Ukraine!



Oleksandra Kuzhel

(politician, public figure, Candidate of Economic Sciences, Chairperson of the State Committee of Ukraine on Regulatory Policy and Entrepreneurship (1998–2003, 2009–2010), Member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in the 2nd, 7th, and 8th convocations).

Two colors I have, two colors: red is for love, and black is for sorrow. Such are my memories of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy. Like all great figures, he was a man of many facets. A tough, at times even ruthless businessman. Yet fair. Honest with himself and true to the great cause of his life. Sincere with people. Uncompromising and often at odds with those in power. A patriot. Genuine – without any pretense. He loved Ukraine deeply. Until his very last breath. I first met Oleksiy Opanasovych during his second term as the head of the State Committee of Ukraine on Regulatory Policy and Entrepreneurship. At that time, the committee had a crucial mission – unfortunately lost today – we worked closely with entrepreneurs and public organizations representing small and medium-sized businesses. After joint consultations with them, we either approved or struck down regulatory acts issued by the

government and other state and local authorities. It so happened that I was the first in Ukraine to promote and implement regulatory policy and oversight of the state's regulatory impact on business – primarily small and medium enterprises – because they are, of course, the foundation of democracy in any developed country, the backbone of the economy, a source of jobs, and one of the key drivers of economic growth. It was precisely for supporting business development that I received an award from the United States – incidentally, the only Ukrainian woman to do so. Their recognition meant I was doing something right, especially given the combative attitude I faced from every single minister and official without exception. It seemed like I was fighting battles on all fronts!

Year 2009. I remember vividly the moment the reception announced the arrival of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, the head of NIBULON. A handsome man in an embroidered shirt stepped into the room. He was already a Hero of Ukraine. The first thing I said to him after greeting was, "I know why you've come, but I won't put my signature on it." The situation was this: the then-mayor of Mykolaiv, Volodymyr Chaika – a man of deep respect whom I knew well – intended to lease a section of the seabed to NIBULON for fifty years. Oleksiy Opanasovych wanted the Committee to grant him the right to manage that sizable patch of seabed for half a century. From a business perspective, I understood him well. I knew he needed clear passage for the vessels heading to the grain silos. At the same time, I fully understood the situation from the state's perspective: just beyond that area stood a state ship repair yard, and any government or military vessel coming in for repairs would be forced to pay a fee when passing through those waters in transit. The very act of leasing the seabed stands as a violation of the Constitution of Ukraine. At that time, the mayor of Kyiv was the 'hustler' Leonid Chernovetskyi, and it was chilling to even imagine the scale of his actions if he had learned of such a scheme – within six months, not a single resident of the capital would have been able to set foot near the Dnipro River – everything would have been sold off.

Vadaturskyy could hardly believe that I, as the committee chair, would refuse to give my approval. He felt it and realized that I would fight for the state until my last breath, for the truth was on my side. Not the state for the sake of the state, but for the people who live here. Of course, our first meeting was far from pleasant, and it seemed he left feeling resentful. And then there was the year 2017. The son of Oleksiy Opanasovych and I worked together in parliament, where a bill on the development of navigation was under consideration. I worked on drafting this bill with Andriy because I believed it to be a serious

state program. Unfortunately, over the many years of independence, navigation was neglected; the rivers were silted up, and their banks were overgrown. In former times, river networks served both the economy and passenger transportation. It is clear that it is far more sensible to transport cargo, such as grain, metal, ore, and construction materials, along the rivers rather than by roads, which quickly crumble under the weight of overloaded trucks, especially during the scorching summer months. And then, vast sums from the budget are spent repairing these roads. By the way, according to calculations by the Ministry of Infrastructure, transporting one million tons of cargo via river transport saves the state one billion hryvnias in road repair costs. But who among the powerful would ever turn away from the lure of such vast sums – where a third slips quietly into the pockets of the profiteers?

It was a true pleasure working with Andriy Vadaturskyy – a very decent, calm, and thoughtful man. Strangely, only two or three members of parliament supported us. Back in June 2017, to help the members of parliament grasp the full scope of the project and its economic and social importance for the country, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy proposed organizing a joint field meeting of the Verkhovna Rada's Committee on Transport and the Committee on Industrial Policy and Entrepreneurship. The deputies sped off in the "Raketa," a vessel built at Vadaturskyy's shipbuilding yard, heading to the Cherkasy region where the grain storage facility stood. Now, thanks to Oleksiy Opanasovych's determination, NIBULON stands as the only domestic company building civilian vessels from the ground up. The purpose of this meeting was to use the example of the Dnipro River to discuss the potential for developing inland waterways and to support Ukraine's shipbuilding industry. The ultimate goal: to harness the inland waterways for cargo transportation, thereby easing the burden on the roads and reviving the river's passenger and freight fleets to fully restore the industry's vitality!

In this matter, I was completely on Vadaturskyy's side – writing letters to the Prime Minister, urging that the Mykolaiv Shipyard be given to Oleksiy Opanasovych. For just one hryvnia, as the Germans did during their reconstruction period, so that he could restore it. They had dismantled the entire plant for scrap, while NIBULON was ready to invest funds into its repair and restoration.

When Oleksiy Opanasovych saw me, he probably thought I was going to be against him again. But after my speech, the head of NIBULON was so impressed and surprised that he sincerely thanked me. "I really don't want to settle our long-standing conflict, but I'm

doing it honestly because you are carrying out a very important state mission," I told him. I admire people like Vadaturskyy. I wish I had friends – and even enemies – who would give everything for the sake of a true dream. And he had it – that dream. No, not to buy a new car, a shiny yacht, or an estate in Europe – but to change the country for the better. He worked to improve the well-being of Ukrainians, created jobs, and grew grain – all so that Ukraine could thrive and prosper. I thank him for that. I'm grateful for his son as well – a truly decent and professional man.

I was ready to support Oleksiy Opanasovych in any way I could. As I traveled to see him on his own "Raketa," I carried a strong belief that together we could make a difference. Unfortunately, not everything depended on me: there were no government officials responsible for decision-making who could think on a national scale and appreciate the vast economic potential of Vadaturskyy's ambitious projects to revive shipping and shipbuilding.

That's how memory holds the image of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy – a giant of a man, held firmly by his native land, which seemed to breathe in rhythm with the pulses of his restless, great heart. This is memory. And the mind preserves the image of Vadaturskyy – as a true statesman. I've met a few people like him – those who place their country above their well-being. One of those rare souls who lived and worked in such a way – and whom the Lord sent to our people – was Oleksiy Opanasovych. In my lifetime, I can count people like Oleksiy Vadaturskyy on fewer than the fingers of one hand. And of whom I would be honored to speak such words. He was a nation-builder – that is what matters most. He thought in Ukrainian, lived for Ukraine, because he was Ukraine itself.

Like all strong, steadfast, and genuine people, he was not "convenient." For no government, for no official. Probably not even for himself. On that July day, when enemy missiles struck Oleksiy Opanasovych's home, it wasn't the wind or the storm that broke two lives. Treachery, betrayal, evil, and dark forces weakened the Ukrainian soil, and it could no longer hold the roots of the majestic tree. And for a moment, the heart of the land stopped beating in unison with the heart of the great man. At any time, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy could have left the country – he had the means and the resources, could have taken his wife with him, and waited it out abroad. But that wasn't who he was; that wouldn't have been the Vadaturskyy everyone knew.

Vadaturskyy did everything not to take, but to change and give more. Yes, he also wanted to live well, but not in a poor country. Not in a ruined land, not where people suffer. He always wanted to change Ukraine for the better.



Roman Leshchenko

(lawyer, lecturer, entrepreneur in the agricultural sector, and Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, 2020–2022).

On December 1, 2011, marking its 20th anniversary, NIBULON inaugurated its 20th modern elevator complex for receiving, storing, and shipping grain and oilseed crops – the Denykhivska branch located in the village of Denykhivka, Tetiivskyi district, the Kyiv region. I was 23 years old, but I remember every detail clearly, because on that very day, my late father (who passed away in 2019 due to illness) introduced me to Oleksiy Opanasovych Vadaturskyy. According to my father, the farmer, Vadaturskyy was the kind of person who, wherever he went and whatever he touched, made everything work, grow, and achieve incredible results for Ukraine. Many good things can be shared about this remarkable man, and all of them will be true. I will focus on a few key points to help understand what we have endured and what we are enduring now. In the positions he held – Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, Head of the State Service of Ukraine for

Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre, and Presidential Commissioner for Land Affairs – Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was a teacher and consultant, an agrarian titan and guru of his craft. He always supported me, and together we accomplished incredible work: "Roman, all of this needs to be removed – it's an obstacle. Include these changes in the draft law. This is corruption, this is the problem!" Having the opportunity to work with the Titan, I gained firsthand insight into what was holding us back and what urgently needed to be eradicated.

In 2021, NIBULON achieved its best-ever results in agricultural product shipments across the month, quarter, half-year, and calendar year. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy's project to build the Ochakiv fish canning plant was exceptional in its execution. With a national investor's investment of 50 million dollars and 1,000 jobs created, he envisioned a modern fish processing facility aimed at generating added value and tackling the issue of poaching. Oleksiy Opanasovych's vessels sailed along the Dnipro river, repeatedly getting entangled in poachers' nets. Such was the lawlessness of the homegrown fish mafia. He told me, "Romanchyk, I want to do with fish what we did with grain – build the infrastructure and offer a fair price." We'll focus on processing fish from the Southern Buh, the Dnipro, and the Black Sea – these are truly unique fish resources. Most importantly, we will transform from fish importers into exporters. It's a shame and disgrace: an agricultural country with great rivers and two seas imports fish! Don't we have our hake, pike perch, or flounder? I will be able to maximize the plant's capacity as a fisheries enterprise. I will build fishing vessels – trawlers. "Everything that's needed..." Then I asked Oleksiy Opanasovych:

"How many years have you been working on that project?" He snapped back, "Five! Everywhere – total corrupt practice, bribes, obstruction..."

I traveled to Ochakiv to get approval at the local level for such a unique project for Ukraine. Everything was at the finish line, but if not for the rascists, if not for that damned war, NIBULON could have also become a strong player in the fish industry with legitimate government approaches and strategic support for the country's food security. And Ochakiv would have had jobs, modern infrastructure, and significant revenues for the local budget. Oleksiy Opanasovych emerged as one of the key advocates, stressing the urgent need to abolish land appraisal in Ukraine and implement comprehensive land deregulation nationwide. Certificates, paperwork, and approvals were delayed for years, and bribes blocked business operations and gave officials unlimited discretionary powers. Thanks to practical collaboration with such Titans, my team managed to pass an entire package of bills on

deregulation and transparency of land relations. This project became a source of encouragement for Oleksiy Opanasovych. When he saw how successful it was, he couldn't believe that we had bypassed the corrupt hydra and implemented everything lawfully! A colossal effort ended in success. That moment felt like something out of a sci-fi story, and I'm very glad we achieved it together.

In synergy, government and business can accomplish incredible things that transform the economic landscape and generate added value. This is how a country becomes immortal – it must become so. And it's abnormal when the head of the land agency engages in such practices. But we had to go through all the stages to eliminate bureaucratic obstacles through legislation. And the whole business community benefited from this, not just Vadaturskyy. He was a pioneer in this, and the business community reaped the benefits. It was a great lesson and knowledge from Oleksiy Opanasovych.

In 2021, we achieved the highest and best results in the agricultural sector in Ukraine's entire history. They were just as strong for investments and harvests, as well as in expanding export markets. By restoring the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food for the country in 2021, we opened 23 new export markets, working around the clock (24/7). I spent more time on planes than on the ground. He met with presidents, prime ministers, kings, and sheikhs. Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, China, Egypt – he has been everywhere. We understood that by providing food for half a billion people, we become a factor in global politics and world markets, and the president's meetings with world leaders demonstrated new opportunities for Ukraine and shaped our economic nationalism – namely, in exchange for our export products, we can gain access to critically needed resources for Ukraine such as gas, oil, coal, and mineral fertilizers. Our cost of producing a ton of product was among the lowest in the world, and we were becoming increasingly competitive in international markets, especially compared to Russia. Having players like NIBULON, with its production, river fleet, infrastructure, and fast logistics – and most importantly, a reputation for reliably fulfilling commitments over decades. While serving as minister, I supported national companies like NIBULON, and the result is well known – we became the world's third-largest food exporter! In 2021, Ukraine's land reform successfully launched without protests or scandals. The entire market infrastructure started functioning. Transparent land auctions began, and the revenues of local communities from these institutional changes increased fourfold. NIBULON, as one of the flagships of Ukraine's agricultural sector, achieved record figures in one year,

shipping over 5.64 million tons of agricultural products for export. To 38 countries! Moved, Oleksiy Opanasovych called me and said, "Roma, we've broken through the wall there! We got certified there!" There was a result, there was prosperity – that was our synergy: when you travel and negotiate on behalf of Ukrainian businesses and companies, scaling up the country's export volume, and then, as a result, see the real growth of the agricultural GDP. Half of the foreign currency earnings come from agriculture, the largest share of investments is in agriculture, the highest growth is in agriculture, and the most new jobs are created in agriculture. I was only 33 years old, and I felt that we had become a problem because our agricultural sector was overwhelmingly powerful. A unique combination of productivity, production scale, and logistics to global markets – no one on the European continent had such a concrete advantage. Only Oleksiy Opanasovych delivered over a million tons of wheat to Egypt. I personally flew out for the negotiations. I communicated with the President of Egypt regarding the increase in food exports and broader cooperation. The Ukrainian company NIBULON was to undertake the largest project in Africa – NIBULON-2. With Ukrainian localized production, a Ukrainian team, and joint ventures with a state corporation. Our logic was this: Ukraine should become the main food exporter for Egypt, while Egypt would be our strategic gas supplier from new fields to reduce dependence on Gazprom.

The scale of Oleksiy Opanasovych's project and his plans were ahead of their time – they surpassed the goals of an entire generation. Just like what this man did and the vision he generated. He was respected worldwide, his company and reputation alike. My synergy with Oleksiy Opanasovych was rooted in concrete projects, reforms, and economic results. NIBULON is a flagship and a dedication to Ukraine. I wanted companies like these to grow; I did not share the policy of economic liberalism and non-intervention, the idea that the market will regulate everything on its own and that the minister should not care about Ukrainian companies or lobby for them in global markets. Why does French President Emmanuel Macron travel and negotiate for French Alstom locomotives, but we shouldn't negotiate for NIBULON in Egypt or the Middle East?! The name of

NIBULON is synonymous with the name "Ukraine," and that is exactly what economic patriotism means. Egypt was meant to become our window to Africa. By 2050, Nigeria alone will have up to 400 million citizens; this country will continue to grow, and Africa will have a significant population increase. Oleksiy Opanasovych had a forward-looking vision. He understood that we didn't need to fight

for European Union markets and shared the view that Southeast Asia and Africa are our future. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was a pioneer in this regard; Egypt was meant to become our window to Africa. Egypt is the Nile – a great river. The lifeblood of Africa. "We will build vessels and infrastructure, starting with Egypt, and then expand across all of Africa. There, to the Cape of Good Hope in the Republic of South Africa. We will achieve everything, accomplish it all," he told me. We had big plans and a huge amount of work ahead of us, and what happened to Oleksiy Opanasovych was by no means accidental. The Rascists threatened him, tried to lure him into negotiations, and systematically destroyed NIBULON's production assets.

To our enemies, Vadaturskyy was a bone lodged in their throat. Through his policy of economic patriotism, Oleksiy Opanasovych developed shipbuilding, which the Russians, using their agent network, bought out through so-called "investors," leading those enterprises to bankruptcy. They systematically destroyed them not only in Mykolaiv but throughout Ukraine. Africa is a strategic market for Russia. Wherever Ukrainian companies once operated, now there are rascists. As long as they bomb our ports and seize our markets. Wherever NIBULON operated, now the lawlessness of rascists companies runs rampant. The Kremlin understood that through the agricultural sector, added value, infrastructure, and new jobs, we could rapidly transform the structure of the national economy. A country with a population of 40 million that produces over 100 million tons of agricultural products can never die. Just as Ukraine restored land ownership rights to its people and was beginning to spread its wings, the rage of the Russians boiled over, and they set out to wipe it all out. Oleksiy Opanasovych was one of those giants standing in their way. I don't believe in any coincidences surrounding the tragic deaths of him and his wife, as I understand the broader context. For the enemy, he was a huge problem – one of the pillars of Ukraine's economic renaissance. Much depended on him. Had he survived, countless bold and grand projects – beyond imagination – would have awaited us. It will take several decades, and Vadaturskyy will be written about in books just as Khanenko and Tereshchenko were in their time. It was a profound honor and a unique act of divine providence to have worked alongside such a great man. I am a father of four sons, and above all, I will tell them about him. I learned a great deal from him, starting from when I was a young man of twenty, seeing his infrastructure, fields, and production firsthand. My perspectives were shaped under the influence of people like Oleksiy Opanasovych. Fortunately, our paths crossed, and I was lucky to work side by side with him.



Serhii Lungu
(personal driver of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, 2016–2022).

Only with the passing of years do you begin to realize that the Lord gave you not just much, but the greatest gift of all – the incredible joy of working and sharing moments beside a legend with the glorious and timeless name Oleksiy Opanasovych Vadaturskyy. Time flies, and yet I still wait for him to open the car door and say smiling: "Hello, Serhii!" Now we finally have some free time and can take a rest..." I had been waiting to hear those words from him because it always seemed like he worked around the clock, never took a moment for himself, and always reassured everyone: "Just a little longer, and it'll get easier!" But that "easier" never came... Long before I was appointed as Oleksiy Opanasovych's driver, I had already been working at NIBULON – and before that, I had driven many influential and well-known individuals. I already had experience with that kind of "work," and eventually it was decided that I was ready. The first permanent driver for the general director was the late Yuriy Zalevskyy (originally from Bendzary, the ancestral home of the Vadaturskyy family in Odesa region). Seventeen

years of working together forged a close bond between him and Opanasovych (that's how I called him; he always addressed me on formal "you" terms and called me Serhii).

It was 2016; I had just turned 33, and my boss (that's what I never called him) was approaching his sixties. I had met him many times before, because it was impossible for Opanasovych, when passing by his employees, not to greet them: if he had time, he would shake hands and even ask each driver how they were doing; if he was in a hurry, he would just nod his head. The head of the transportation department at

NIBULON called me over and informed me that I was being promoted to the position of the general director's driver, and that Vadaturskyy was aware of this – all the formalities had been agreed upon with him. Vadaturskyy trusted his department heads. And it had been that way for years, as each of them had endured the toughest moments working in the company alongside him. They were all skilled, close-knit, and trustworthy.

For the first time, we met face to face at the airport. He was returning from a business trip to Europe, and I had arrived in Odesa at the appointed time to meet the flight from Warsaw. I arrived ahead of time. The official vehicle for the top executive of NIBULON was a dark blue Mercedes S 500.

Of course, I was nervous, and Oleksiy Opanasovych noticed it – he was an excellent psychologist with a wealth of life experience. From the very first handshake and the first words, I felt a special warmth. He never divided people by their status or the prestige of their profession. To him, everyone was equal. Opanasovych was easygoing in conversation, yet his presence always shone with a special light and rare kindness. Although my father was Moldovan and my mother Ukrainian, I grew up in my native Mykolaiv region as a proud Ukrainian. Ukrainian has always been my native language. I spoke with Opanasovych only in Ukrainian. He didn't make any special remarks when I occasionally slipped into surzhyk or Russian, but I always heard noble, literary language from him, so I tried to respond in kind. He would notice which words I mispronounced or where I placed the wrong stress. So, right beside me, I also had a teacher of my native language. And what a teacher! The one known and respected by the world! And deservedly so! My father was gone early – I became an orphan young – but over the years, I felt a fatherly care coming from Opanasovych. He did it quietly, without making a show of it. Because that's how truly magnanimous he was – he simply couldn't be any other way. I grew attached to him as if we were bound by blood. I understood everything without a word; sometimes all it took was just a glance. His secretary had called me the evening before, letting me know when to pick him up in the morning

and where we'd be heading. The car, fueled up, washed, and spotless inside, stood ready in advance, awaiting the creator of the company's new day. Not once had I let him down – a trait Opanasovych took note of and respected me for. When we returned late from business trips, he'd tell me himself what we were doing the next day.

I spent the most time with Oleksiy Opanasovych, as our travels covered vast distances and happened almost every day. I was always aware that the comfort and safety of this great man's journeys to his destinations depended on me. Right from our very first meeting at Odesa airport, Opanasovych told me, "What we discuss, and what you hear in my phone conversations with others, must always stay inside the car." Now and then, he'd ask me how things were at home, how the family was doing. He wanted to be sure I had a sense of warmth and peace at home. Over the years we worked together, there was hardly a place we hadn't been to! All across Ukraine, in some places we visited dozens, even hundreds of times. Opanasovych traveled abroad by plane. For long journeys, he always brought a suit, hanging neatly on a hanger in the back seat. As those who saw it well remember, it was blue with white pinstripes. Whenever he was advised to, or sensed it was the right moment, he would fasten the Golden Star of the Hero of Ukraine to the lapel of his jacket. Thankfully, it fastened with a pin, so there was no need to pierce the fabric, unlike some other medals. He'd sit beside me in a tracksuit – he had quite a few of them, in all sorts of colors. When he put it on, he looked like a heavyweight athlete, a wrestler, or a kettlebell lifter. When it was warm, he liked wearing simple slip-on sandals with crisscross straps, bare feet slipping right in. When we arrived for meetings, say in Kyiv, sometimes he'd even change clothes right there in the car.

Opanasovych never allowed himself to eat in the car. He loved cleanliness and order, and he respected me for upholding it. On the way back from Kyiv to Odesa, we would stop at the restaurant "Zahadka", which had become our traditional spot for lunch or dinner. For Oleksiy Opanasovych, making sure his driver was fed was a matter of honor. Always and everywhere. He loved red borsch the most and savored pancakes (whether with honey, cheese, poppy seeds, or cherries). He mostly enjoyed drinking green tea. He never overate, as he led a sporty, healthy lifestyle. He had a lean, athletic build.

It's worth noting that I can't recall a single time when Opanasovych got into the car tipsy or intoxicated. Responsible, focused, and always ready to move.

Sometimes people think that the personal driver is the closest confidant of such individuals. But that's not the case. Maybe back when mobile phones didn't exist, that was often true. Opanasovych

was constantly on the phone, either receiving calls or making them himself. He worked tirelessly, addressing urgent matters even while on the road.

For shorter trips, mostly around Mykolaiv or nearby, we'd switch to a white Škoda Superb. And no one would've guessed that the person riding in that car was on the Forbes list. He never cared about that – it was comfortable and economical, and that's what mattered. And that was that!

If traveling to Kyiv was a burden for Opanasovych – a struggle through high offices where they threw obstacles in his path as he fought for the truth, draining his strength and health (though they picked the wrong man to challenge – he stood his ground and triumphed!) – going to his native Bendzary was a whole different story: he didn't just travel there, he soared. And so it was every time. Not "as if going home," but "going home"! Always and only so! He loved his village deeply, often remembering his parents and those people who had become like family to him. He led me through the family grounds where he had taken his very first steps in life. He took great pride in his neighbor, Olena Pavlivna, who was like a guardian angel to him, tending lovingly to his family home and its affairs. Everywhere, there was perfect order and sparkling cleanliness. He never missed the service on Forgiveness Sunday. When I worked with him, he never took the wheel himself. True, he mastered the controls of the "Raketa" on his own, where he gained some skills. I never saw him in the front seat, only in the back. He trusted me. He saw how, over the years, I managed to handle various situations on the road, so he was calm and confident. Ultimately, that was the entire well-trained and proven-in-action team Opanasovych had at the NIBULON. He was a patriot of his homeland. I worked with him both before the Russian invasion and during the occupation of the Donetsk and the Luhansk regions, and Crimea. There was never a single moment when Opanasovych said even one good word about our enemies. Always reserved and tolerant in his judgments, when it came to those treacherous events, he didn't just use swear words or curses – he said things I had never heard before! And rightly so!

On February 24, 2022, Opanasovych remained silent, not uttering a single word. He looked black, like the earth. He understood more and saw farther than others: who our enemy was, the price of victory, and what would come after the war...

He knew it was vital to vessel out the grain, to gather the means needed for the spring planting ahead. We often traveled to Izmail, just after the decision was made to build a grain terminal designed to supply up to 300,000 tons of grain per month to the European

market. He sought new trade routes and was the first among domestic grain traders to embark on an overseas business trip during the war. It was the end of April or the beginning of May 2022. I took him to the border town of Reni, located in the Izmail district. He walked three kilometers on foot from our side, crossing the Moldovan border to the Romanian border, where a partner's car was waiting for him. He came back from Romania in good spirits and told me, "Everything's fine, everything worked out!" Two or three weeks passed, and he headed back to Romania again.

On Saturday, July 30th, wartime 2022, we returned to Mykolaiv from Izmail after spending two days there. It was still light outside; it was around 8 p.m. I asked Oleksiy Opanasovych about his plans for the coming days. He said tiredly but calmly, "Tomorrow is Sunday, we're not going anywhere. On Monday, August 1st, there's a planning brief; on Tuesday, we'll head to Odesa. On Wednesday, we'll be at the Voznesensk branch, Thursday – at home, and Friday – back to Izmail again..." And with that, we said our goodbyes.

At one o'clock in the night on July 31st, I couldn't sleep – the Russians launched a missile attack on Mykolaiv. A few hours later, when everything had quieted down and I had just fallen asleep, a phone call woke me up. "Where is Opanasovych?" asked the head of the company's transport department. "What do you mean, where? At home!" I replied. "Opanasovych is gone..." the words echoed through the receiver. I couldn't believe it. I stepped out onto the balcony, lit a cigarette, but extinguished it after a moment and rushed outside. I came to the house of Oleksiy Opanasovych and understood everything... Our enemies had used precision-guided weapons and deliberately targeted, with pinpoint accuracy, those people who were meant to live forever.

Opanasovych was as kind-hearted and humble as Raisa Mykhailivna – a true bundle of goodness and light. What mattered to them in people was honesty, justice, spirituality, forgiveness, humility, and wisdom...

The native land can feed every person with its bread and quench their thirst with the healing waters of its springs. However, alas, it cannot defend itself... And that is when the time of heroes comes – those whose names are written in gold in history, who have entered immortality forever.

I believe the time will come when not only our enemies will be judged – as it must be – but also those who provided the coordinates for the destruction of the great Ukrainian, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, and his wife, Raisa Mykhailivna. There will be a trial, and there will be punishment... Even if not on this earth, everyone will receive their due from the Lord...



Zhanna Maksymenko-Dovhych
(journalist, creative producer, director, screenwriter, and head of the Ukrainian Guild of Directors).

Vadaturskyy was a private man who didn't enjoy engaging with the media, be it Ukrainian or international. I met Oleksiy Opanasovych by chance in a hotel where, in July 2022, I was staying with Le Monde journalists Olivier Truc and Adrien Vautier while we worked on a story about the grain crisis. The country's leading grain magnate could have stayed in a much fancier place, but instead, it was just a modest, mid-range hotel. But he lived here alongside his workers, busy building new facilities on the Danube, expected to help somehow compensate for the downtime at the seaports.

That morning, he looked deeply troubled, yet despite that, he made time for us at breakfast to have an off-the-record conversation.

Mr. Oleksiy was constantly traveling between Mykolaiv and other cities across the country, and when he left that time, just on the eve of our conversation, fragments of rockets from the morning attack on Mykolaiv University were falling behind his car. He saw no possibility

of negotiating with the occupier over grain exports, no matter which countries or international institutions acted as intermediaries in the process. Only heavy weapons for Ukraine, only driving the Russians out of Kherson and out of Ukraine – that was what he believed in.

I won't dwell here on Vadaturskyy's titles and honors – he had many of them – or about the modern port terminals, grain storage facilities, vast fields, restored vessel repair and shipbuilding capacities, and the tens of thousands of jobs created across the country. What I do want to mention is that it was thanks to NIBULON that commercial river navigation in Ukraine, along with river tourism routes, began to see a systematic revival. Of course, not without a touch of self-interest, as with any big business. It should also be remembered that it was NIBULON's barges that carried the legendary Kherson watermelons up the Dnipro to Kyiv – and those barges weren't awaited like bread, but like a long-lost song, something tender and nostalgic that transported many straight back to their childhood.

Everyone in Mykolaiv knows this, though few beyond its borders do: when COVID-19 "unexpectedly" reached Ukraine, it was Vadaturskyy who, at his own expense, renovated the local infectious disease hospital, which was in critical condition, and equipped it with the most advanced medical technology. It must have cost him several million dollars at the very least and saved countless lives – yet he had no desire to bask in the spotlight. And at the place where we met him, he declined to make any public statements regarding the grain crisis. However, he sent me a few links in a private message. This was an investigation by The Wall Street Journal revealing how Russia steals Ukrainian grain and vessels it to the Middle East, along with a link to the Telegram channel of the Ukrainian underground fighters in Kherson. I share them here with you to shed light on what weighed on the mind of this Titan – a shipbuilder and agrarian who built a vast business empire.

The missile striking his very home might have been a tragic twist of fate. But given the reports about occupiers seizing

NIBULON offices and grain storage facilities in Kherson, alongside simultaneous missile attacks on port infrastructure, grain silos, and oil storage in Mykolaiv, and considering his skeptical stance on the safe export of Ukrainian grain from Black Sea ports without full liberation of southern Ukraine, the deaths of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy and his wife hardly seem accidental. Blessed be the memory of Oleksiy Opanasovych Vadaturskyy and his wife Raisa Mykhailivna.

My deepest condolences to the Vadaturskyy family, the entire NIBULON team, and the people of Mykolaiv.



Gilles Mettetal

(banker, former Director for Agribusiness, Property, and Tourism at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD, until 2017), member of the Supervisory Board of NIBULON Ltd. (2018–2023)).

When I first met Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, Ukraine was barely self-sufficient in grain production and imported all of its meat. I worked at the EBRD in the agribusiness sector and was convinced that Ukraine's agricultural potential was largely untapped. I heard about him and his son. I was told that they revived river transport and developed an excellent network of river and land-based grain silos, as well as transshipment terminals for grain export from the country. It was difficult to meet them, but I finally had the chance to get to know them. I understand that Mr. Vadatursky was more than just an entrepreneur. He was a man of vision, determined to restore his country as the breadbasket of the world and to contribute to global food security. There was still so much ahead. In 2007 and 2008, the Ukrainian government decided to introduce a quota on grain exports.

The government feared there might not be enough grain to feed the population. NIBULON became the EBRD's largest agribusiness client in Ukraine, and Oleksiy took part in many events. For example, he was among the first to fight against corruption. After the quotas were introduced, I met with Oleksiy, and he explained to me that it was nonsense and likely aimed at fueling even greater corruption.

We agreed to join forces – all the traders, development institutions, and numerous international organizations. We convinced the government to end the quota system and established an ongoing dialogue between the government and private enterprises, as well as with the Ukrainian Grain Association. This dialogue proved so effective that, before long, Ukraine became a leading grain exporter and regained its status as the world's breadbasket. I don't think it would have been possible without his involvement. Vadaturskyy did more than just build an outstanding company; he set a powerful example of quality, integrity, and resilience. He was a source of inspiration for many entrepreneurs. He brought the finest examples from around the world and was already prepared to fight for the best solution.

Some called Oleksiy an oligarch. In my opinion, he was the complete opposite. He lived a simple life. He rarely took vacations. Every morning, he went to the office. His car was an old Mercedes, with over a million kilometers on the odometer!

All the profits generated by his company were reinvested. As far as I know, he never took any dividends. I traveled with him several times. He was willing to travel economy class and stayed in mid-range business hotels. He always asked for an iron to press his shirt and look impeccable... Something I learned to do on my own! No signs of luxury in his life. For him, family was the most important – his wife and, of course, his son.

Of course, as a strong entrepreneur, he also had his character. Usually, he would never agree to proposals right away, but would come back after a few weeks with the same proposal as if it were his own. He had a strong temper and could be very harsh with people he believed were untrustworthy. But he knew most of his employees by name and respected everyone, from unskilled laborers to managers.

Oleksiy's legacy will continue to inspire many people both in Ukraine and beyond. He unquestionably deserves the title of Hero of Ukraine.



Liudmyla Mekheda

(engineer-economist in the food industry, Deputy Chief Accountant at NIBULON Ltd. (since 1993)).

I studied at the same Odesa Technological Institute of the Food Industry as Oleksiy Opanasovych – though he graduated in 1971, and I did eight years later. Moreover, as it turned out, during my student years, I not only lived in the same dormitory as Vadaturskyy but also served as its community warden. In 1978, the young Vadaturskyy arrived in Odesa for a vacation, accompanied by their tiny son Andriy. And I accommodated them in our health and wellness center, which was part of Student Dormitory No. 4. At the entrance, the security guard recognized him and told me that he was the first head of the dormitory's student council. Even back then, he was proactive and determined – she remembered him well. Of course, I accommodated them; they had a good rest, and then we went our separate ways. Who would have thought it wasn't by chance?

In 1979, she was assigned by the state to Mykolaiv Regional Administration of Bread Products. The general director of the Administration, Bronislav Stanislavovych Zubrytskyi, came for the

assignment ceremony and promised "golden mountains." Nothing of this existed, but he was the one who gave me a future I had yet to imagine.

When I arrived in Mykolaiv as a young specialist, Vadaturskyy was serving as the chief engineer at the grain products plant in Trykraty. There was a ten-year age difference between us – Oleksiy Opanasovych and my husband were born on the same day, September 8. Good thing it wasn't the same year! Otherwise, at work you'd have a firestorm of a person (in the best sense), and then you'd come home, and there'd be the same fire waiting for you. I felt almost the same character traits both at home and at work.

I started in the planning department, and later, when a department for computers and computing equipment was opened at the regional administration, I was appointed to head it. At that time, the formulas for producing compound feed were ordered from Kyiv, as was the case throughout Ukraine. To avoid long waits – and since the formulas kept changing – Vadaturskyy proposed that we develop them ourselves using our computing equipment. It was outdated, but there was no other option. After some time, Zubrytskyy realized that people like Vadaturskyy should be closer to him, in the regional administration, so he transferred him to Mykolaiv. Oleksiy Opanasovych headed the production department and was responsible for the flour milling and compound feed industries. We ran into each other more and more often at work; I helped him, and he was always full of fresh ideas and progressive thinking. Thanks to Vadaturskyy, the people of Mykolaiv had their compound feed recipes.

In extremely difficult times, NIBULON was just emerging; economists were not needed, but accountants were. I did everything that was needed and possible. We distributed seeds to the collective farms and taught them how to work. I could spend half a month in Mykolaiv and the other half on business trips. Besides Mykolaiv, we were already operating in the Luhansk region. The collective farms harvested sunflowers and delivered the collected crop to the oil and fat processing plants. The finished product, sunflower oil, was shipped by rail to Odesa, and from there, exported abroad.

At that time, collective farms were being pressured, but it was beneficial for them to work with us – we offered the best terms for all our partners. We taught each of them how to properly handle the paperwork – they could all see that everything was done openly and transparently. That was the integrity and forward-thinking spirit of Vadaturskyy. Everyone always wanted to work with NIBULON – they were drawn to us, eager to cooperate, and placed their trust in us. At some point, Oleksiy Opanasovych realized that collective farms needed more than just seeds – they also needed diesel fuel. So he decided to

add fuel and lubricants. We either imported fuel or refined oil at the Lysychansk plant. We distributed it to the collective farms along with the seeds – and once they harvested their crops, they settled accounts with us. Of course, many tried to play tricks, but we checked every report, recalculated everything, and brought order to the process. We taught each of our partners to value order and transparency. No "off-the-books" money and nothing handed over in "envelopes"! Only clear, honest relationships – that's how NIBULON started, and that's how we've always operated! That's why everyone was drawn to us. No one wanted extra trouble, especially since many had been left hanging, unpaid and abandoned. But we always did everything with integrity. Vadaturskyy was a leader born to lead. If he had become President of Ukraine, everything would have run like clockwork – the country would have long since flourished, and workers from abroad would have been coming to us. And they would be keeping their money in our banks. We would have our own Liechtenstein and our own Monaco right here. He had such a brilliant mind and a rare way of thinking that he was racing ahead of his time by decades, if not more.

Sometimes he set goals that none of us believed possible – yet he achieved them, and that was truly impressive. With him, I arranged NIBULON's first loan at the First International Bank – the very loan that brought us the combine harvesters. When Oleksiy Opanasovych began working with European banks, spotless credit histories and trust were essential, and he was even asked to put up his own home as collateral. It was very hard at first, but after a night's sleep and some thought, he made up his mind. He came back and said, "I agree!" He knew he would make it work and pay everything back. Even when the war broke out in 2014, European banks still trusted Vadaturskyy. They continued lending and working with him.

There were ups and downs. Growth followed a sine wave pattern, just as it often does in agriculture. Sometimes

NIBULON was at its peak, other times in a downturn. It was extremely difficult when they came at us, trying to seize the business brutally and by force, to take everything away. But they picked the wrong person to mess with! Each new elevator built served as collateral, pledged to secure funding for its construction and to obtain loans for the next project. The interest costs were part of the expenses; with the borrowed money, we purchased products that we then exported and sold. Such a foresighted and protective move – almost divinely guided – was carefully planned by Oleksiy Opanasovych. Everything ran on credit, and European banks kept a close eye on our operations – but at NIBULON, everything was in motion, turning, working non-stop! And no one dared to snatch a piece or take a bite – because they might just choke on it.

The racketeers were furious and resorted to sending in all kinds of inspections, trying to paralyze our work, but our documents and actions were perfectly in order, leaving them nothing to latch onto. When NIBULON was being founded, Vadaturskyy received great support from Mykhailo Bashkirov, People's Deputy of Ukraine of the 1st convocation. They were alike in the way they thought and reasoned. They both figured that the climate in Mykolaiv region was similar to that of Hungary, so they decided to import hybrid corn seeds that the collective farms would grow and deliver. And "London" appeared in the name as a checkmark for a trading company from that country. Bashkirov was assigned to head the Kirovohrad region, and later, they staged a car crash – a setup to get rid of him. We could have had another strong leader in Ukraine, someone like Oleksiy Opanasovych – he was being prepared for the presidency.

Vadaturskyy's most defining trait was his burning passion for work – everything personal came second, even though he was also a devoted family man and a wonderful father. You had to see the way he walked onto the terminal – the way he looked at his creation in action! That surge of adrenaline he got from watching it all – the people, the machines at work – gave him such strength, energy, and confidence that he just wanted to keep pushing forward. He never stopped at what he had already achieved. What's more, all of us lived and breathed it too. He shared his plans with us and could spin everything in such a way that we felt just as inspired and excited as he did. We too celebrated every shared success. Not everyone always understood everything, but they always trusted him. Time proved that his way was the only way – you could follow him through fire and water.

There have been – and still are – those who steal money and flee abroad, building villas, buying expensive yachts and luxury cars, and squandering ill-gotten gains. He was nothing like them and never cared for such things – the complete opposite in every way. He was a true Ukrainian patriot – everything he planned, did, and accomplished was for his homeland and his people.

Of course, the war took its toll on him, just as it did on all of us and our production. He supported the frontline and the Armed Forces of Ukraine as much as possible, starting back in 2014. For the first nine months of the full-scale war, Mykolaiv was a frontline city, constantly shelled by artillery and repeatedly targeted for occupation by Russian fascists. Mykolaiv stood firm and earned the title of "Hero City," a feat to which Oleksiy Opanasovych contributed greatly. He didn't just help – being prudent, he made sure everything was properly documented, every piece of paperwork went through accounting, and everything was perfectly in order. There were times when he'd help, and the very next day, local tax inspectors would show up. Vadaturskyy was not

"surprised" with that. He viewed it all calmly and said, "Now is not the time. When the war ends, we will win, and everyone will find out the truth." Whenever someone doubted, felt uncertain, or worried, he would always reassure them, saying: "Everything will be alright!" He was trusted... He provided extensive support to the territorial defense and military units. He always trusted me. Over the years, NIBULON had many different seals, but the main one – the bank seal – was always under my custody. And he slept peacefully, without a worry. For which I am deeply grateful to him.

I want to say a special word about Raisa Mykhailivna, a remarkable woman who has been with Vadaturskyy since their student days. Like him, she was incredibly hardworking. He set a goal for himself – that mine would be the best – and he achieved it! He wanted to switch from surzhyk to literary language – and he did! He encouraged all of us to do the same, and today we are grateful as we speak our beautiful, gentle native language.

I still can't believe what has happened. I always believed his stars were aligned for him to live forever. He'd just been on the first floor – whoosh – and in a few seconds, he was already on the fifth. Not every young man had as much energy as he did. He once had kidney stones, so he learned to hop up and down the stairs on one leg, and he also walked a lot! He was the kind of person who could overcome anything and live up to a hundred years. When he spoke with young people, you couldn't help but listen. He drew energy from them, and gave it back in return. You couldn't even call him a grandfather in real life – he was young, handsome, fit, and lived fully in the moment. And what a bright mind he had! He never allowed himself to relax; he was always working on improving himself. He thought things through and calculated carefully. One time he asked me, "How much did you get?" I looked through my accounting records and answered. His number was much lower. He could calculate not only each operation but several of them within seconds. He had countless essential figures at his command – his mind held them all. Until his very last breath.

He exported Ukrainian grain, which angered our enemies, and the Russians did everything they could to destroy Oleksiy Opanasovych. But we couldn't protect him. He was supposed to go to Türkiye, but there were scoundrels who informed on him.

Whatever he took on, he always did it properly. He often said, "I built a basement that has everything needed for safety during the war: an office and a bed!" That's exactly how it was – everything was equipped, neat, tidy, and well-organized. You could even give tours there.

It was in that basement where death found him... He still had so much life to live and so much to create...



Bohdan Muzyka

(mechanical engineer, since 2009 at NIBULON Ltd., Director of NIBULON Shipbuilding Yard LLC (since 2021)).

For me, it all started in March 2009. I studied at Vinnytsia Agrarian University and was fortunate to attend a career guidance talk held for us, the soon-to-be graduates, by Larysa Borysivna Buryk, the Deputy HR Director at NIBULON. What I heard impressed me, so I believed that working at the Mykolaiv company could be both interesting and promising. One Saturday, together with other students, a group of about 20 people, I went by bus on a tour to the production branch State Enterprise 'Lidiivske' in the Domanskyi district, and to the transshipment terminal in Mykolaiv. It turned out that Oleksiy Opanasovych trusted and loved to mentor young people. At NIBULON, there was an ongoing 'young specialist' program that became somewhat unique. I was 22 years old when I first saw the General Director of the company, known worldwide, trusted by global creditors, and for many years a flagship brand of Ukraine's agribusiness. Although it was a day off,

Vadaturskyy himself welcomed and received us at the transshipment terminal. The owner impressed us first and foremost with his presence (no one expected that!), not to mention the main production facilities, which looked like a fairy tale, an unrealized dream – everywhere you could feel the scent of Europe. Oleksiy Opanasovych paid attention to everyone and spoke with each person. He looked unassuming, and at first, we didn't even realize who he was until he told us himself. He was dressed in sportswear and spoke in simple, clear words that everyone could understand, making his story interesting and engaging. It even felt unusual to hear such down-to-earth questions from a person of his level: How did you get here? Did you like the Lidiivske branch? How were you welcomed there? The conversation was very heartfelt, so it stayed with me forever. Then came an unforgettable tour of the transshipment terminal. I was captivated by the enterprise from the very first steps on its grounds, thanks to the way the head of NIBULON spoke about it. You could see love, pride, and joy in his eyes. He told us about the program to revive the Dnipro River, about his grand strategy that he was just beginning to implement, and about the great prospects the company had in grain exports. He asked us whether we had visited the NIBULON website or read any articles about the company. It seemed he wasn't speaking about the company, but about his child.

Vadaturskyy outlined in detail the plans for constructing the first river transshipment terminal on the Dnipro – the Vitove branch in the Cherkasy region. Since then, NIBULON never left my mind, and when I returned to Vinnytsia, I made the decision that I wanted to be part of this team, part of what Oleksiy Opanasovych spoke about with such enthusiasm.

After finishing my studies, I was given a choice of branches where I would like to work and was assured that they would teach me everything, show me around, and familiarize me with all the rules. And I will be able to realize myself at my workplace and achieve results for career growth and development as part of the team. Everything came true. Dreams come true! I started as a mechanical engineer at the Chyhyryn branch and worked my way up to become the director of NIBULON Shipbuilding Yard.

Just a few months after starting as a mechanical engineer at the Chyhyryn production branch, I took part in the construction of the terminal in Vitove and witnessed firsthand how everything the General Director had said was coming to life. And the specified construction timeline – three months – turned out to be completely realistic,

becoming a true baptism by fire for many of us. At that time, it was Serhii Vasyliovych Besedin – a legendary figure and a true master of his craft – who was practically turning fantasy into reality on the construction site. The Vitove branch was officially opened on October 15, 2009, on the Pokrova Day according to the old calendar – the Day of Ukrainian Cossacks – with President Viktor Yushchenko attending the ceremony. In March 2010, I asked to be transferred to the Vitove branch. I worked there as a mechanical engineer, chief mechanic, and chief engineer for two years, until February 2012, when construction began on the future river terminal in the Kozatske village, Beryslavskyi district, Kherson region – the Kozatska branch. The very names of the villages and branches – Chyhyryn and Kozatska – already took your breath away! There, I followed my professional path from the first foundation pile and worked for the next six years as the branch director. At that time, it was the farthest downstream branch of the Dnipro River, heading toward the Black Sea. I was given the chance to head the new branch thanks to a recommendation from the director of the Vitove branch (he was the first to tell me about it), and after a one-on-one interview with Oleksiy Opanasovych. It was my first candid conversation with the boss before facing the enormous challenges that awaited me in the new role.

He had a keen understanding of people, so he found just the right words – words that motivated me and helped me build a team to launch a major production endeavor as an independent unit. Vadaturskyy focused more on responsibilities and work, sharing his own life experiences as well as examples of other leaders and companies. He stressed the importance of integrity. He said, "Lord forbid you become a spoiled, privileged director." He warned me not to reach for the stars or chase fame, but to stay grounded at all times. He said I shouldn't exploit people ruthlessly, but rather care for, respect, and value everyone and their work. He reminded me that teamwork would be key and that leading by personal example would be the most important thing.

Every time we talked, Vadaturskyy paid close attention to details. He told me that there's no such thing as small tasks. Whatever you take on, you have to see it through to the end. And in every single task, there are no small details. Because any one of them can turn into a big problem if it's not dealt with early on. Those were the lessons he kept giving me, a young specialist just starting after graduating from university. Working for such a powerful company, being close to Oleksiy Opanasovych, hearing his ideas, and seeing firsthand how he was bringing them to life – that was already a blessing from the

Lord. At NIBULON, key positions were held by hands-on production specialists – those who had worked their way up through every level of production and understood, often without a word, exactly what needed to be done. He appreciated those with an analytical mind who could evaluate every step they took. In this kind of work, experience was crucial. He valued people who learned and worked their way up from the very bottom. They understood him and the tasks he set.

I received the offer to head the NIBULON Shipbuilding Yard directly from Oleksiy Opanasovych in mid-2021, when I was already serving as one of his deputies for economic affairs. In July 2021, the shipyard was separated from NIBULON Ltd. as an independent legal entity to enter both the domestic and international shipbuilding and ship repair markets. Of course, I couldn't turn it down – shipbuilding had always fascinated me, as right before your eyes, a real miracle comes to life, and you're part of making it happen. A sheet of metal comes to the shipyard and turns into a barge that can carry grain and watermelons. Or a tugboat that pulls the barge, or a crane that handles grain loading onto vessels. The whole process is fascinating at every stage; it draws you in like a magnet, captivates you, and leaves no one indifferent.

When I took over the leadership of the plant, we had 650 employees, and when needed, we increased that number to around 1,000. On November 30, 2021, I signed a contract on behalf of our NIBULON Shipbuilding Yard with the French company OCEA for the construction of five high-speed patrol boats for the border guard. The plan was to build all the vessels as part of the government project aimed at strengthening Ukraine's maritime security and border protection system. Under the terms of the intergovernmental agreement, we were to build five boats using French technology, while the French company OCEA would construct the remaining fifteen. The total cost of the project was €136.5 million. The Ukrainian side was set to begin construction of the aluminum boats at the NIBULON Shipbuilding Yard in early 2022, in February. In March, we were supposed to receive parts for building the boats in Mykolaiv. If it weren't for the war... We had to look for alternative solutions to keep fulfilling the contract. As a result, we agreed to move production to France, with the requirement that Ukrainian shipbuilders be involved. So, at the beginning of June 2023, specialists – including pipefitters, hull assemblers, mechanics, welders, and technical support staff – went to France to continue fulfilling the intergovernmental agreement at OCEA's facilities. At that time, Mykolaiv was in a zone so dangerous that hardly anyone from Ukraine was willing to come to us. Not to mention the French.

Shipbuilders were involved in building the boats from the ground up – from the initial deck assembly all the way to commissioning and testing. The experience gained would enable our specialists to carry out fleet maintenance in Ukraine going forward. Thanks to this, we can keep the vessels in proper condition and reduce the total cost of fleet ownership, which on average is made up of 70 percent maintenance expenses.

We continued building the boats even after the killing of Oleksiy Opanasovych. Our workers are professionally doing their job at OCEA's shipyards in Les Sables-d'Olonne and Fontenay-le-Comte. We carried on the work started by our General Director, not just to stay competitive in the market, but to remain leaders in the industry. We're working harder than ever, with full transparency and openness.

On the very first day of the full-scale invasion, Oleksiy Opanasovych said over the phone that our shipyard would keep running, that everyone should report to work, and most importantly, that we must take care of everyone's safety. At 8 a.m., I was at the shipyard, and by 10 a.m., I was at Oleksiy Opanasovych's place – he was gathering everyone for a meeting at the central office. He assured us he wasn't going anywhere – that he was staying with us and that everyone should keep working calmly. He encouraged everyone not to give up or panic, reminding us all to keep a clear head and stay confident in our victory.

At that time, we were building a 25-meter aluminum boat for the State Emergency Service, designed for rescue operations on rivers and in the Black Sea. There wasn't a single day off when Oleksiy Opanasovych didn't come to the plant – that's just how it always was. He was one of those who loved challenges; difficulties energized him, and he was always on the move. Whenever he saw difficulties, he would ramp up his efforts to the fullest and energize everyone around him. It was this powerful surge of energy that solved all the problems. Everyone knew he was coming and waited for him. He watched the vessel being built, walked around the yard, and observed how far the repair work had progressed. He held meetings with managers, engineers, and designers. He was always on the lookout for better solutions, regularly talking with the engineers about suggestions for improvements and innovations...

He was the longtime mascot of our plant, its heart – it was said that he held the keys to the whole plant. And now with him gone, each of us workers looks forward to Saturday, hoping the boss will come and we'll hear his voice: "Hang in just a little longer, my dear... Everything will be alright! We will win!"



Natalia Nahorna
(TV journalist).

In 2009, I was working on a television project focused on restoring navigation on the Dnipro River. I witnessed that time when Oleksiy Opanasovych was tirelessly insisting that Ukraine's main river must serve the country and its people. More than ever before, the issue of restoring navigation on the Dnipro was pressing, and it called for a large-scale logistics project to make it happen. He envisioned barges moving along the river, understood how much this would help preserve road infrastructure, improve the country's ecology, dramatically boost employment, and give people the chance to work and earn decent, European-level wages right at home, on their native land. He was eager to do everything possible, and even impossible, as soon as he could to get not just the Dnipro running again, but also its tributaries – the Desna and the Prypiat. They used to serve the people, but now they merely carry water over a silted-up, neglected riverbed. "This isn't right, it can't go on like this!" he stated with pain at the highest government

levels. At that time, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy had already begun opening grain terminals along the Dnipro. To be honest, it was hard to believe someone could have such willpower, determination, and ambition. His plans seemed like distant dreams – unreal and impossible to achieve. Even fantastical! Oleksiy Opanasovych and I kept in close contact back then.

When we first met, he was already a Hero of Ukraine. Unfortunately, in recent years, the meaning and significance of this highest state honor and recognition have undergone significant changes. In the past, the title of Hero of Ukraine was the only way to gain access to power. The way he lived, created, endured suffering, achieved the unimaginable, and ultimately how he died – Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was a true hero. Until his very last breath, he remained a true Ukrainian and a proud son of Mykolaiv. Not for a single moment in his life was he indifferent to how Ukrainians would live and work.

Before I met Oleksiy Opanasovych, I was very skeptical about the Hero of Ukraine Star. To be honest, the title was often awarded either for hefty bribes or for fabricated achievements. And everyone has known and still knows it well. But the Admiral of the Dnipro (he truly was that, and everyone admits it because that's how it was) earned his heroic recognition through sweat and blood, with his intellect, wisdom, and courage. All of it together brought the result. He loved being called "Hero of Ukraine, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy."

He truly had incredibly ambitious plans. He was an authoritarian dreamer: "Here's what I've dreamed up, and I don't care how you just have to make it work!" An adventurer might admit the possibility of failure, but Vadaturskyy wouldn't be himself if something didn't work out. He put in every effort to make sure it did. And if it didn't, he pushed even harder. And made it happen! He opened grain terminals across the country and bought barges, which he called non-self-propelled vessels. He developed waterways, insisted on cleaning the rivers, and fought to restore Ukraine's shipping. I remember his long legal battle with the leadership of the Mykolaiv port. Vadaturskyy insisted that Preventor-class vessels must enter the port, and if that wasn't possible, the problem lay with the port itself and not with the private terminals. I didn't even go home to celebrate New Year, because the NIBULON leader got what he wanted – I was there capturing this historic moment.

He wanted large-tonnage vessels to be able to enter the Mykolaiv port. So they could navigate the Dnipro river. The barge carrying striped watermelons from Kherson has already become a legend – they sailed

across the country to Kyiv. With this real achievement, Vadaturskyy proved his point about protecting the environment, preserving roads, and lowering costs for domestic agricultural products. It made a lot of people laugh and even became a meme. But he knew exactly what he was doing. NIBULON resumed watermelon barge shipments in 2017. It was reminiscent of the early days of independence when our rivers carried 60 million tons of cargo annually.

In public, he spoke exclusively in his native language, though in private conversations he would sometimes switch to Russian. Vadaturskyy wasn't always steady, he was a complex person. I don't want him to be idealized.

He ran a serious business, with huge amounts of money flowing around him. All of this demanded toughness from him. There were days when he called me "Natashenka" with tenderness, and other days when, in a firm voice, Oleksiy Opanasovych would say "Natasha"!

He could change his mind and make everyone redo everything. Though at first, he might have wanted something different.

I always understood that he worked for the result. There was that shared battlefield – one that only Vadaturskyy could truly see. Some saw only certain parts, but he alone grasped the whole picture.

He made a very positive and genuine impression on me. He cared deeply about what he loved. For example, he decided the "Raketa" riverboat should sail to the Kinburn Spit – and that was that: it would sail there, no question! Buying "Raketa" would be expensive, and running it there wouldn't be profitable – but "Raketa" would sail anyway. Because that's how it was for him in childhood. He just decided that's how it would be – and that was that! Even if it meant running at a loss. He wanted to show that it was possible first, and then convince the government that it was their responsibility to take over.

Oleksiy Opanasovych proved that the Kinburn Spit could be developed, and that "Raketa" – fast and convenient like a ride – could be sent there. That was a crucial step for the development of tourism in Mykolaiv region. Anyone could take a morning trip to the Kinburn Spit, relax in the nature reserve – a magical place – and be back home by evening. Vadaturskyy never spared any expense when it came to his dreams.

He was never a coward. Yes, he took big financial risks, but he didn't like being misunderstood. He liked it when people understood things right away, from the very first try. He cared deeply for this projects. He called them "awesome," his eyes lighting up every time. If he liked an idea, he'd light up – and ignite everyone else with his passion. Time

and again, I'd find myself exhausted – but somehow, he never was! We'd start talking at five in the morning and wouldn't stop until 1 a.m. the next day. He left for Kyiv in the morning and was back in Mykolaiv at night. He said to me, "Well, here I am, back home – and I see you, Natashenka, like working at night." And that's not even counting the three hours he spent driving from Mykolaiv, and another three getting back. I never liked working at night, but my friends kept quoting his words to me.

Sometimes I told myself I just couldn't keep going. He had six times more strength than I did.

At the terminal's opening, they gifted him a huge straw hat. He walked along the field, beaming with happiness in that big straw hat.

He was a very unpredictable person. One day, you were the dearest person to him; the next, he hated you. He could call at 7 a.m. on a Sunday, say "Natasha, why is everything wrong?" – and hang up. And he wouldn't pick up again.

His wife, Raisa Mykhailivna, left a warm and unforgettable impression on me. They complemented each other perfectly. She remained in the shadows, unnoticed by most, yet stood by her husband as a guardian angel in everything he did. He was backed by a strong and dependable home. And that gave him wings.

Whenever someone visited Oleksiy Opanasovych or he opened a new port terminal, he always had a gift for each guest. He would pack a gift basket of homemade goods: salo, sausage, bread, and moonshine. And all of it was natural and delicious, truly organic – grown on a separate farm where the pigs were fed only pure grain. It seems to me that no minister or top official ever turned down one of those gift packages. Everything was of high quality. My friends enjoyed eating and drinking it, always asking when I'd be visiting Oleksiy Opanasovych again. I don't eat meat, so I only tried the bread and the moonshine. Let those aged cognacs and fancy whiskies take a back seat! The unforgettable taste of a time I'll remember for the rest of my life.

He loved Ukraine deeply. I was always surprised that, despite having the chance to travel anywhere in the world, he preferred to relax in Zakarpattia, in Shaian. He stayed at the Kooperator Hotel – it always amused us. That place was like a leftover from Soviet times. The first time I saw Shaian mineral water, I bought a bottle – and it's been my favorite ever since.

Oleksiy Opanasovych loved those hidden gems of Ukraine that many people didn't even know existed. He did everything in a way that made others fall in love with it, too.

Some love people with words – Vadaturskyy loved them through action. And that's much harder. He made sure that Ukrainian money, honestly earned by his workers, was invested back into Ukrainian causes. That's exactly what he believed, and he went to great lengths, doing whatever it took.

He loved being in control of every process. We worked together on a twenty-minute program, and I realized that such a personality was far too grand for such a brief moment. And then things went wrong between us. And I went on to work in news. Since then, we only saw each other a few times.

He never spared his time when it came to explaining why something was important. It may seem like just a grain terminal... What is there even to talk about? It was just a small part of a larger system that worked. He said it wasn't just a pile of grain. A non-self-propelled vessel came for it, towed in by a small tugboat. They cleaned the river for this purpose. Next, everything was loaded onto the vessel that would carry it where it was needed and feed the world. And we'll all have jobs. He was a leader with a grand vision. He hated mistakes; everything had to run smoothly for him. "Why isn't it working?" And he always got what he wanted. People like him are hard to find. That's what made him unique.

He was a leading grain trader, and many didn't like him. I clearly remember how passionate he was about the project to feed Ethiopia with Ukrainian grain. He wasn't your typical oligarch, but he was a Ukrainian through and through.

He had a trait that was both a strength and a weakness: Vadaturskyy needed to control everything. He wasn't someone who delegated authority; he was the one who controlled absolutely everything. How he managed to be everywhere at once, only the Lord knows.

He truly loved Mykolaiv and was proud of it. He helped out during COVID. And he didn't leave his hometown even during the shelling. Although he could have... Killing one of Ukraine's best and brightest talents by the Russians is yet another 'grain crime' committed by our enemies. Grain traders are required to sell their products in order to afford the seeds for the next planting. He knew how to feed the world with grain. And build a real system from seed to loaf.

When I heard about the death of Vadaturskyy and his wife Raisa Mykhailivna, one question echoed in my mind: "Oleksiy Opanasovych, why is everything so wrong?"

It was the first time in my life I ever waited for a barge carrying watermelons from Kherson...



Liudmyla Nazarova

(mechanical engineer, auditor; since 1996 — at NIBULON Ltd. (accountant, chief accountant); Deputy General Director for Financial Security at NIBULON Ltd. (2007–2019)).

You don't often come across people in life for whom work is the greatest joy. Oleksiy Opanasovych didn't believe in the idea of a celebration. Everything we did – for him, for the company – was a celebration. He gave us the chance to be around someone better than ourselves – in this messy world, he was a true moral compass. He led by example: confident, steady, never bending to anyone, always walking straight into the wind. He taught us that giving is better than taking. And in those later years, when most people try to hold on to everything, he chose to give instead.

The true celebration for him was the result of his long and noble journey. I remember the day when the President of Ukraine, Viktor Yushchenko, presented the Hero of Ukraine Star to the General Director of NIBULON in Kyiv. He returned to Mykolaiv, as always,

without any fanfare – no hint of glory, no suggestion that he would change or start acting important. We, the staff, gathered together, gave him flowers, and said a few kind words. And that was that! Back to work!

...I studied mechanical engineering, but life had other plans – I had to retrain and became an auditor. I ended up at NIBULON completely by chance: I saw a job ad in the Pivdenna Pravda newspaper, where the company was looking for an accountant. Before that, I worked as the chief accountant at a large enterprise in another city. I came for a competitive interview, where a panel, including the chief accountant (Liudmyla Ivanivna Havrykova), the head of the financial department, and the head of the economic department, assessed my professional skills. I was hired and added to the company's staff.

I began my career at the company in 1996 and was the 36th employee helping to build NIBULON from the ground up. I saw Oleksiy Opanasovych every day – he often came by our accounting office – but it wasn't until a year later that I was lucky enough to finally speak with him. The chief accountant position then became vacant, and there were two candidates for the role, myself included. They chose me. The final word and decision rested with the General Director.

Gradually, NIBULON's branches began to open, and the team expanded. I never felt any fear working alongside Oleksiy Opanasovych because I had already been through a school just as professional – I knew all the intricacies and every nuance. Among Vadaturskyy's key qualities, his adherence to principles stands out. He always listened to others' opinions, and I can't recall a single time when he just listened and then made the final decision on his own. He never said, "This is how it will be, and only this way!" Or: "We're doing it the way I said!"

No one ever tried to set him up or deceive him, and honestly, no one would have ever succeeded in doing so. He truly commanded an immense amount of data and knew the details so thoroughly that it was hard to find anyone his equal. He could easily multiply and divide numbers in his head. He was so versatile and exceptionally developed, with a unique memory – a true prodigy of his own kind!

What stood out most was his genuine love for people, with a special warmth reserved for villagers. Whenever someone came from a village, Oleksiy Opanasovych made every effort to receive them promptly, understanding that they had a long way to return. He cared deeply for each person, was grateful to everyone, and that's what set him apart from other leaders. He really loved young people. Whenever there was a need to hire someone for the branch's equipment maintenance, he

never looked for specialists. He would say, "We'll take the youth. I'd rather train my own – they'll do things the way we need them done: the new way, the modern way. Not like it was back in the Soviet days." Let's be honest – the villages were in decline. It was hard to even imagine the state they were in when we came to open our branches there. What a dreadful legacy the collective farms left behind – ruins, hopelessness, disorder, chaos... NIBULON rebuilt everything from the ground up, investing in the newest and most cutting-edge equipment. He developed rural infrastructure, and the villages began to look European – people wanted to work with us. Our villages had a future. I remember when pedigreed cows were brought in from Germany for the Lidiivske branch. The livestock specialist chose the cows, and Oleksiy Opanasovych himself often came there. A few dozen of them were brought in by trailers. At our central office – and even at the branches – it wasn't customary to set tables for special occasions. The biggest treats on birthdays were chocolates and cakes. There was, however, one special day – December 5th, the birthday of NIBULON. On the company's anniversary, Vadaturskyy could gather us all together – in a theater, a cultural center, or even the lobby of some restaurant. The 10th and 15th anniversaries were celebrated with such grandeur...

What made Vadaturskyy unusual was that he could do everything himself. When he arrived and saw something was off, or that his team didn't know a certain detail or step, he would get up and do it himself. He showed how it should be done. He would sit down on the most modern tractor, plow the field himself, or teach others how to properly till the stubble. It seemed there was nothing he didn't know or couldn't do. For me, it was both obvious and incredible, especially coming from a company where the director only held meetings and was otherwise unreachable – a person you could hardly ever get through to.

Oleksiy Opanasovych spent every business day fully with his team, greeting everyone, knowing each by name, and treating each with love and respect. Whether it was the janitor, the guard, the head accountant, or even his deputy – he showed everyone the same respect. For him, just like for the Lord Himself, everyone was simply a person. He never divided people by rank or by how prestigious their job was.

He always responded to pain and human sorrow. If someone was in need or struggling with an illness, he would always lend a hand. When Vadaturskyy visited the villages where our branches were located, he listened to every villager, gave each one his full attention, and offered help whenever it was needed. Some he helped financially, others in different ways, but no one was ever left without his attention.

In the villages where our branches operated, Oleksiy Opanasovych built modern schools and equipped them with everything they needed, such as up-to-date kindergartens, community clubs, libraries, medical clinics, and even stadiums. He oversaw everything, knew everything, and made sure everyone had what they needed. Some say he was a philanthropist, but it was something much greater than that. He did everything officially; unofficial actions were not tolerated. Otherwise, it wouldn't have been NIBULON, and it wouldn't have been Vadaturskyy. That's how it was, year after year, always and everywhere. Any other way was simply out of the question.

When the Russo-Ukrainian war began in 2014, the commanders of the Mykolaiv military unit reached out to Oleksiy Opanasovych. First of all, he asked, "What do you need and how much?" He never gave cash. But he purchased and controlled everything. So that everything would be high-quality, comfortable, and safe for life. This is how our soldiers received their first bulletproof vests, thermal imagers, helmets, and combat boots. He never spared any money for this and did it without hesitation.

Almost every day, I had to meet and talk with Raisa Mykhailivna. She was a true connoisseur of beauty, with such a finely tuned sense of style that she could see, organize, and create the very best for NIBULON – all with the unique flair that was hers alone. And she herself was a very beautiful woman. Always. She had a magic touch – people said she could plant a stick in the soil, and it would bloom. Beauty comes in many forms and exists everywhere, but not everyone is able to see it. The outward beauty of a person, nature, or an object is visible to all; everyone can see it. But there is also an inner beauty – the beauty of the soul. Though hidden from plain sight, it is no less important than outer beauty. Raisa Mykhailivna, like Oleksiy Opanasovych, possessed a beauty that was undoubtedly both outward and inward. They were both made for each other by Heaven, understanding one another silently or with just a glance.

Now it's hard to believe that I might have missed crossing paths with Oleksiy Opanasovych in life – if I hadn't moved and seen that ad in the newspaper. Who knows what my fate would have been? In 1996, NIBULON wasn't yet what it would later become. I could have joined any company in Mykolaiv – and thank the Lord I didn't. And that's how I went from a team of 36 to leading over 7,000 employees.

She carefully weighed every decision, calculating and anticipating the risks, the consequences of each action, each step, considering what lay behind and what might lie ahead. Every decision Oleksiy

Opanasovych made was thoughtful and precise. We discussed everything together, as a team. He truly loved listening to everyone, paying close attention to the flow of thoughts, expressions, and wishes. He was not an authoritarian leader.

A heavy cross was laid upon Oleksiy Opanasovych's shoulders, yet he kept working tirelessly, unable to imagine life without work.

On my last working day, he gave me flowers, thanked me for my efforts, and wished me good health. Genuine, warm, and heartfelt like family. Like only he could.

It so happened that I wasn't at the funerals of Oleksiy Opanasovych and Raisa Mykhailivna – I never saw them go. They will forever remain alive in my heart...

Walking through the city, it feels like you might just catch sight of them or hear that familiar voice on the phone. It's hard to say now if, in all its centuries of history, Mykolaiv ever had a citizen who cared so deeply for his hometown, who worried about everything and everyone, and who gave so much to help. He took the initiative himself, never sparing time or money, because he understood that it had to be done at any cost.

For me, Raisa Mykhailivna and Oleksiy Opanasovych were the kind of people who remain a shining example – how to live on one's native land and leave a vivid, authentic legacy for future generations to follow. Both were true souls – people worthy of prayers.

Thank God for sending such guiding lights to Ukraine.

I believe and know how unbearably and indescribably hard it must be for Oleksiy Opanasovych up there in Heaven. "Hang in just a little longer, my dear, and the Ukrainian sun will shine bright!" – perhaps this is what he often wants to tell us from up there. From eternity. God willing, may it come as soon as possible.



Liliia Nikitina (Perebyinis)

(power engineer, director of the Luhansk branch of NIBULON Ltd. (1996–2015), chief specialist of the trade department at the Starobilsk branch of NIBULON Ltd. (2015–2022)).

My husband's surname isn't Ukrainian, but my Luhansk ancestors – and I, before marriage – come from the proud Cossack lineage of the Perebyinis family. When During Viktor Yushchenko's presidency, amid the wave of national revival, Oleksiy Opanasovych switched NIBULON's branch offices to their native language. He said to me, "Lilia, return to your roots, to the very source!" Until then, we all spoke in surzhyk, so it felt strange at first. Vadaturskyy would gently correct me during conversations, and I felt it would be shameful not to master the language of lullabies and nightingales. All our Luhansk branches spoke only Ukrainian, and now we gratefully remember our boss for this wise and timely decision of his.

I worked with the General Director of NIBULON for nearly 29 years. It pains me deeply that all the photos with Oleksiy Opanasovych were left in Luhansk – I just couldn't take them along. During the war days

of 2022, I had to pack urgently, with no time to spare, so I took only the essentials. With two suitcases, I had to pass through 15 checkpoints to get into Ukraine. Even the data I had on my phone had to be erased – everything was scrutinized. The only thing that remained was my passport photos...

The Russians seized the enterprises' property rights, leaving people with only one choice: either work for them or cease to exist in that territory.

At first, the so-called "LNR" forces tried to take over our branches, then the "young republic" was pushed out by Krasnodar scoundrels, who ended up harvesting the crops sown by NIBULON. They swooped down on everything ready, like black crows on their prey. Operations at the enterprises came to a standstill; the land was partly seized, dug up, and turned into bunker-filled, mined territory. NIBULON had five branches in the Luhansk region – Bilovodsk, Novopskov, Starobilsk, Svatove, and Troitske – managing 20,000 hectares of land. We also had the Kupiansk branch in the Kharkiv region. Within our structure, there was the Starobilsk elevator (one of the largest in Ukraine, spanning 24 hectares and numbering 300 employees). At the beginning of the occupation, it held about 70,000 tons of grain – sunflower, wheat, barley, sorghum, and other cereals – which the hateful Russians shamelessly plundered. If only that were all... But they stole our expensive equipment – the machinery Oleksiy Opanasovych took great pride in, earned through his sharp mind and the hardworking hands of the NIBULON team which they were never strong enough to handle: 6 John Deere combines, 10 Case tractors, 15 Fendt tractors, 12 Case combines, a full range of tillage machinery, an MTZ fleet, and repair facilities. All of this was stolen by the Russian governor of Krasnodar Krai, Tkachov, for his gain. Everything except the Kupiansk branch ended up in his hands. Some left, while others betrayed us and joined the Russians. The director of the Starobilsk elevator turned out to be a traitor, and there are fools in other districts, too. All the scum floated to the surface! God will be their judge; the Lord's punishment will surely come upon them.

...With the boss, Oleksiy Opanasovych Vadaturskyy, I went through thick and thin. It all began with the regional grain departments – I was working in the Luhansk region, and he was in Mykolaiv. Then came ElevatorZernoprom, the State Joint-Stock Company "Khlib Ukrainy." It was all the same entity, just under different names. He was the Deputy General Director, while I worked in the Department of Intersectoral and Foreign Economic Relations. It's fair to say that NIBULON's work began back in 1993 in the Luhansk region, where there was an abundant sunflower harvest. And the farms were in desperate need of fuel and lubricants. Luhansk was fortunate to have Mykhailo

Bashkirov (a graduate of the local agricultural institute), who was a close friend of Vadaturskyy. Together, they made bold decisions for that time, measured, thoughtful, and ultimately right. Mykhailo had many connections in the region – one of his former classmates was the head of the regional department of agriculture. Both agreed that they needed to support each other and work together on common and noble endeavors for their homeland. That's how Oleksiy Vadaturskyy came to us. The sunflower harvest was stored at grain reception points, where we first met our future boss. In 1994, I was already working part-time at NIBULON, carrying out various assignments. At the beginning of 1995, I joined the company. To be honest, at first I was even afraid to work for a private company located in Mykolaiv. After graduating from university, I have always worked in government institutions. Times were changing, life was moving forward, and the homeland air was filled with confidence that the future belonged to private business.

I was already 39 years old when I came to Oleksiy Opanasovych – and I never regretted it. I was the first employee hired in Luhansk, and probably the tenth or twelfth in the entire NIBULON company. The boss allowed me to bring in two more specialists; all of us worked on the company's payroll in Mykolaiv in 1995. It felt so unusual. Vadaturskyy established the branch a year later, in 1996, and appointed me as its director. There were already six of us. We handled fuel and lubricants in the Luhansk region. We exchanged fuel oils for sunflower seeds, which were then processed into oil by local enterprises in our region. We had three oil and fat processing plants.

In 1996, the Hungarians provided us with seeds, and at the newly established Bilovodska branch, equipped with expensive, modern tractors supplied by NIBULON, we carried out a demonstration corn sowing. The boss came from Mykolaiv to witness the event with his own eyes. One of the machine operators was planting corn using a German-made Fendt tractor. Vadaturskyy saw how skillfully he worked, dressed in a branded overall with NIBULON across the back, and was so impressed that he wanted to thank him somehow. Everything was neat, the sown rows lay perfectly straight on the field. Overwhelmed with emotion, Oleksiy Opanasovych was so moved he wanted to hug and kiss the tractor driver. At one point, the boss suddenly took off his expensive watch and gifted it to the machine operator as a token of appreciation for his diligence, dedication, and the masterful care he showed in his work. And it wasn't for show – he was always sincere with his employees, genuinely kind and warm-hearted. And what a hard worker he was! When he came to the Luhansk region, where I had arranged meetings at farms across different districts, he made time for everyone, speaking to each person in a way they could understand. He

could spend an entire week with us, leaving for Mykolaiv late Friday night, only to return early Monday morning. It went on month after month until he was sure that everything was working just the way he wanted.

It seemed there was a computer in his mind, and that he was like a robot! He possessed a phenomenal memory and could do all the calculations in just three seconds. When you see a person before you who comes up with unimaginable ideas and makes the most unexpected, yet profoundly far-sighted decisions, it draws you in and fascinates you even more. The boss knew all our employees by name and was even well acquainted with their family members. What problems or troubles do they have, and what relationships do they have in their families? He was never indifferent to this. I remember when Oleksiy Opanasovych announced that we all need to tighten our belts and build a grain terminal in Mykolaiv – because without a port, we simply wouldn't have a future. When the now-famous silos appeared at the terminal, I asked him, "So, what's next?" He led me inside and said, "Well, go ahead – shout here." I shouted at the top of my lungs, "Hooray! Glory to NIBULON!" And he was happy like a child. He ran around there himself with such excitement and such an uplifted spirit! That was the joy of his creation.

Raisa Mykhailivna – his hope and support – also came from our field. Thanks to her, our terminal's café became famous all across Ukraine. In winter, it felt like a true winter garden in there. One hundred blue Canadian spruces were planted at the terminal – brought from the Luhansk region. Employees from our branch offices carefully dug them out – each tree was already 20 to 25 years old. The boss wanted something no one else would have. And those stunningly beautiful rose plantations everywhere – planted with the hands and heart of Raisa Mykhailivna. She also made sure that every NIBULON branch was neat, tidy, cozy, and beautiful, surrounded by blooming flowers and lush greenery. We met often – she would invite me over to her place. When the war started and the fighting broke out in 2014, the boss sent everyone on leave, saying we would be back in a month. We returned... but there was nowhere and no way to work. Everyone scattered, each going their way. I was in Kyiv, and they called me, urging me not to return to Luhansk. The scoundrels stole 40 wagons of our wheat! They wanted me to write it off to them. Then I spent a few days in Kharkiv and Svatove, came to Starobilsk, and stayed there – I'm working here now. In the first days after February 24, 2022, Starobilsk was not shelled. The military put up resistance. We had already stopped working, but the boss called me every day. He told me to leave, saying that life is the most precious thing. There were no major battles; the fascists destroyed a few houses. Raisa Mykhailivna wrote to me on

Viber – I have saved those messages: "Lilia, get out now! How are you? What's going on?" Then threats against the boss started through me. The "request" from the Russians was that there are people who want to work with NIBULON. Normal people, Russians. You won't feed us with those fairy tales anymore – there are no people there and never were! As it turned out. Of course, I reported it to Oleksiy Opanasovych. He immediately made the decision: no contacts, no talks with the enemy.

"I am a Hero of Ukraine; I will not work with any Russian!" It hurt him deeply because he knew the entire Luhansk region inside out and knew many people there. Unfortunately, some of them became our enemies and traitors.

I spoke with Oleksiy Opanasovych in the last days of July, shortly before the tragedy. Raisa Mykhailivna last wrote to me on the 28th, saying there were heavy shellings and that Mykolaiv was turning into hell. She even sent a photo showing an enemy missile shot down over the Southern Buh River. "It's very frightening, alert after alert," she wrote. At the end of the message, she added: "I'm praying for you!" Oleksiy Opanasovych wasn't there – he had left on a business trip to Izmail. The boss couldn't abandon his hometown, betray himself, his principles, or the people who trusted and believed in him.

He could calculate a hundred, even two hundred steps ahead – always thinking how to keep the company running, thriving, and reaching new heights. But he couldn't foresee his own fate...

And how proud they both were of their son Andriy – words can hardly capture it. The joy the boss felt when Andriy got accepted and studied in London was beyond measure. He knew that a son with a European education would be a true pillar – his sole heir, ready to face any challenge that lay ahead. Oleksiy Opanasovych visited him often and once sent me a photo of Andriy at his graduation, dressed in a black gown and square cap. And Dad – so happy standing by his side...

The boss was always happy whenever the whole team gathered for holidays or celebrations – he would pay for the festivities himself. He never spared anything for the team so that everyone could come together and celebrate. He truly loved it when everyone sang and danced together. For his 50th birthday, we all came from the different branches to Mykolaiv. Family and close friends gathered, and partners came from many European countries. He loved to have fun and dance; even in that, he was the life of the party. Just to be together with the team. Raisa Mykhailivna sent me photos with the grandchildren... All the good things he built for us will come back a hundredfold. Our close-knit team will endure this cursed war and will once again work tirelessly. Just as our boss wished. Many kind people have crossed my path in life, but Oleksiy Opanasovych and Raisa Mykhailivna are truly the best!



Oleksii Pavlenko
(politician, entrepreneur, Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine (2014–2016)).

There was a noticeable age gap between Oleksiy Opanasovych and me. I was appointed the minister at 37, while he, an established agrarian heavyweight, was already 67. Even though nearly two generations separated us, our relationship was exceptionally warm, and he always treated me with special respect. It was that way from our very first meeting and remained so until the very last. Our collaboration began in the early years of RISE's operations. From 2004 to 2006, I served as the General Director of the RISE Group of Agro-Companies. My responsibilities included strategic planning, implementing efficient budgeting systems, and overseeing financial control. I also had to manage certain issues with NIBULON, including some controversial trading matters. Thankfully, we were able to address these issues with intelligence, thoughtfulness, and without causing offense. One thing I learned is that a true character remains unchanged.

No amount of fame, wealth, the highest titles, or public recognition could ever spoil Mr. Vadaturskyy. He never trampled over others, never pushed, took revenge, pleased, or bribed anyone. He always moved forward with quiet confidence, acting like a pioneer and a winner.

We took pride in the fact that both RISE and NIBULON were growing successfully and maintaining their leadership in the agricultural market. The top companies earned the respect they deserved. For a reason, as the country also benefited.

I got to know Oleksiy Opanasovych better when I became a minister. He not only raised many important issues with us, but he was also actively involved in the development of the agricultural sector as a whole. From the very first days, our team focused on finding new markets.

Those were turbulent times – Yanukovych, the fugitive president, had left the treasury empty, and the country was, in effect, bankrupt. I was part of Arsenii Yatseniuk's second government. Before me, the minister was Ihor Shvaika. Our team included Natalia Yaresko and Aivaras Abromavičius. They had excellent reputations and managed large businesses with great success. I had the opportunity to manage such positive and successful projects as RISE and Foxtrot. Additionally, I held a foreign diploma: I studied at the Nyenrode Business University in the Netherlands, where I earned an MBA (Master of Business Administration). I also worked at ABN AMRO Bank in Amsterdam and was a member of the audit committee and a manager for restructuring and business development at Damen Shipyards Group (Netherlands), overseeing project implementation in Ukraine, Romania, and the Netherlands.

Typically, technocrats come to power during a crisis, primarily to save or fundamentally restructure the economy. It was not a matter of political expediency; rather it was solely about the work of crisis managers capable of charting the most effective paths out of a difficult situation. At that time, there was no real money available – no billions to support livestock or horticulture.

I was born in Uman, my mother's homeland. My parents studied in Odesa at the Polytechnic Institute, so I took my first steps there, in a student dormitory, and I also accompanied them during their exams. Later, my father was assigned to a Kherson combine harvester plant, where my grandfather had worked as an industrial worker. My father started as a foreman and later became the Deputy Director General for Production. For a quarter of a century, my mother worked as an engineer alongside him.

Oleksiy Opanasovych and I were connected by the Dnipro River, the South, the heat, barges, vessels, water, the steppe, fields of wheat, and grain. He appreciated my experience working with the Dutch in Mykolaiv, when Damen Shipyards Group, a world-famous shipbuilding group, acquired the state-owned Okean plant, and I worked in a company on restructuring matters. The investors didn't acquire a high-quality enterprise; instead, they inherited a production facility with a troubled history, a poor recent reputation, and a personnel crisis. As a result, they had to move heaven and earth to revive the enterprise and make it competitive. Over five years,

Okean built several dozen fully equipped vessels for Ukraine, Germany, England, Norway, and the Netherlands, including self-propelled ones with a displacement of 6,000 to 24,000 tons: container vessels, bulk carriers, ice-class tugs, heavy-duty cargo vessels, chemical tankers, and multipurpose cargo vessels.

Working in Ukraine was profitable for the Dutch due to the free economic zone that existed at the time. The main assets were skilled professionals earning Ukrainian (not European) salaries, along with affordable Ukrainian resources and spare parts. The shipyard flourished, performing better than in its best years during the Soviet era.

I was someone who understood politics from the perspective of business development. Oleksiy Opanasovych and I quickly found common ground, as he was one of the first to publicly support our initiatives. We had no formal requirements, but the condition was clear: not to stand in the way of business development. We couldn't offer money, but we ensured access to new markets. For example, China sourced 80 percent of its corn imports from Ukraine, and the same applied to meat and dairy products. Over two years, markets in 32 countries became accessible.

We successfully deregulated quarantine certificates, meaning it was no longer necessary to obtain separate certificates for each region when crossing them for export.

During the 2015–2016 marketing year, Ukraine achieved a record grain export of 39.4 million tons.

In 2015, the agricultural sector's profit increased 2.5 times in UAH and 1.4 times in USD. Agricultural profitability reached a record 45.9 percent, the highest in the last decade. As a result, Ukraine entered the top ten most developed agricultural countries.

We had transparent and uniform rules for everyone – just what businesses needed. Throughout his challenging career, Oleksiy

Opanasovych witnessed many ministers and endured an unprecedented period of arbitrariness under Yanukovych and the Party of Regions. He admired our team for expecting nothing from such figures and creators, instead emphasizing: "Focus on work and explore new markets." He, along with all those like Vadaturskyy, was given a free hand and left alone. Oleksiy Opanasovych was deeply moved, having hoped for this moment for over a decade.

We clearly understood all of his plans for NIBULON, especially regarding water logistics, which had already been successful in countries like Holland and France, where water transportation plays a significant role. Mr. Vadaturskyy aimed to implement similar European models and projects on our Dnipro River.

However, in 2014, when the war began, Ukraine lost access to Russia's substantial traditional market, and a trade war was launched. As a result, we were forced to quickly search for new markets to sell products from our Agro-Industrial Complex.

I don't want to sound overly dramatic, but we always found common ground with Oleksiy Opanasovych. We often greeted each other warmly at numerous events.

We preserved an excellent relationship, a clear indication that there were no corruption claims or issues during my tenure as minister. Had that been the case, Oleksiy Opanasovych would have simply turned away and forgotten my name.

After my time as minister, Mr. Vadaturskyy invited me to conferences organized by NIBULON, most of which focused on water logistics – what was needed, how it was needed, and why it was needed. He also invited me to witness the launch of new vessels, knowing that I had a keen interest in shipbuilding. He recognized my experience and influence, as I had held the position of Chairman of the Board of Directors at Mriya Farming Plc for two years, followed by another two years as a board member of GN Terminals, and as a quota representative of the Argentem Creek Investment Fund, USA.

Everyone knew well that Oleksiy Opanasovych led a modest life, free from any unnecessary showmanship. It was hard to believe that he was the man who earned billions and carried out major projects. He earned all of it honestly. I've known many wealthy people in Europe, and most of them led simple, unpretentious lives, maintaining an ascetic lifestyle.

Moreover, Oleksiy Opanasovych was always physically fit. I only started taking sports seriously after leaving the ministry – as a cross-continental swimmer, I swam the Bosphorus twice (in 2018 and 2020),

participated in long-distance swims like Oceanman in Greece, Cyprus, and Italy (five kilometers), and ran in major international marathons (42 kilometers in Berlin and Chicago). Mr. Vadaturskyy, who was meticulous about his health and enjoyed discussing related topics, supported me in these endeavors. He was a true professional, paying attention to the smallest details. He often expressed regret over wasted time, once saying, "How long are we going to listen to your blah-blah-blah? How long will you keep promising and doing nothing?" He controlled an enormous number of processes and knew all the details, down to the finest micromanagement. How did he manage all of this?

Until his last day, he texted me in Ukrainian. Everything was clear; there were no secrets. I saved the messages.

The last time we met in person was in Kyiv in February 2022, just a few days before the war broke out. It was already in the air, and Oleksiy Opanasovych offered me a position on the Supervisory Board. He wanted to involve me in a collaboration with NIBULON, and we were planning to discuss the details later. He had many plans and exuded a sense of strategic optimism.

Nowadays, I often recall the day we were returning from one of the conferences. I see Oleksiy Opanasovych approaching his company car (not a prestigious Lexus, but a much simpler Toyota Camry) and carefully taking off his favorite signature dark-blue (the color of his beloved Dnipro River!) striped business suit. He folds it neatly and changes into simpler clothes. He slips worn-out flip-flops with two crossed straps over his bare feet...

That was his charm. Such was the God-given vitality of this great person, who loved his homeland beyond measure.

He never betrayed his principles.

The Rockets and Comets restored by NIBULON were sailing along the Dnipro River! I had promised my family that we would take a trip together, but there was never enough time. Now, I vow to make it happen at the first opportunity after our victory.

Many of our native, Ukrainian, agrarian, and humane ideas went with Oleksiy Opanasovych to Heaven... Nevertheless, many of his unforgettable deeds remain with us...



Andrii Pavlushyn
(economist; CEO of OTP Leasing).

The operations of OTP Leasing in Ukraine began in 2010, providing financial leasing services for passenger cars, trucks, vessels, agricultural machinery, and more. We needed a client who, as they say in my native Ivano-Frankivsk, "could get things off to a good start." And we made the right choice: Mykolaiv's NIBULON was already working with OTP Bank, but not with us. At that time, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy's company urgently needed a tugboat, and they wanted to acquire it through leasing. At that time, Vadaturskyy didn't yet own a shipbuilding yard and placed an order for a vessel at the Mykolaiv Okean shipyard. At that time, the surname of the chief NIBULON figure was a well-known brand not only to me but to the entire Ukraine; he was recognized in Europe and America, and global institutions trusted him. It was a great honor for us to sign our first deal with a company that was trusted, confidently looking to the future, a leader in the agricultural market, and even building its own fleet. That's how my first business meeting

with Oleksiy Opanasovych came about. God granted me 12 happy years of communication with this extraordinary and unique personality. We didn't become very close friends, as I worked in Kyiv while he was based in Mykolaiv. But we developed a warm and friendly relationship. I had the same name as his son and was the same age as his Andriy. And it so happened that in 2012, my father passed away, and I deeply missed his support, guidance, and comfort. When I clung to Oleksiy Opanasovych to talk, I wished I had a father like him. He became a fatherly presence for me here on earth. A stranger, yet so close to me.

We spent a lot of time talking, meeting in person, and speaking over the phone. My memory holds many meaningful, unforgettable moments – things I deeply regret losing but can never get back. Much has been done and said – but also much left unsaid when it mattered most.

In 2014, NIBULON began trading grain on the global exchange. They made a costly mistake and were facing significant financial losses. That happens in business. Oleksiy Opanasovych got in the car and personally visited all the creditors. He came in to see me too. He told the truth: "Yes, I made a mistake, but it won't affect our financial partnership." I will pay everything I owe on time and settle all accounts. Don't worry, the schedule won't be delayed even a single day. The loan amount was very high. The grain futures market has always been risky: anyone can win or lose at any moment. Vadaturskyy kept his word and paid us everything on time. He proved that he was always worth dealing with, reliable, and would never let you down, regardless of the cost. There aren't many people like Oleksiy Opanasovych in the Ukrainian agricultural market, or in Ukrainian business in general – men of their word.

At one point, there was an opportunity to discuss NIBULON and its leader with Yevhen Cherniak, the host of the YouTube channel Big Money. First, he recorded an episode with me, and then with Oleksiy Opanasovych. When the Big Money seminar was held at VDNG in Kyiv, where many Forbes-listed representatives were invited, and Vadaturskyy took the stage, the audience stood up and applauded the legend for five minutes! He had just stepped out, without saying a single word! Everyone knew about him and eagerly waited for him; every word he spoke was like gold. What pleased him the most was seeing so many young people, in whom he saw the future of the country. Every word touched the hearts of the youth, resonated deeply, and settled forever in their grateful memory. Everyone knew how busy this person was, yet he stood there face to face with them. He spoke as if in confession, saying exactly what they wanted to hear. He was

sincere, as always. That's how Vadaturskyy came, saw, and conquered! I often visited Oleksiy Opanasovych in Mykolaiv and was surprised that a Forbes-listed person rode in a Skoda Octavia. When we first met, he had a Mercedes that he had used for about ten years. The staff convinced him to buy a new one. He drove it a few times but said it didn't suit him – it was too stiff.

In my office, in the guest room, hangs a portrait of Oleksiy Opanasovych, along with a photo of us together. I wanted to be like him, to follow his example in everything. Athletic and fit – I often asked him, "How do you manage to stay that way?" How do you live your life? How does your day start? What do you eat and do to look and stay in such great shape? Of course, everyone is different and a lot depends on genetics, but he shared everything honestly, teaching me what to do and what to avoid.

The last time we saw each other was at the end of 2021, when he was launching barges that we financed and leased to another company under a tripartite agreement. Oleksiy Opanasovych decided to show me the vessel, which was a large vessel. How he ran up and down those narrow, steep interior stairs. He was 74! Energetic and athletic. You can't help but look up to people like that; such individuals truly inspire. And you just wanted to help him in any way you could. What was most satisfying was that NIBULON is made in Ukraine! He had Ukrainian hands and minds working on his native land for Ukrainian causes. His story is one of mutual support among their own. We usually invest much into American or German tractors, and French, Italian, or German cars. But deals with NIBULON – that's Ukrainian! Barges and tugboats proudly stamped "Made in Ukraine"! He was proud of it to the point of pain, to the point of tears. It was what drove Vadaturskyy, and me too.

We walked through his shipbuilding yard, and he said to me, "Andriy, can you imagine? I'm an agrarian who became the country's biggest shipbuilder." Back in 2010, when he was building the tugboats we leased to him at the Okean shipyard, many production problems arose. Oleksiy Opanasovych was eager to get the tugboat as soon as possible, but the shipyard was in complete disorder. At some point, he couldn't take it anymore and started coming there himself. To a shipyard that was unfamiliar to him, where he wasn't the owner. He gathered the workers who weren't his, held meetings, lined them up, and inspired them. He brought together contractors, subcontractors, and suppliers. They themselves pushed him to do it. He was paying the money so much needed for a large team back then, but they weren't doing the work. Eventually, life forced Vadaturskyy to build his shipbuilding yard, where, under his leadership, everything was done on

time and diligently using the most modern equipment and the latest technologies. With the NIBULON label – made in Ukraine! There, among other things, Yevhen Cherniak asked Oleksiy Opanasovych about a car: "Do you have a Rolls-Royce?" "Yes, I do!" "But that's the engine in our largest vessel," Vadaturskyy replied.

This man never dreamed of Miami, Monaco, or yachts – he felt best at home in his native Ukraine, in Mykolaiv. And the greatest luxury for him was the vessels he built with his own hands. Vessels that carried grain along the Dnipro and Southern Buh rivers. And how did they deliver watermelons to Kyiv? Some mocked it, and now we realize how much we miss it.

It was impressive that Oleksiy Opanasovych managed the company himself from his office for over 30 years. He was the owner and could appoint a responsible person to take on the various risks – tax-related, legal, and others. And how many nerves and how much health were worn down by government agencies constantly bleeding him dry. Everything was tied to him – he ran it all and signed every single payment. He knew his company down to the capillary level – an absolute phenomenon! He even knew which shelves held what inside the fridges of his laboratories. He ran day-to-day operations, never let go of the helm, and felt everything with the tips of his fingers. I remember how, during the troubled Yanukovych years, Party of Regions member Inna Bohoslovska said on Savik Shuster's show that NIBULON should be state-owned – that it would be better off that way. But Vadaturskyy feared no one – he endured it all.

Oleksiy Opanasovych was an Honored Worker of Agriculture of Ukraine, an Honored Builder, and an Honored Shipbuilder. He celebrated all those special days that meant a lot to him. He was multifaceted and managed to be everywhere at once.

That was his life motto – "Never give up!" – hanging on the wall of our office, right alongside the famous quotes of Einstein and Churchill. Every day, I see a beautiful NIBULON towel that Oleksiy Opanasovych gave me as a gift. It is my keepsake. It seems that wealth brings its hardships, and many rich people are doomed to loneliness. Especially when you reach such heights. You hardly find understanding with anyone – everyone acts like it just fell from the sky. Hardly anyone realizes just how much effort it took to accomplish all this through immense, tireless work. Who knows if he ever truly had friends? The closest and most loyal was Raisa Mykhailivna, who knew everything – after all, she married an ordinary village boy, a student, and they went through it all together. During his last visit, we went to a restaurant near the stadium. We enjoyed some fish and talked. Vadaturskyy

walked me to the hotel, said goodbye, and told me, "I'm going home." Outside, it was dark, and the streetlights barely glowed! "And you, are you walking home on your own?" "So what? Everyone here knows me." And he quietly shuffled off, all alone...

Since February 24th, Oleksiy Opanasovych stayed at home with his team. We often spoke on the phone; he had many ideas that he shared with me. I kept bothering him whenever Mykolaiv was being hit by missile strikes. At one point, I asked, "Do you have a Plan B if the Russians enter Mykolaiv?" He reassured me, "Yes, I have a Plan B. Don't worry."

Now I think that plan was to stay until the very end. Oleksiy Opanasovych did not believe in fate and was confident that the vile and treacherous occupier would never seize his city. And I wasn't the only one bothering him about it. Although he could have easily moved to the capital or abroad and managed the company from a safer place. Run away? Never!

In a pre-war interview, he said he would do everything possible to make life better for Ukrainians and to turn Ukraine not just into a country by the sea, but a true maritime nation in every sense. He just couldn't be without the company.

Oleksiy Opanasovych was very eager to restore the export of Ukrainian grain and tried to make his voice heard to unblock the port of Mykolaiv as well. At the same time, he was building an elevator in Izmail. He had countless plans for future work.

Oleksiy Opanasovych was a man who firmly kept his word and never made any compromises. He died, and the work of his life remained at great risk. Thanks to the Lord that all the creditors and partners came together. And they're helping. The leader of NIBULON was respected during his lifetime, and he is still respected today...

Andriy will carry on his father's work. After all, he's a Vadaturskyy! Everything will be alright. I spoke with Oleksiy Opanasovych on the phone just three days before his death. He called me himself, and I listened to him. The topic was about the grain corridor, but we didn't finish the conversation. I was on a business trip abroad, and it was inconvenient to talk. Now it haunts me: what was he trying to say then? I should have made time to hear him out. I realize that fathers and elders must be listened to until their very last word. Tomorrow is too late to live. Because that tomorrow might never come.

If a miracle happened and we could talk once more, our conversation would undoubtedly be about the future. Both for NIBULON and for Ukraine. He was a man who lived for the future; all his plans were focused solely on it.



Oleksandr Pysaruk

(banker, first deputy head of the National Bank of Ukraine (2014–2015), chairman of the Board of Raiffeisen Bank).

A memory of past happiness – unfortunately no longer happiness, but a memory of endured pain – is true pain. When I think of Oleksiy Opanasovych – which I do very often – I first and foremost feel a deep sense of loss. We had a long, interesting, and unique story of our work and life journey. We met in 1992, in my native Mykolaiv, which was also the native for Vadaturskyy, a native of the neighboring Odesa region. My first place of work was Agroprombank "Ukraine", where I worked my way up from the head of the foreign economic activity sector of Mykolaiv region to the director of the international department of the entire credit organization. During this time, I pursued further education at the Kyiv Institute of Bankers affiliated with the "Ukraine" bank. Before that, I had a basic education from the Mykolaiv Shipbuilding Institute, where in 1990 I completed my postgraduate studies. Interestingly, Oleksiy Opanasovych had no formal education

in shipbuilding, yet the passion for it burned within him so fiercely, it was as if he were an academician of the field. Perhaps the fact that I was from Mykolaiv and familiar with shipbuilding added a certain warmth to our friendship and working relationship.

He valued my honesty, and I valued his. We looked each other openly in the eyes and understood each other even without saying a word. This is where the result of such a long-lasting fruitful cooperation comes from. How he loved Mykolaiv! And what a patriot of the city he was! He did so much good for it. Not out of obligation, because he didn't know how to do that, but out of great satisfaction, understanding that when you can help but don't, it is a great sin. He did it quietly, calmly, without any unnecessary pride. Yes, truly, I could have become a shipbuilder, but thankfully, the Lord changed my destiny in time. For the better, and I'll always be grateful to him for that. When I was writing my dissertation, the Soviet Union was just collapsing. I was married, already had a small child, and money was tight. Ukraine had too many engineers, but very few bankers. There's a joke: A Jew is asked, "Are you by any chance Jewish?" "Yes! I'm a Jew! But not by accident!" he answered proudly. It's the same with me – only with time do you come to realize that the path you've taken was no accident. You have to thank the Lord for what you have. Just as much as for what you don't have! That's exactly what I do.

At first, during my postgraduate studies in shipbuilding, I thoroughly studied the optimization of the gas dynamics of centrifugal compressors on vessels, and later, the purification of oil-contaminated water on vessels using membrane technologies. Neither of them has any connection to agriculture or banking.

A striking quality of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was that he never changed over the years. The way I saw him the first time, he remained that way until our very last meeting. Time did not affect him. Of course, over three decades, a person doesn't get younger, but he remained just as energetic, diligent, principled, honest, and decent. These key virtues, which were fundamental to his life's core and principles, remained unchanged. All the good and the very best in him remained, as this crystal-clear purity was ingrained in him from birth. Both by the grace of the Lord and the genes of his hardworking parents.

In Russian-speaking Mykolaiv (and sadly, it's painful to even recall this), Vadaturskyy managed to grow into a proud and unwavering Ukrainian. When I was already working in Amsterdam at the Dutch bank ING, Oleksiy Opanasovych came to visit us on NIBULON business, speaking only his native language there, which raised

him even higher as a patriot of his homeland. Vadaturskyy deeply understood the importance of his native language and, over the years, repeatedly experienced in practice that a Ukrainian can never express his deepest heartfelt aspirations and feelings so subtly in the "tongue" of our eternal enemies, because this can only be done in his native language.

It was 2013, a challenging year for his company. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy arrived in the Netherlands on business. The bankers had understandable questions:

"What will happen next?" The head of NIBULON understood the immense responsibility (another one of his striking qualities) and therefore personally explained everything to his partners. He took his suitcase and briefcase and visited banks across Europe. I know he was in Geneva before coming to us. At ING, they arranged a meeting for him with a member of our bank's management board. Even in the toughest situations, he would say, "Guys, don't worry, I'll fix everything, I'll get it done." They trusted him and believed in his word. He never let his creditors down. Because he was Vadaturskyy. And if he was there, the banks felt at ease about him. He didn't speak English, but he understood every foreigner without interpreters. At least, that's how it seemed. He read people with his eyes. Like a book.

In Amsterdam, we went to a restaurant for dinner together. Oleksiy Opanasovych would only drink alcohol in a purely symbolic gesture. He loved to have a good talk. In sincere, heartfelt conversations not only about business but also about life, hours would fly by, yet it felt like mere moments. He cared deeply about his native Mykolaiv and wasn't afraid to speak on a variety of topics. Now that I think about it, I'm not even sure if we still have any of the photos left. There was never time for that. There must be. But photos can't replace Vadaturskyy. When I was serving as Chairman of the Management Board of ING Bank in Ukraine, Oleksiy Opanasovych often invited me to Mykolaiv, to his company. I always accepted with great pleasure. I visited his modern terminal and elevator. And with what love he showed everything and carefully chose his words to accurately explain all the details. Anyone who has seen and heard something like that even once is left with vivid impressions and unforgettable emotions for a lifetime. We met not only at the bank but also at NIBULON's office and at his enterprises.

From almost our very first meetings, I could feel a kind of fatherly warmth and attention from Oleksiy Opanasovych toward me. It wasn't excessive, but he had a way of doing everything so delicately, with a special tenderness, that not every son receives such respect in life – even from his father. We had many years of business relations; I

held leading positions in banks (top roles at ING Bank in Central and Eastern Europe, gained crisis management experience in 2014–2015 as the first deputy chairman of the National Bank, and later worked several years at the IMF). Yet, the humanity and warmth one feels only from a father, I constantly felt from the head of NIBULON. And it wasn't because he needed something from me or thought I could help him with something – he was always like that. I always made sure to congratulate him on his birthdays, even when I was working abroad. There are people you carry in your heart – those who are dear to you. That's the kind of person Vadaturskyy was.

Holidays? What holidays? You rarely meet such a workaholic in life – for Oleksiy Opanasovych, even holidays were always full of business days. It seemed as if he were made of steel – even with age, he never reduced his workload and worked, it felt, around the clock. More than once I found myself wondering how it was possible to work like that at his age – not everyone in their thirties or forties could keep up. And he was an example to others in everything. Just try to keep up with him!

Building vessels practically from scratch is an extremely long production cycle, especially at the neglected and broken-down enterprises that remained in Mykolaiv. It was a very complex undertaking that required investments and capital expenditures with a payback period of three to five years. This required having a confident vision far into the future – a skill Vadaturskyy possessed. We discussed financing – I was still working at ING then – and I told Vadaturskyy, "You already have a lot of loans and quite a few risks; maybe you should consider limiting the financing program?" To which the head of NIBULON confidently replied, "Oleksandr, I have to build, because if I can't transport anything along the Dnipro, I'll face serious logistics problems. I can't rely on the railway. I need this. I will have a competitive advantage." We financed everything, and he built everything he had planned. And that was truly unique. In August 2019, I started working at Raiffeisen Bank, and Oleksiy Opanasovych was a longtime, most diligent client there. Those fruitful relations with NIBULON were passed down to me as an inheritance. I continued to support and develop them. He could find me abroad, as he did in 2020, and say, "Help me, I've been let down." And within just four days, we approved a loan for him amounting to 20 million dollars. I worked at the IMF for several years, and when I returned to Kyiv, Vadaturskyy called me and congratulated me on my return, likening it to the return of the "prodigal son." He was pleased to see specialists returning to Ukraine

and working for its benefit. Every year, I filled out various surveys, and I always placed the businessman Oleksiy Vadaturskyy at the very top. Our Raiffeisen Bank had been the captain steering NIBULON's economic growth for many years. There was a sense of mission in Vadaturskyy – he understood that the world was changing. That he, too, needed to evolve to stay competitive. He kept pace with the time – or even stayed ahead of it. He wasn't a banker, but he had a solid understanding of banks and banking. He knew how bankers think, having a long history of business relations with financial institutions, starting with the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. He built these relationships from scratch and communicated so much with bankers that sometimes it seemed he was a banker himself. He knew all the nuances of communication – what matters to bankers and what doesn't. Oleksiy Opanasovych was always prepared for every meeting; it wasn't intentional – it was just part of who he was because he knew everything. Banks liked such qualities.

He wasn't the kind of person to complain, no matter what he had been through. It's strange how, in our country, people who have done and continue to do so much for the state are constantly met with obstacles and setbacks. After all Oleksiy Opanasovych did for Ukraine, why not help him achieve even more? Yet causing harm was something they always managed to do, always and everywhere. Especially the government institutions. It must be acknowledged that despite everything, our Ukrainian business is successful. Only God knows how Vadaturskyy managed to get everything done on time despite such pressure.

Oleksiy Opanasovych was an example and a symbol of Ukrainian resilience and unbreakable spirit. This is something our people have vividly demonstrated in the war against Russian fascists. And victory will be ours!

When I remember our last conversation, tears well up in my eyes. Oleksiy Opanasovych called me at the end of March or the beginning of April 2022. The first month of Russia's bloody war against us had passed; no one knew and couldn't know what would happen next. "No matter how hard it is for me, I want to inform you that I have paid all the interest on the Raiffeisen Bank loans," the head of NIBULON assured.

That was the true Vadaturskyy – known not only by the largest creditors in his native Ukraine but also worldwide. We lost a person whom you could trust one hundred percent. A bank is built on trust. The loss of such a unique individual, trusted by all, is also a loss for the global banking community.



Oleksandr Purkha
(banker, Director of Corporate Sales Department at
JSC KREDOBANK since 2014).

The name of the world-renowned Ukrainian company NIBULON contains the first two letters of three cities – Mykolaiv (Nikolaev), Budapest, and London. Unfortunately, my native Lviv was not included. And not just because we don't have a great river of our own. Thank God we had the opportunity to financially support Oleksiy Vadaturskyy's brainchild – even if not to the extent we would have liked. There were such plans, though...

The father of NIBULON never got the chance to visit our central Lviv office of Kredobank, nor did we get the chance to show off the beauty of Lviv, or treat him to the legendary aroma of Lviv coffee in one of its cafés. Usually, I went to Mykolaiv. Throughout all the years of independence, every bank dreamed of cooperating not just with the Mykolaiv-based, nor merely the national, but with Oleksiy Opanasovych's global marvel, rightfully regarded as the number one client. No one has ever created anything like this here before. That's

why there was a desire to involve him and work together with him in our financial sphere. As it turned out, the owner of NIBULON was well aware of our Kredobank. We were founded in 1990, with our headquarters in Lviv, although we have branches in all regions of our country. We are 100 percent owned by the largest Polish bank, PKO Bank Polski. By the way, my Dad was born in Poland, in Tomaszów, and I – his son – work at a Polish bank. My family was first relocated to Brody as a result of Operation Vistula. My father, Tadeusz Purha, led the renowned Polaron factory for nearly thirty years and later founded the bank Lviv.

Kredobank has its branches in Southern Ukraine, and we set a goal to attract NIBULON for client services. I was fortunate to organize the first meeting with the finance department of one of Ukraine's largest agricultural producers and exporters in 2013.

It's one thing to read and learn about NIBULON, and quite another to see it all with your own eyes. "Some immediately exclaim, 'America!' and it's hard to disagree with them. But when you delve deeper, you start to understand that "America should just step aside!" The people of Mykolaiv are one of a kind. While someone is said to be the first, our NIBULON is the very first! Grain elevators built by a Ukrainian company and Ukrainian ingenuity are one of a kind in the world." The fleet, the grain elevators, and all the equipment are impressive.

The final decision about the cooperation between Kredobank and NIBULON was made by Oleksiy Vadaturskyy himself. He wanted to meet us. At that time, we were not yet as big a bank as some others, but Oleksiy Opanasovych said: "I want to expand cooperation with Ukrainian banks, especially those with Polish capital." This is how we have worked closely and continue to do so over all these years.

We met then at the NIBULON office. Classically, calmly. Due to his extremely busy schedule, the general director allotted us up to 20 minutes of his precious time. He immediately asked who we were, how we were doing, and where we came from. He spoke his beautiful native language flawlessly, without a hint of any surzhyk, which made him even more appealing. He spoke with a soft Poltava-Cherkasy literary accent, which sharply contrasted with ours, the Galicians.

Before going to the meeting, I tried to read and watch as much information as possible about Oleksiy Vadaturskyy. I tried to understand the essence of this remarkable personality. How grandly he thinks, how scientifically he works with people, how he achieves his goals – and those goals seemed cosmic, unimaginable, and unattainable. What he did could be replicated by only a few. Not only does the state rely on such people, but the whole world does too. He was a man of the world!

For decades, he inspired us, the younger generation. What was especially impressive were the results he achieved, no matter the obstacles. And indeed, everything he achieved came not because the path was easy, but in spite of all the challenges. What struck you most from the very first moments of meeting him was that Vadaturskyy radiated energy – with his drive, his vision, and his determination. He was like a power plant – constantly recharging and, more importantly, giving off energy to everyone around him. He was always not just a man of celebration, but a man of sunshine. That's the true law of multiplying goodness on Earth: preserving and amplifying energy for creation and progress! And what a patriot he was! Every decision he made, every plan he envisioned – Ukraine and its people lived at the heart of it. Being near him made you want to live and create, to create and live. The last time I met with Oleksiy Opanasovych was in August 2021. When he heard that top executives from PKO Bank Polski would be present, he simply couldn't miss the meeting. It came as quite a shock to our neighbors at the time. They didn't expect that someone of such stature would take the time for them. A genuine smile never left his face. Everyone felt as if Vadaturskyy himself was glad to see them – as though their presence alone made such a person genuinely happy. Something like that, even if it happens just once in a lifetime, is never forgotten.

Oleksiy Opanasovych reminded me of my father. Because he treated me in a fatherly way. And he was like that not only with me, but with everyone he happened to cross paths with. And this positive attitude could not go unnoticed or unacknowledged by our Polish colleagues. Vadaturskyy knew every detail about NIBULON – even the tiniest and most subtle ones. He had all the figures, names, surnames, and dates stored in his memory. He was always aware of every matter concerning his company. His memory was not only encyclopedic, but also forged through suffering and soaked in the sweat of many years of hard work.

Such knowledge, awareness, breadth, sincerity, and authenticity gave him confidence in the future. He was driven to do more and accomplish greater things. Kredobank provided NIBULON with working capital. But we planned to increase the financing severalfold. Vadaturskyy greatly impressed our Polish colleagues with the scale, quality of work, and results during their personal meeting. It must be said that 2020 was a difficult year for NIBULON, while 2021 turned out to be the best in the company's entire history. The company recorded its highest profits, settled debts with creditors, and new investments appeared promising and full of optimism. A river fleet was successfully established. NIBULON was entrusted with repairing and restoring the naval fleet of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Vadaturskyy was believed

in and trusted. The NIBULON brand became the conscience of the nation. In 2021, NIBULON's Ukrainian grain entered Asian markets for the first time. Previously, they had been exporting to Europe and Africa. When we visited Oleksiy Opanasovych with our Polish colleagues in the summer of 2013, it was at that time that our frigate Hetman Sahaidachnyi entered the Mykolaiv port for repair and modernization. This area of the company's work was not only an additional activity but also vitally necessary. Vadaturskyy didn't just have something to do with the creation and restoration of the civilian and naval fleets, but everything happened with his direct involvement.

You always wanted to listen to him, listen and listen... He was incredibly busy, so our very brief (up to an hour) meetings flew by at a cosmic speed. He promised that he would come to Lviv and meet our friendly Kredobank team. Each time, he thanked us for how our small bank, despite its financial capacity, always supported him in all his endeavors and plans.

Oleksiy Opanasovych was strikingly different from other leaders of his level. He always spoke about his achievements not with boastfulness, but as a life path that must be walked in a godly, honest, and transparent way. With a clear conscience. Unfortunately, there are still very few people like that in Ukraine – those who have proven that it is possible to achieve the desired results without any optimization schemes or artificial "complex maneuvers." Everything for Ukraine, everything for the benefit of our native land. Taxes, duties, and fees were paid transparently and honestly based on the final achieved results. When Oleksiy Vadaturskyy faced the monopoly of Ukrzaliznytsia, he realized that two things needed to be implemented as soon as possible: building grain elevators along the banks of the Dnipro River and establishing a river fleet. In some areas, NIBULON made the river navigable, deepening the river of life. And what an invaluable contribution he made to Ukrainian ecology! NIBULON had a wide range of activities. Not only the port but also the agricultural sector operates successfully. Grains are sown in the Central and Western regions of Ukraine, including the planting areas in the Khmelnytskyi and the Vinnytsia regions.

Oleksiy Vadaturskyy built a transshipment barge in the Romanian port of Constanta in the summer of 2014 – the only one in the waters of the Black and Mediterranean Seas – and named this creation "St. Mykolai." The unique self-propelled floating crane helped transfer grain from non-self-propelled vessels (barges) to large-tonnage vessels (such as Panamax) that could not reach Mykolaiv due to insufficient depth of the fairway at the port. Later, Vadaturskyy realized that one such barge was clearly not enough, so he built a similar one

in Mykolaiv. NIBULON built its own barges and tugboats. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy didn't just restore the country's river fleet – he created it.

He was not only an agriculturist but also a mechanical engineer. And taken together – a great builder. It was encouraging that many talented young people worked and continue to work at NIBULON, and Vadaturskyy constantly supported them in all their aspirations.

Vadaturskyy also united the young company team into a solid, cohesive unit. To him, everyone was like family, and together they formed a single family known worldwide today as NIBULON.

If we consider the followers and allies of Oleksiy Opanasovych, then among the major companies for Kredobank, these are: the Halychynian Vadaturskyy – Petro Gadz (by the way, he is a virtuoso bayan player, while Vadaturskyy played the accordion), in Sumy region – Volodymyr Zaiats, and similarly, Ostap Ivanchyk. In Ternopil, the Ternopil Vadaturskyy is Vitalii Kovalchuk, the head of Molokia – a small family brand with values that set it apart from the massive corporate giants: honesty and simplicity. With them, with each one, you have no right to make a mistake. They are crystal clear, truthful, genuine, and will never return to those who work dishonestly. No matter what you come with – large sums or significant loans – they won't believe you. These are people with a strong Ukrainian core, who have no room for mistakes. Those very virtues were vividly embodied in Oleksiy Vadaturskyy.

Over the past decade, many leaders of smaller companies have grown intellectually and realized that the only path to follow is that of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy. There is no other way. Others wanted to have him as an example and still do. It was impossible to compare Vadaturskyy with anyone else because everyone wanted to be like him. He is one of a kind, a trailblazer and pioneer, unmatched by anyone else.

During the toughest days of the war, NIBULON was constantly on the radar of the National Bank, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, and the Office of the President of Ukraine. All efforts are focused on helping the company withstand challenges and survive. Foreign companies and creditors share a unanimous and clear opinion – to support NIBULON. In my opinion, the world, represented by creditors, must now come together and make a decisive and sensible decision, setting aside all ambitions: to give NIBULON peace and do everything possible so that the people of Mykolaiv not only stay afloat but also create a post-war miracle. Breakthrough.

The foundations laid by the Ukrainian Oleksiy Vadaturskyy with his intellect and wisdom will enable economic growth to multiply three or four times. And it couldn't be any other way! Now, we need this as much as we need air.



Yuriy Sydorenko

(member of the military, security officer at the central office of NIBULON Ltd. (2011–2015), military chaplain of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (since 2015)).

In August 2011, I enrolled in a four-year part-time program at the Kyiv Theological Seminary, in the faculty for training military chaplains. The Lord gave me the opportunity to combine work with study, as I was fortunate to get a job in the special security and protection unit at the Mykolaiv central office of NIBULON. Once every six months, I traveled to the capital for sessions, completing exams and practical assignments in my free time. I had a very convenient security guard schedule that allowed me to combine work with studying and practical training in the military units of the Mykolaiv garrison. My first education is military; in 1997, I graduated from the Kyiv Institute of Air Force with a major in Logistical Support of Military Units.

Oleksiy Opanasovych knew my life story; he knew where I was studying and what my goals were. When the war began, I was involved in volunteering, and in May 2014, specific military units invited me

to serve as a chaplain. I turned to Oleksiy Opanasovych for advice. The general director and I had numerous conversations about military chaplaincy. Unfortunately, we didn't have much time, as he was constantly busy. He didn't open up to me much, and I didn't have the chance to talk with him about his faith or his views on religion. I knew that he had friendly relations with priests from the Orthodox Church of the Mykolaiv Eparchy. I remember how they came to visit Oleksiy Opanasovych. I believe he had faith from the Lord. It was the core, without which Vadaturskyy could not have accomplished so many great deeds on that land. Interestingly, he was well informed about the development of military chaplaincy and said that the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine should promptly establish the organizational and legal foundations for the interaction between the state and religious organizations regarding the rights to freedom of conscience, worldview, and religion within the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

I often worked at NIBULON's central office, so on workdays, I saw Oleksiy Opanasovych almost every shift: sometimes he was arriving at work, leaving, and staying late. I would greet him as he climbed the stairs (since he didn't use the elevator) and escort him – these were part of the security guards' responsibilities. Working with him was intense because everyone felt a great responsibility and feared making mistakes, but it was always prestigious and very interesting.

There was never a time when the general director passed by without greeting and shaking hands with everyone he met, whether it was his deputy or an ordinary security guard. Even in moments when he was very tired or going through difficult times, Oleksiy Opanasovych could stop and talk with ordinary employees, showing genuine interest in their affairs.

Watching Oleksiy Opanasovych and his discipline, I often felt there was something military about him – punctual, well-composed, precise, and reliable – and he expected the same level of discipline from his subordinates. He was highly responsible. I don't want to overly idealize him or make anything up, but that's what he truly was – an outstanding personality. As a person and as a leader, he was undoubtedly God-given. He was exactly where he was meant to be – he knew what to do, how to do it, whom to choose for the job, what goals to set, and how to achieve results. He noticed who entered his office and who left. He carried such an immense physical and psychological burden – at times more than what ten people could handle; it's hard to even comprehend how all of that could fit into one person. He could work until 11 p.m., and by 4 a.m., be on the road for a business trip to Kyiv or Odesa, or even fly abroad.

It was plain to see that he had the core of a true leader – someone who knew which path to take, how to walk it, and how to lead others along the way. A talent from God! I have worked with many leaders – both in the military service and in business, and now on the front lines – but I have never encountered such expertise and professionalism as that embodied by this remarkable person. As a young I served in Crimea, in Sevastopol, in Mykolaiv, at the airfield. I was the head of the support service and became a chaplain on the front lines in three different brigades during the war – in Sumy, Mariupol, and Kherson – meeting with generals and high-ranking officials. Yet, in terms of professionalism, Vadaturskyy remained number one for me.

Oleksiy Opanasovych attracted people because he was a master of every aspect of his work. When you watch from the outside how he organizes everything, how it all happens, how he achieves results – that's the kind of thing movies should be made about, books written about, and studied in universities. That was the high school of professionalism of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy. It's a pity that we only talk about it; his lessons, thoughts, and dreams should have remained. There was no time and no one capable of understanding and implementing them.

I often thought to myself: I was a career military officer, a bit of a businessman (even achieved some success but then fell seriously ill), spent four years blessed by God working at NIBULON; then the war came, and once again I became a soldier and a chaplain. What role did God assign to Oleksiy Opanasovych? I learned a lot from him, gained much insight; I was deeply impressed by his approach to life, work, and people. His responsible life stance – to reach the top through tremendous effort and extremely hard work, and to stay there – is not something everyone can achieve. Nothing ever fell from the sky for him, and it was never easy for him. God chose him among people and appointed him responsible for the great Ukrainian mission he undertook and accomplished. And he also appointed him to be an example for others.

I often wondered how he managed to be everywhere and succeed at everything. How does he withstand such intense pressures? He seemed to be made of steel because he could do anything. This slogan and life motto of Oleksiy Opanasovych – "Never give up!" – has become mine as well. It was like that when I was ill, and it is the same now, as our people fight against such a cunning and cruel enemy...

But God is kind and loving to those who believe in Him and remain faithful to Him. No matter what the problem is, He will find a way that will give you a tomorrow, will give you life. I was a capable student,

observing a lot and learning much from Oleksiy Opanasovych. There are no random encounters; everything happens for a reason. And fortunate are those whose life path crossed with people like Vadaturskyy. And I walk through life following his path. Thank God we had such a wise person, from whom thousands, even millions, will always learn the experience of a successful Ukrainian. They will be filled with it. "Never give up!" – this slogan grew sharper during the war. It's the number one motto for every soldier, for every defender. Everyone must go through difficult trials, survive, and remain alive – remain human. Do everything possible, and even impossible, for the victory. I've been at war since 2015, and every day I see how people go through extremely difficult trials – I see their exhaustion, their stress, how they live with it, and the fear they overcome. But on the other hand, I see how the Lord saves people. In such situations, each of us must have strong faith and understand that everything happens for a reason. God is the Creator. He knows where to best use us to our fullest potential and where we can bring the greatest benefit. He knows how to guide us through any trials. Sometimes there are situations when it feels like that's it, there's no way out. That's what happened with my unit in Lysychansk. We didn't believe they would let us out, or that we would survive. And the Lord led us out – we survived! But the foundation was faith. We didn't give up and placed our complete trust in God. He can work true miracles, can do anything, and gives us strength and blessings. He is always near.

From what I observed, Oleksiy Opanasovych carried faith in his heart – there were always icons on his desk and walls, and the windows of his office looked out on the bell tower of Mykolaiv's central cathedral. I remember how on Christmas 2013, Oleksiy Opanasovych organized and invited the entire team to the church for the Divine Service. The service was held for the health of every employee, for their families, for the prosperous fate of NIBULON, and for a happy future for Ukraine. The service was conducted in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church on Sadova Street, which he always supported, and where a distinctive iconostasis had just been installed thanks to a donation from Vadaturskyy. The younger Vadaturskyy – Andriy – accompanied the military at the meetings, and I was fortunate to have conversations with him. Now I pray for him to stay strong and endure this heavy cross in life, which, with God and faith, he can bear.

Many times I faced difficult situations and got burned; it was very hard, and I didn't know what to do. What helped me was a living book – the Bible. At the right moment, the Lord gives guidance – you open the Bible to that page and find exactly what you need. The Lord helps and

heals. Such is the living word of God. That's how blessings come, and answers arrive – the key is to trust God and have a personal relationship with Him, heart to heart. It's important to communicate with Him. He, like a loving Father, waits for His children to talk with Him and wants them to spend time with Him. The nature of God is absolute love and absolute goodness. A terrible sin that people commit, and it affects our nation the most during the time of war. On one side, we have loyal, devoted, and selfless defenders and volunteers; on the other – chaos, betrayal, impunity, corruption, and the carefree, festive attitude of thousands who are already celebrating victory. I see fallen – worthy and brave young men; disabled, without hands and legs – and I will never understand the recklessness that exists in the minds of many people in various cities, both in the capital and everywhere else. It's frightening when there is no spirituality and nothing sacred in such empty souls. Each of us will be held responsible for ourselves. Sooner or later. For what we did, and for what we didn't do.

I am serving in the military command of one of the army corps as the head of the chaplain service. I hold the rank of lieutenant colonel and organize spiritual education, pastoral care, and psychological support for servicemen. I help soldiers overcome stress, post-traumatic syndromes, and spiritual struggles. Sometimes it may seem that our brave defenders are made of steel. But each of them needs prayer, moral support, and encouragement.

Behind my chaplain's shoulders are memories of the escape from the almost surrounded Lysychansk, months of constant shelling, Sievierodonetsk, Soledar, Bakhmut, and the successful offensive in Kherson... I have witnessed what our warriors are truly capable of and how much effort every meter of liberated Ukrainian land demands.

I learned about the death of Oleksiy Opanasovych while at church in my hometown of Myrhorod, where I had come to visit my parents and recharge. I received a text message. It was hard to believe – maybe it was a mistake... maybe it wasn't so...

God has His own times and appointed terms for each of us to remain on earth. And we cannot judge whether it is right or wrong. When I see how the Lord takes the best Ukrainians, the nation's finest, I understand that this was their purpose on earth as warriors and defenders. Through their example, God gives a chance to those who remain – through faith, through strong faith in Him. Oleksiy Opanasovych had such faith; he knew and realized in time that this talent and strength were given to him by the Heavenly Father. He alone knows when and whom to take, so they may enter the perfect world of God's Kingdom.



Viktor Slauta

(politician, scholar, Minister of Agrarian Policy of Ukraine (2004),
Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine (2007, 2010)).

I had known Oleksiy Vadaturskyy since Soviet times. In the late 1980s, I was serving as Deputy Head of the Donetsk Regional Executive Committee. Fate first brought us together at a meeting in Mykolaiv region. I remember that during the press conference, we even sat next to each other at the same table. And in the early years, we would see each other at various agricultural seminars held in different parts of Ukraine. I felt his every step – before my eyes, NIBULON, Vadaturskyy's brainchild, was growing stronger, transforming into a powerful grain trading company.

One of the regions has a coat of arms bearing the motto: Potential Proven by Action – a phrase that perfectly describes Oleksiy Opanasovych. At birth, the Lord gives each person a purpose they are meant to fulfill on this earth. Each of us strives toward something. We all have the potential granted by the Heavenly Father, and only through real actions can we make use of it? The world is governed by those countries where information comes first, finance second, and

personnel third. All possible and seemingly impossible information is gathered, then the idea and concept are developed through thorough analysis, and only after that do they look for funding and the necessary qualified personnel. This was precisely the principle by which Oleksiy Opanasovych Vadaturskyy lived and worked. Indeed, he constantly sought to learn more, striving for knowledge and frequently traveling abroad to study European and global best practices. And once he made the only right and well-considered decision, he would seek the necessary sources of financing or attract loans.

For me, Vadaturskyy was like a mascot – a driving force behind certain achievements. He once came up to me and asked, "What are you doing?" I personally worked with about ten farm managers from the Poltava and the Vinnytsia regions, as well as from the Agrarian Union. At that time, they were just deciding to create a certain system in the agro-industrial complex.

And Oleksiy Opanasovych took on the task. In 2004, we developed the Law of Ukraine "On the Basic Principles of State Agrarian Policy of Ukraine" (adopted on June 17, 2004), which contained no numbers – only articles and an action plan. Pillars, foundation. And additionally, the Law "On State Support of Agricultural Development of Ukraine" (adopted on June 24, 2004), which came into effect on January 1, 2005. It introduces for the first time everything necessary for agricultural producers: an agro-fund, seed fund, commodity intervention, financial intervention, taxes, an insurance block, state support, and the use of bank credits... In 2007, based on this law, the State Target Program for the Development of the Ukrainian Countryside for the period up to 2015 was launched. It became the foundation and driving force for the development of the country's agricultural sector.

To me, Vadaturskyy was like litmus paper – something we all studied in chemistry class. He was unique even in that. There were heads of top state institutions whom he visited, as people say, only twice: the first and the last time! He once confided in me: "When a new head is appointed in Kyiv to a vital position in the agro-industrial complex or to lead a ministry, I make a point of requesting a meeting with each one." I come, observe, and listen carefully. I extract a few key thoughts. When I see and hear that someone is "empty," that meeting with them is a waste of time, I don't spend another minute on them.

In the capital, from the early years of independence, Oleksiy Opanasovych was actively addressing many pressing issues.

We, Ukraine's agrarian producers, met monthly to summarize results and exchange information. Oleksiy Opanasovych remained an agrarian to the very end; he respected not only his environment but also the people within it. The place he came from. Even after becoming an oligarch and a Hero of Ukraine, he never got arrogant, never bragged

or looked down on others, but remained balanced and consistent. He knew well and never forgot where he came from. I remember and almost see Vadaturskyy right in front of me. A gray-haired, stocky man. I hear his voice and look closely at his blue suit (either solid-colored or striped). How he loved to dress in the color of the sky – how those blue suits matched perfectly with his golden fields! True, he didn't wear ties – they probably didn't give him freedom, felt like they were choking his throat.

He truly was a hero of his time, and the title Hero of Ukraine – which has sometimes been diminished under various governments, and still sometimes raises surprise – confirmed that. There are some eccentrics among them. And Vadaturskyy was real. In everything. This sets him apart and elevates him to a height unattainable for many of his contemporaries (including those from the domestic Forbes list) and, I believe, for future generations as well.

I don't recall Oleksiy Opanasovych wearing the Hero Star on his chest all the time. If asked or warned, at official ceremonies – yes. He didn't do it unnecessarily. Although some people even put them on pajamas when they go to bed. And in the morning clip it onto the suit. And then he goes to the farm.

Vadaturskyy invited me to the openings of his grain terminals. As soon as they laid the capsules, less than three months would pass before he called me: "Viktor Andriiovych, come over! We need to cut the ribbon!" And so, together we opened up to fifteen terminals. It wasn't just a ceremony – it was a whole event! He knew how to make a celebration when it was truly deserved. Everything was well organized: the installation and construction teams knew their tasks clearly and always finished on time. Such a conveyor never failed; it worked smoothly and at the high standard demanded by the client. Oleksiy Opanasovych didn't throw words to the wind; he kept his promises and, of course, demanded the same, because he knew the true value of what had been done. He looked not only a day, a month, or a year ahead – he foresaw the future. The main thing was that no one got in the way! He never fell into despair. He would drop such pearls of wisdom that you could barely keep up.

I was born in the village of Zakitne, Krasnolymanskyi district (now Lymanskyi district), the Donetsk region. We are 150 kilometers from Kharkiv and the same distance from Donetsk and Luhansk. There are forests all around and the Siverskyi Donets River nearby. The Kaiala River was eight kilometers from my home; it flowed into the Siverskyi Donets River. It was there that Prince Ihor, the hero of the late 12th-century poem – one of the most famous works of Ukrainian literature – met his death. What I mean is that in my Zakitne, people always spoke their native language. Ukrainian. My dad returned from the war at 37,

missing a leg, and worked as an agronomist. When I finished school, my father gave me a hint: "Son, there isn't a single agricultural school in Donetsk, nor Luhansk either." You can only go to Kharkiv to study agronomy." He cried because he knew well what a hard, responsible, and unpredictable job it was from morning till night... He took me to Kharkiv, where I enrolled in the oldest agricultural higher education institution in Ukraine, which is over 200 years old. It was originally founded back when the region was part of Poland. Maybe my native language isn't quite like the one spoken in central Ukraine, not like the way Petro Gadz from the Ternopil region sings and accompanies himself on the accordion, but it's our native language and the dearest to all of us.

Oleksiy Opanasovych had his own dialect; he mastered Ukrainian later in life and was proud of it. He didn't have any nicknames. When people talked about him, they usually said "NIBULON" or simply "Vadaturskyy." They could and should be considered equivalent. His wisdom, knowledge, and even a certain reservedness were felt everywhere. Sometimes he would stop mid-sentence or leave a thought unfinished, and you had to figure it out yourself.

Not everything went as smoothly as desired. I called Oleksiy Opanasovych the day before the tragedy on July 31, 2022. There was a specific financial debt owed to a farming enterprise in the Myrhorod district of Poltava region. I was asked to help. Vadaturskyy was gone the next day, but the issue was resolved positively. He still managed to give the necessary instructions.

What an irony of fate: you speak with someone and have no idea what might happen to them the next moment... As the elders say, everything is in God's hands. Why the Almighty took such a bright soul at such a time is not for us to judge. Perhaps Oleksiy Opanasovych was destined to remain the grain symbol of that cursed war. A model agrarian – a benchmark of honor, spirit, and the nation's conscience, which he served faithfully and truthfully until his last breath. I recalled a story I had read while helping my grandchildren with their homework. Somewhere, archaeologists discovered an ancient tablet with hieroglyphs that was deciphered in England. The meaning was this: "Right now, everything is fine, but we are very worried about the younger generation." Such is the world – the older make way for the younger. And life goes on!

I believe that with the incredibly difficult challenges facing NIBULON during the toughest time in our history, Andriy Vadaturskyy – with his European mindset and education – will not only manage but also multiply the glory of his family. And of Ukraine too.

As for Oleksiy Opanasovych, I am proud that he visited my offices not just "twice," but regularly. And we hurried to do good for people.



Vitaliy Skotsyk
(politician, economist, scholar).

There was nearly a generation and a half between Oleksiy Opanasovych and me – he was 25 years older than me. He entered the agricultural business at the dawn of Ukraine's independence, already backed by more than a decade of experience at the Mykolaiv Regional Administration of Grain Products, while I began my journey in private business in 1997. He was already an adult and experienced, while I was still very young. I turned 25.

That happens in our lives, where the Lord on our life's path sends people – some meant for you, some not. From the very beginning, a warm, genuine, professional, and candid relationship formed between us and the unwavering head of NIBULON. Whenever our paths crossed – whether in discussions about future projects or in resolving operational matters – we always shared a common understanding. And that was no surprise, as we had similar core values. True professionals never entertained those artificial notions that some were born and fit for the West of the country, while others belonged to the East. Though

Vadaturskyy's homeland was Odesa region, and he was most renowned as a resident of Mykolaiv, his enterprises thrived across all of Ukraine. We were united by our native land – the finest and most cherished in the world. And these were no empty words – this was the reality we lived. For him, until his very last breath; for me – to this day. And it can never be changed by anyone.

The world is now open and accessible to everyone, so long as you are a true human being, not a terrorist. We were never concerned with provincialism or small-town mindsets; our thinking was always global. Oleksiy Opanasovych devoted all his time and energy to production. And that was his earthly purpose. Wherever he could bring the greatest benefit. And he did just that! Though I never left the world of production, I followed the path of science. We came from different generations. Who's to say which of us had it easier? Let's be honest, our field wasn't without its oddities: there were those who fancied becoming professors or honorary doctors at some university. By all he had built and achieved in life, Vadaturskyy was, without a doubt, an academic of agribusiness in his own right. But those artificial titles, lavish praise, and pompous accolades were not for him. On the contrary, they irritated him.

Vadaturskyy became a Hero of Ukraine – and who, if not he, truly deserved that title! Because he was genuine. Real. That award was meant for a select few – it wasn't something to be handed out lightly. As strange and paradoxical as it may seem, there are "heroes" out there wanted by Interpol. Unthinkable! Oleksiy Vadaturskyy is a true standard, a benchmark to live by. A man whose example is worth following. And to do even more – but never, under any circumstances, less than he did. Though he set the bar of achievement incredibly high. And thank God for that! That's what made him truly unique and phenomenal.

What others did made him sick to his stomach. Corrupt practice and bribery have no place alongside Vadaturskyy's name or his work – it's simply unthinkable! He was neither liked nor accepted by the changing authorities. He could never put up with the fact that for many, power had become nothing more than a business. Positions, titles, and awards were bought – and then all that had to be worked off, plus earn some extra money for oneself. Amid all that filth and corruption, he always stood out by his absence from it, remaining crystal clear, unstained, and incorruptible.

Some people didn't like his character, and others tried to take away part of his business. But how much he was loved and respected by global institutions! He was the first to receive credit facilities from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Large

credit facilities, even very large. For him, doors and opportunities opened at the World Bank, and for many years, he remained a national symbol of trust and integrity. In the history of Ukrainian business, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy has become an iconic figure. He became a genius even during his lifetime, a genius, the conscience of the country, and a guarantor of the Ukrainian word of honor and dignity. This story has to be told so that everyone knows how he started, from what and under what conditions he built his vast private business despite all the extremely difficult, epochal challenges and warnings. His example and biography should be the basis for textbooks, the subject of TV series, and a source of pride and inspiration. He had a life story that could fill the biographies of dozens like him.

Some say it's impossible to run a civilized business in Ukraine. But Oleksiy Opanasovych and his NIBULON disproved that. I looked up to them and tried to follow their example. Everything was absolutely transparent, open, and honest. Flawless.

And how many problems he had with the ruling parties, as they all dreamed of privatizing Vadaturskyy, making him controllable and captive. Fortunately, no one managed to break him. He served only one party – the Ukrainian people. Although it wasn't all that simple. When I was the leader of the

Agrarian Party, he and I had many discussions. Yes, he supported us, but he never became a party member. He firmly believed in the principle that business and politics should never be mixed. And that saved him – party work didn't distract him or take away his precious time; he worked hard, seemingly around the clock, and achieved the unimaginable. He used to say that a businessman should focus on business, and a politician on politics. If you want to make changes, you should leave business and go into politics, or vice versa. But never enter politics to advance and expand your business.

For example, that's what I did in 2014. While I was in politics, I withdrew from all my businesses. What Vadaturskyy did should become part of the modern culture and traditions of national business and politics.

Everything Oleksiy Opanasovych did was done properly and in a truly civilized manner. Of course, Viktor Yushchenko wanted to have Vadaturskyy as a standard-bearer in 'Our Ukraine', Viktor Yanukovych – in the 'Party of Regions', and Petro Poroshenko – in 'European Solidarity'. There were those who managed to be in all of them. Now they explain that they couldn't do otherwise... But that's exactly why Vadaturskyy was special – no one could bend or break his life principles. Such was the unwavering foundation of his core philosophy.

And how much honesty it added when he said that being on Ukraine's Forbes billionaire list was like a death sentence. And who really loves the truth? In that list, Vadaturskyy was a white crow – he earned everything through his grit, wisdom, and hard work, not by plundering the Ukrainian economy or gaining astronomical wealth for free. He had nothing to do with such people. That "list" was an alien environment for him. He felt out of place there. He was one of the few who managed to become a genuine businessman.

There was nothing he didn't know. He delved deeply into even the smallest details of his business. I assisted him with agro-technologies and advised on equipment purchases for NIBULON. He never delegated these matters to any of his specialists but was always the first to dive deeply into the issues himself. When something new arrived, he would personally inspect and accept it himself. And he would test it himself, too. He was down-to-earth, which is why he achieved such efficiency in his work. He was deeply curious about innovations he hadn't yet seen himself but had heard were already in use somewhere around the world. I remember how his face lit up when the latest high-tech seeders were delivered to him. He would always head out to the field himself and be the first to see how they worked in action. He set the necessary parameters, even though he wasn't an agronomist. But he knew agricultural production thoroughly and in great detail.

And what a combine operator he was! He skillfully harvested himself when he was provided with the latest Massey Ferguson 7274 grain harvesters. At that moment, it seemed there was no one happier on earth than him! Now I am proud that together with him, we entered the field with two combines.

Throughout all the years, Vadaturskyy supported the Mykolaiv Agricultural Institute. He oversaw the training programs and apprenticeships. Many graduates of the university later joined the professional and highly skilled ranks of NIBULON.

How he loved Mykolaiv – its industry, fields, port, and the comforts of home. There he soared, spread his wings, and gladly returned to his beloved home from everywhere. But Kyiv felt foreign to him, too heavy to grasp and understand its nature and essence. Maybe it was because of the powers that be, whom he never accepted. And they also resisted and did not accept the ubiquitous and persistent man from Mykolaiv. The trips were only forced, mostly arduous and uncomfortable. Addressing urgent matters or attending official meetings required his presence. He never traveled unnecessarily or just for the sake of it. He preferred the field, the elevators, or the production facilities. He invited me to the openings of the first grain elevators and to the launch of the first barges. The traditions were already worked out down to

the smallest detail, and throughout all the years, his special mascot remained Viktor Andriiovych Slauta, to whom he had a particular affection. There was a reason for that – in their duo, words and deeds were always in perfect harmony.

Oleksiy Opanasovych warmly welcomed everyone, engaged pleasantly with all, and always remained true to himself. Without arrogance, superiority, or any pretension. He was a great patriot. Since 2014, from the very first days of the Russian-Ukrainian war, our military units have been supported by NIBULON: beds, mattresses, construction of barracks... A huge amount of equipment belonging to Oleksiy Opanasovych was working for the defense of Ukraine. He did great things but never publicized them anywhere. All military units stationed in the South were supplied by Vadaturskyy. It was no coincidence that since 2018, he has been included on the list of our agribusiness representatives sanctioned by Russia.

The murder of such a great Ukrainian was deliberate, as he stood like a thorn in the side of our sworn enemies. We will undoubtedly win, but no one will bring back Oleksiy Opanasovych. The country's reconstruction will begin, and it will truly hit us that Vadaturskyy is no longer here. People like him will be worth their weight in gold to us. How much he could have done for the country and how much good he could have brought to its people. Now he would be entering his natural environment, at a time when the oligarchic economy is nearly dismantled, and the world is ready to invest huge sums in Ukraine, his golden era would have begun. With his NIBULON, he would have been able to implement billion-dollar projects. And people like him were trusted and believed by global banks and investors. It was not destined... The star has faded... But his name and earthly deeds will never fade. Lucky are those who spoke with him, who learned from him. I am glad to have been one of them. He was able to convey sincerity, openness, and integrity in business. Love for people, for the country, and for foreign partners. The successors of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy in the days to come must be exactly like this – embodying his core values and philosophy. And not those who built their sinful fortunes on the collapse of the Ukrainian economy in the 1990s.

Oleksiy Opanasovych sowed golden seeds. He did it! He set an example for many people who built similar projects with their own hands. For example, just like the modern builder Petro Gadz has done and is still doing in the Ternopil region. And thankfully, there are more and more new Vadaturskyy in Ukraine who have built unique things. Now they will raise investments – their time is coming. If only we had peace and victory. We will rebuild everything and multiply all that we have.



Viacheslav Sokolov

(Director of the Plant Breeding and Genetics Institute — National Centre of Seed and Cultivar Investigation of Ukraine, Corresponding Member of the National Academy of Agrarian Sciences (NAAS).

Life passes quickly, especially when you're over seventy; each day feels like it slips through your fingers like sand. Each of us carries in our hearts not only those we love but, sadly, those we can never stop loving... It's hard to believe, but with age and passing years, you begin to carry deep in your soul your cemetery, or perhaps more than one: of parents, family, classmates, college friends, colleagues, unforgettable and loyal friends, acquaintances, and even people you barely knew... As the elders used to say, everything is in God's will.

We first met Oleksiy Vadaturskyy in Kyiv back in 1993, at the dawn of our Independence. I remember every detail of that day vividly, as it was my faithful friend – one of those you carry in your heart and never forget – Mykhailo Bashkirov, who brought us together for nearly three decades. We were coursemates at the then Voroshylovhrad Agricultural Institute. By assignment, he ended up in the Mykolaiv

region, starting out as a chief agronomist and then chairman of a collective farm in the Berezanka district. In 1990, he was elected as a People's Deputy of Ukraine of the first convocation, serving as the head of the Mykolaiv Regional Council at the time. Mykhailo didn't have a place to live in the capital and stayed in Room 617 of the Ukraine Hotel. Of course, Oleksiy knew him – they were even on friendly terms. Vadaturskyy was already taking his first challenging steps in agriculture with his NIBULON. The future agroholding – one of Ukraine's largest agricultural producers and exporters – began as a joint venture between the Mykolaiv entrepreneur Oleksiy Vadaturskyy and Hungarian and British companies. So, the Hungarians proposed that the Plant Breeding and Genetics Institute be among the Ukrainian founders, as they were interested in corn.

This issue hung in the air and remained unresolved because of our bureaucracy. I was not yet the director of the institute, but I had already begun working with Oleksiy on the breeding and genetics of various crops. Oleksiy fell out of favor; competitors and envious rivals pressured him from all sides. His only true protector at the highest level remained Mykhailo Bashkirov. Years passed, and in 1998, NIBULON received its first direct loan of five million dollars from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), becoming the first agricultural producer in Ukraine to obtain such financing. The funds were used to expand exports. Vadaturskyy earned trust and recognition worldwide, yet many of his fellow citizens drained him dry. Time has proven the truth – Oleksiy saw farther and clearer: every dollar invested through the credit line in NIBULON generated four to five dollars.

He started in Vradiivka at the grain products plant and later moved on to the Luhansk region. Soon, like mushrooms after the rain, Vadaturskyy's enterprises sprang up all over the country. When NIBULON already had 50,000 hectares of land, he and I began actively discussing seed-related matters. By that time, I had already assumed the position of director of our institute. He obtained various seed varieties from us and distributed them.

He began exporting grain from Vradiivka, organizing shipments at sea, bypassing the Mykolaiv port. When Vadaturskyy was building the river fleet on the Dnipro, Mykhailo Bashkirov tragically passed away. It so happened that on the eve of the presidential election, in which Leonid Kuchma won for the second time, Mykhailo was offered to head the Kirovohrad Regional Administration. Before that, the agronomist held the position of Director General of the State Production Cooperative Association 'Seeds of Ukraine' from 1993 to 1998.

Sadly, our loyal friend – both mine and Oleksiy's – died in a car

accident on February 2, 1999. Just over a month later, on March 25, a similar tragedy near Boryspil took the life of Vyacheslav Chornovil, the leader of Rukh. Interestingly, also on February 2 – but in 2015 – the youth idol and musician Kuzma Skryabin tragically died in a car accident near the village of Lozuvatka in the Kryvorizkyi district of the Dnipropetrovsk region. Each of them held an active political stance. The murder of each remains one of the versions of their death for all these years. A number of politicians, experts, and law enforcement officials continue to insist on justice. However, this has never been proven by the investigation and continues to stir public interest in Ukraine. Mykhailo and I were the same age, while Vadaturskyy was two years older.

After Bashkirov's funeral, Oleksiy and I grew closer as friends. We were united by science – and only by science. Fortunately, we had no shared business interests, which usually lead to broken relationships and hostility. I was fortunate not to get involved in any schemes and to avoid unnecessary troubles or legal issues. And Vadaturskyy, with his values and transparency, never wanted to hear about any schemes. They irritated him, and he wanted clarity and purity in relationships as soon as possible. Even our wives got along well, and sometimes we all spent time relaxing together. Like mine, Oleksiy's faithful and only life partner, Raisa, was kind-hearted, humble, open, sincere, without any airs or pretensions.

I traveled to Mykolaiv more often, while Oleksiy was busier and had little time to appear at our institute in Odesa. Whenever I had any misunderstandings or problems, Oleksiy would calmly resolve everything immediately. He was a man of word and deed. He was someone you wanted to talk to, to be friends with.

When Russia attacked us openly and cynically, from the very first days of the war, Vadaturskyy worked around the clock for Victory. He simply couldn't believe in any other outcome; he was confident in the Ukrainian people because he understood well the nature of our enemies, who were never brothers to us, and time has proven that they were never even human. And it was Oleksiy who organized the first grain shipment of the war year 2022 through the Danube. When the Russian invaders destroyed the bridge over the bay between Ovidiopol and Bilhorod-Dnistrovskyi, he sent his boats to help.

Oleksiy and I were bound by our village roots – we were born, raised, educated, and worked within rural traditions, gaining life experience there, never shying away from or fearing any kind of work. And that was how it had been throughout our entire conscious life. We spoke almost the same kind of surzhyk, and only over the years, through the poetry of famous Ukrainians and the books of our great authors,

we came to truly appreciate the beauty and grandeur of our native language. For some reason, people consider me a Moskal because of my surname; many are surprised that I, a native of the Luhansk region who has worked for decades in Odesa, have been and remain a Ukrainian. That's just nonsense! My surname is SOkolov, not SokolOv! Do you get the subtlety? I've been correcting the misplaced stress in my name for years – in my native language, it's on the first syllable, but in their language, they put it on the last one!

We need to adopt the global tradition of the Jewish people and determine nationality based solely on the mother's lineage. I was born in the Petrivka village (formerly known as Karaiashnyk), located in the Stanychno-Luhanskyi district near the confluence of the steppe rivers Yevsuh and Kovsuh, tributaries of the Siverskyi Donets River. I grew up just five kilometers from Shchastia (meaning 'happiness' – what a name! If only the reality matched it!). Our primary language in Petrivka is our native Ukrainian. I was taught Ukrainian at school, said my first word 'Mama', dreamed in it, and fell in love for the first time... And those fashionable embroidered shirts I wore in the 1950s – I've been attached to them ever since. On my mother's side, my family name is Prokopenko, a native Ukrainian lineage that has been part of the elite for generations. My grandfather was the first to establish a vegetable farm and build a greenhouse. In 1933, he was dispossessed during the dekulakization. He instilled in me a love for the land and seeds. Later, unfortunately, I studied in Russian in Luhansk and then enrolled in a postgraduate program in the Russified city of Odesa. In the very same place where Vadaturskyy received his higher education. The dominance of Russian was everywhere, and even in Kyiv, it still remains that way today. But we endured, which makes it hardest for us – yet we are already defending our native land and our native language. Oleksiy and I went through a sort of linguistic evolution together. We met speaking Russian and took our first steps in the workforce using it. But since 2007, when he was awarded the title Hero of Ukraine, he felt that a person with such recognition had no right to speak in any language other than their native one. From then on, during work, meetings, private conversations, and phone calls, we spoke only in our native language! By his example, he inspired all employees of NIBULON and his supporters to do the same. He remained a patriot until his last breath.

All technical progress in the agricultural sector is related to the development of fertilizers and chemical plant protection products. Oleksiy always strived to keep up with the times, using the most modern equipment from the best manufacturers. Costs were rising, while seed loss fluctuated between 15 and 20 percent. When you have

huge expenses and use poor-quality seed of a bad variety, the saying "you reap what you sow" truly comes into play. Vadaturskyy demanded better crop varieties and more technologically prepared seeds. There were times when all producers managed to unite around a single type of activity. We adopted this method from the Hungarians, based on the scientific organization of labor. And this was the work of our Odesa Selection and Genetics Institute. We cultivated both parent lines and hybrids. We grew high-quality seed with genetic quality control. Unfortunately, it was produced at our old factories. We had a dream to build a modern seed production factory. Experts from the United States, where I completed an internship, helped us with this. Unfortunately, we couldn't secure three million dollars, and the state did not support us. It was fortunate that two seed factories were privatized: one in the village of Zoria, Rivne region, built back in 1989 and now, after modernization, holds strategic importance for farmers who have become practically independent of imported seed material; and another one in Cherkasy. Unfortunately, they produce seeds for foreign companies there.

The hybrids are simple, silage, and versatile. I worked with a group of full-season hybrids – those that mature nine times over ten years in a given zone. I was fortunate to develop hybrids that produced the highest yields in Ukraine. It's a pity I accepted the managerial position, because deep down I'm a breeder, and that's where I can be most useful. After state testing, each hybrid receives a specific name or unique designation.

Our institute works on breeding 12 crops: winter wheat, soft wheat (for bread), durum wheat (for pasta), spring barley, winter barley, sunflower, corn, soybeans, peas, chickpeas, alfalfa... Now I feel – and rightly so – that I have a duty to myself and to Oleksiy's memory.

Long before the signing of the international mediation agreement to unblock the ports, Vadaturskyy was building grain transshipment facilities at the mouth of the Danube, in Izmail, to export grain either to Central European countries or to the Romanian port of Constanta in the Black Sea. Sadly, he never lived to see the day when native grain would once again be exported by sea. However, through our peaceful and victorious Black Sea, the world will receive a new wheat variety named 'Oleksiy Vadaturskyy', to be developed by our Plant Breeding and Genetics Institute. If only he were alive! After all, his life's credo – as a true self-made man – was tireless work for Ukraine and for the Ukrainian people. And work so worthy that even during his lifetime, vessels, barges, and the finest varieties of wheat deserved to bear his name... Oleksiy belonged to the kind of people you carry in your heart, those you can never forget...



Mykola Solskyi

(lawyer, agricultural entrepreneur, People's Deputy of Ukraine of the 9th convocation, Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food (2022– 2024)).

The full-scale war was a profound shock to Oleksiy Opanasovych's business. Russian occupiers looted the company's grain storage facilities and shelled its elevators. From the very first days, despite the constant shelling of the city, the head of NIBULON stayed in Mykolaiv, helped the city, created new logistical routes for grain export, and fought with all his might for Ukraine.

I met Oleksiy Opanasovych in the first year of Russia's full-scale invasion. But I had heard, read, and knew a lot about him. Vadaturskyy was a guiding example and role model for me and many of my colleagues. And I am truly grateful to fate for giving me the chance to know and shake hands with this remarkable man.

Oleksiy Opanasovych was known not only within the business community but was also recognized and respected by ordinary

Ukrainians. As a successful entrepreneur, a talented manager, and a simple, down-to-earth man. He was a man of action and a man of honor. Someone you could trust to go into business with and confidently build a partnership. Talking to him was easy – his advice always came naturally and carried real value.

Oleksiy Opanasovych was a man full of zest and inspiration for life. Despite his respectable age, he made a constant effort to stay in tune with all the changes happening in the world, whether it was the rise of new technologies or the emergence of modern business principles and approaches.

He was a remarkably modern, driven figure with a resilient, youthful spirit. He nurtured many skilled specialists in the agricultural sector within his company. They were all incredibly fortunate to have such a mentor and guide. It is truly valuable to grow and develop alongside such a professional.

Vadaturskyy was among those who represented our country's agricultural sector on the international stage. He did so with a strong reputation and at a high professional level. Oleksiy Opanasovych can rightfully be regarded as the founder of the Ukrainian agricultural sector. His name is forever etched in the history of our nation.

"The most important rule is to be honest – with people, with business partners, with the banking system, and with society. And then any task set before the company will be accomplished." These are simple yet deeply meaningful words from Oleksiy Opanasovych – a reflection of how he truly built and grew his life's work.

Strict, demanding, and fair. Vadaturskyy lived by these principles throughout his entire life. He succeeded in building a powerful, world-class company.

I sincerely believe that his legacy will continue to grow and thrive. I believe that under the skilled leadership of his son Andriy and the highly professional team at NIBULON, the business will remain successful.

Oleksiy Vadaturskyy often said, "My motto was, is, and always will be – never give up." Today, these words have become the motto of all Ukrainians. He never gave up and fought until the very end.



Heorhii (Yurii) Stankevych

(Doctor of Technical Sciences, Professor, Academician at the International Academy of Refrigeration, Laureate of the State Prize of Ukraine in Science and Technology).

I first met Oleksiy in September 1963. My Myrony was on one side of the Odesa district Balta, and his Bendzary was on the opposite side. Together, we studied at Ukrainian Secondary School No. 1, which had five grades of students from the district center and the surrounding villages. All were grouped by their chosen trades: drivers, builders, electricians, club workers... Oleksiy studied in the class with future electricians. I remember when luminescent (some called them fluorescent) daylight lamps first appeared. Before the advent of LED lamps, they were widely used for general lighting because they offered several times greater luminous efficiency and lifespan compared to incandescent bulbs serving the same purpose. Oleksiy and his classmates installed those lamps in the classrooms and corridors of Balta School No. 1.

Oleksiy Vadaturskyy earned only good and excellent grades year after

year. It's probably no coincidence that he ended up in the electrician's class, as in 1966, he enrolled at the Odesa Institute of Technology, specializing in automation and comprehensive mechanization of chemical-technological processes. At first, I studied in the class for drivers in Balta, but when my eyesight began to deteriorate sharply, I transferred to the class for club workers, since I played the bayan quite well and took part in amateur artistic performances. The school had its own dormitory, although Vadaturskyy and I went home every day, sometimes by bus, and sometimes on foot.

Our admission to university was quite unusual. At that time, the secondary education system was transitioning to a ten-year program. Oleksiy and I were among the last to study for 11 years, but we graduated together with those who had completed the school curriculum in 10 years. The number of applicants was twice as high as in previous years, and naturally, the competition for admission doubled as well. But we were lucky – we both got in!

We had wonderful teachers back in Balta. To reach your goal, you first have to keep moving forward. Whether you want to or not, you have to study. From my very first days at school, I had the feeling that it was the best – simply because it was my school. And my teachers were the best, too. And my classmates were the best as well. They are for life; you have no right to hurt or betray anyone. Every day, we should learn and work in a way that leaves the best mark and the fondest memory behind. Then teachers and friends will speak of you as genuine, as a true Person.

At the institute, I majored in chemical technology of plant raw materials (back then, wood chips, vines, and wood waste were chemically processed to produce feed yeast, alcohol, and chemicals) and earned my qualification as a chemical process engineer. Oleksiy and I had a solid grasp of the school chemistry curriculum. Three teachers named Vira left a lasting impression on us – Vira Danylivna, Vira Hryhorivna (she was the one who sparked our love for chemistry), and Vira...

We lived in Odesa for five years in different dorms – he in a five-story 'Khrushchyovka' on what was then Pioneer Street, and I nearby. At that time, students from all years were sent to state farms and collective farms to help with the harvest of agricultural crops. Every year throughout September, we would head off in different directions to pick tomatoes, grapes, corn, watermelons...

Petro Mykytovych Platonov was the rector of the Odesa Institute of Technology. He was one of the founders of the university, served as rector for nearly 20 years, and greatly influenced its development and future achievements. Few people know that in 1963, the government

planned to relocate our institute to Kostanay in Kazakhstan (during the Virgin Lands campaign), but thanks to Petro Mykytovych's connections, it stayed in Odesa. Without that, who knows where Oleksiy and I would have studied? The institution was officially named after Stalin and Lomonosov, but among people, it was nicknamed the "flour-milling and nuclear" place. Platonov managed to bring together not only specialists in the grain industry but also thermal engineers for nuclear power plants, as well as mechanics and telemechanics experts in emerging fields.

I progressed from being an institute student to heading the Department of Grain Storage Technology. In 1980, I defended my candidate's dissertation, and in 1997, I earned my doctoral degree. Both of my theses focused on improving grain drying – one of the most important processes in post-harvest grain handling.

During his studies, Oleksiy was curious about everything and actively participated in technical creativity clubs, especially those related to his specialty in automation of chemical-technological processes.

In 1968, our institute was reorganized: specialists in thermophysics, mechanics, and thermomechanics were transferred to polytechnic universities and the Institute of Refrigeration, while we received programs focused on food technologies (such as meat preservation, dairy industry technology, winemaking) and refrigeration engineering. Since then, we have been known as the Odesa Technological Institute of the Food Industry named after Lomonosov. Thank the Lord, Vadaturskyy and I chose the right future profession and weren't assigned anywhere – we stayed there until we defended our diplomas.

After my fourth year, I completed a four-month practice in Leningrad and returned to Balta by train on 31 July 1970. Once I was home in the village, I learned that Odesa had been placed under quarantine due to a cholera outbreak. After a while, I received a letter from the institute informing me that classes were suspended and that on September 1, students were to gather in Izmail, where agricultural work was organized for us. From Balta, Oleksiy, I, and other students traveled by

AN-2 biplane (by the way, the most widely produced, highly demanded, and longest-serving aircraft model in the world). It was there, in the Broska village near Izmail, that Vadaturskyy's organizational talents first became apparent. Everyone lived and worked at the field camp. Oleksiy, as an initiative-taking, responsible, and organized student, was soon invited to attend the foremen's meetings. Together with the head of the collective farm, they assigned work tasks. Our buddy proved himself to be a capable student team leader.

I clearly remember the simple student wedding party of Oleksiy and Raia in the dormitory. They got married while Oleksiy was working under assignment in Trykraty.

The following year, 1971, we completed our studies. I was left working as a postgraduate researcher at the institute, and Oleksiy, during the job assignment, was sent to the Trykraty village in the Voznesensk district of Mykolaiv region. There, he began his professional career at the grain products plant as the chief power engineer, and later worked as the chief engineer.

Ten years later, he was transferred to the regional center Mykolaiv, where he held positions as Head of the Production Department and Deputy Head of the Regional Grain Products Administration. For a while, we lost contact – there were no mobile phones back then, so of course, no way to get in touch.

I have to say that in my youth, at school and in the institute, people called me Yurik, but when I stayed on to work at the institute, they started calling me by my official name – Heorhiy. I worked at the institute and often visited students during their industrial practice related to grain storage and processing at corresponding enterprises. And so, a decade and a half later, Oleksiy and I met again in Mykolaiv, where he was working as the chief engineer of the grain products plant. We just couldn't stop talking!

I will never forget the events of the late 1990s, when our institute was cooperating with the Skvyra Grain Products Plant in the Kyiv region. That's where, I first saw on TV NIBULON's creation – the dome-shaped grain storage facilities with a capacity of 50,000 tons. Vadaturskyy inaugurated the Grain Transshipment Terminal in Mykolaiv. I not only understood what my fellow countryman was involved in, but also saw the extremely complex challenges he was tackling.

Somewhere in the early 2000s, Oleksiy and I met in Kyiv at the Exhibition of Achievements of National Economy, where NIBULON was a co-organizer of one of the booths. Years passed, we both grew older and more serious, and when I greeted Oleksiy in one of the pavilions, he didn't recognize me. He mentioned he had a scheduled interview but said he'd be happy to meet afterward. And once again, we just couldn't stop talking! I was extremely proud of my friend when, on November 15, 2007, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was awarded the title Hero of Ukraine for his outstanding personal contribution to strengthening the agro-industrial complex, organizing and ensuring consistently high performance in agricultural production, and advancing the social sphere. As graduates of the same school and institute, we both became recipients of State Prizes: first Oleksiy, who received

the 2008 State Prize of Ukraine in Architecture for the design of the agricultural transshipment terminal for the NIBULON enterprise in Mykolaiv; and later me, awarded the 2015 State Prize of Ukraine in Science and Technology for the work titled the System of Energy-Efficient Technologies for Grain Storage and Its Processing into Food and Feed Products.

From time to time, Oleksiy would call me whenever work-related questions came up. I consulted with him several times. In the summer of 2012, I received a call from the rector's office asking me to meet with the institute's rector, Bohdan Viktorovych Yehorov. It turned out that Oleksiy Vadaturskyy had arrived and proposed establishing a scientific laboratory at our university to assess grain quality indicators.

Over the years, NIBULON has consistently recruited specialists from our institute to work in the company and its branches. NIBULON allocated the necessary funds and provided all the required equipment for four laboratories. Even the color of the furniture matched the company's corporate style. The festive opening was successfully held in December 2012. At that time, Vadaturskyy was awarded an honorary doctorate from our university. He gave a very engaging speech, and the students listened with special reverence as he shared stories about his life experiences, studies, trips with construction teams, and the teachers who helped guide him in life. I often took students on unforgettable excursions to Mykolaiv, visiting the facilities of NIBULON.

I traveled to the Zolotonosha and Kremenchuk branches, where I helped tackle issues with corn drying. In 2021, I congratulated Oleksiy on his birthday, and he replied that on that day he would be launching a vessel – one of NIBULON's latest major projects – and that he would be glad to see me there. I believe and know that he felt more at ease knowing that I would always be there to help him with certain matters. As for me, knowing Oleksiy well and understanding what he did for Ukraine, I could never say no to him. Our many years' friendship was honest and sincere...

Memory is like a copper plate covered with letters that time quietly wears away – unless you refresh them with a chisel. The Odesa National University of Technology, where Oleksiy and I studied in different years, once bore names associated with Stalin and Lomonosov – names alien and even hostile to the Ukrainian people. I am confident that the day will come when our alma mater will be named in honor of its most distinguished graduate, honorary Doctor of Science, and Hero of Ukraine, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy! Forever etched with a chisel! As a benchmark, as a model professional of the highest caliber and a Person who was and will remain the bread captain of Ukraine.



Yulia Tymoshenko

(a stateswoman and political leader, Member of the Ukrainian Parliament, twice Prime Minister of Ukraine, and the first woman to hold the office of Prime Minister of Ukraine).

The greatest treasure of any country is its people. Ukrainian soil has given rise to many talented scientists, brilliant artists, and pioneering researchers. The world is rediscovering Ukraine and its heritage, and Russia's full-scale war against our country has only accelerated the process of national identity, with the courage of Ukrainians admired across the globe. The recent news that the Metropolitan Museum has recognized artists Ivan Aivazovsky, Ilya Repin, and Arkhip Kuindzhi as Ukrainian painters is just the beginning of rethinking the legacy of Ukrainians who have enriched human civilization. The list of famous Ukrainians could go on and on. They lived before us, and they continue to live among us. They have glorified Ukraine and continue to do so today. Ukrainian soil is rich in talent and heroic figures. Without exaggeration, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was a landmark figure for our country. A Hero of Ukraine, a patriot, and visionary driving force behind

transformations in agribusiness; a prominent figure in the maritime industry and shipbuilding; a global advocate for Ukraine's interests; and the founder of the world-renowned agroholding NIBULON.

Before Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine, our country was among the world's top ten grain exporters, ranking second in grain exports and seventh in oilseed exports. The total grain exports for 2021 amounted to 51.2 million tons, roughly the same level as in 2020. Nearly one-tenth of all grain exports came from the agroholding NIBULON, which supplied agricultural products to seventy countries worldwide. That's over one-third of the UN member countries whose food security NIBULON helped ensure. For many years, the corporation consistently won UN tenders to supply grain to countries in Africa and Asia. Its founder and unwavering leader for nearly 30 years was Ukrainian Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, whose dream was to feed all those in need with Ukrainian bread.

He believed that Ukraine has everything it takes to be a global leader in the agricultural market – fertile land, the world's best chernozem soils, hardworking people, and a unique geographic location. He did everything to make Ukraine a "true maritime nation, not just a country by the sea." He dreamed of restoring river navigation in Ukraine and showed by his own example that it was possible. He had many dreams, but the war and the hostile missiles from the Russian occupiers cut them short. Oleksiy Opanasovych Vadaturskyy's name was known not only in professional circles and government offices but also among ordinary people. In his hometown of Mykolaiv, people recognized him on the streets because, over thirty years of NIBULON's existence, he created thousands of jobs.

He didn't just overcome challenges – he set them himself. Vadaturskyy's ambitious, large-scale projects were more than private business; they drove Ukraine's economy and continue to serve the country's welfare and global food security. Oleksiy Opanasovych firmly believed that both large and small private companies should work for the country, its global standing, and the well-being of its people. Back in the 1990s, he chose to focus on developing his own private business because he didn't want to depend on the state. He lived by the principle of relying on his efforts and the professionalism of like-minded people rather than waiting for favors from others.

I often remember Oleksiy Opanasovych, whom I met back in the early 2000s when I was serving as Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister. Even then, he was a legendary figure in the country's rapidly growing agribusiness sector. I have always had – and still have – great respect for people who create something valuable for others and their country.

He was pleasant to talk to, always spoke his mind openly, and had a good sense of humor... I remember my first impression of him: energetic, full of ideas, and bursting with ambitious plans. And each of his major business projects stands as proof of those words. No matter the topic – whether it was processing agricultural enterprises, transshipment terminals, elevators, fleets, sea and river terminals, shipyards, restoring river navigation, or building his own vessels. His stories about building the agroholding and his future plans were sometimes captivating, but the true value of his leadership talent and the scale of his business could only be grasped by visiting NIBULON – its shipyard in Mykolaiv, grain storage facilities, elevators, and terminals. He dreamed of building a successful agribusiness – and he made that dream a reality. He dreamed of restoring Mykolaiv's reputation as a city of shipbuilders – a dream he fulfilled, as NIBULON's vessels were built right at the Mykolaiv shipyard. He aimed to revive and breathe new life into the river transport industry, proving that there are no limits to what can be achieved with determination and vision. In some high-level offices, officials joked about barges carrying Kherson watermelons being transported to Kyiv via the Dnipro River. The media interest in this event pleased Vadaturskyy himself, who joked that the buzz around a barge carrying watermelons was like the attention given to building an aircraft carrier, even though it was just a barge and a tugboat. He considered it unacceptable luxury for the country to use only 15 percent of the Dnipro River's freight transportation potential. I met with Oleksiy Opanasovych several times, including during my two terms as Prime Minister. I asked him how, as head of government, I could help, and he always emphasized the importance of creating transparent and fair rules for business development, a smart tax system, the growth of civilized lending for enterprises, and the fight against corruption at all levels of government. He had seen firsthand that excessive inspections, reports, and paperwork only hinder business growth. He was straightforward and loved to joke: "You shouldn't interfere – we can manage on our own!" I know that his word as a businessman was highly valued, and foreign investors weren't afraid to put millions into Vadaturskyy's business projects almost "on his word alone" because he had an impeccable reputation in business circles.

Together with Oleksiy Opanasovych and the team from the Batkivshchyna party, we worked for a long time on improving the draft law "On Inland Water Transport." For nearly 15 years, there were fierce battles in the Ukrainian Parliament as pro-Russian forces pushed for benefits and privileges for foreign shipowners, including Russian

ones. At that time, anti-Ukrainian bills regarding the use of Ukrainian river waterways were introduced almost every year. Patriotic forces resisted the lobbyists' attempts to introduce opaque and corrupt rules that favored those using foreign vessels in Ukraine's inland waters and created discriminatory conditions for vessels flying the Ukrainian flag. In 2020, together with Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, we developed a comprehensive package of nearly five hundred amendments to the draft law "On Inland Water Transport." These amendments aimed to protect Ukrainian shipping within inland waters and introduce fair tax and fee requirements for foreign vessels. Neither Oleksiy Vadaturskyy nor I could accept that anti-Ukrainian forces were pushing the same provisions into the inland water transport bill, lobbying for the interests of foreign carriers – particularly Russian ones – by granting them unprecedented privileges, including exemption from taxes and excise duties, which is unheard of in any European country. The issue concerned foreign offshore vessels, including Russian ones, as the law included technical specifications characteristic specifically of those vessels. Together with Oleksiy Opanasovych, we fought against the discrimination of Ukrainian companies whose operations on the rivers were burdened by extra duplicate permits, reports, licensing, and paid administrative services. Not all of our proposals were adopted, but without them, Ukrainian river carriers would have faced unfavorable conditions compared to foreign vessels engaged in cabotage transport within Ukraine.

Oleksiy Vadaturskyy could talk for hours about the future of river navigation because he understood the potential and opportunities of both river and sea transport in Ukraine – a country that, thanks to its unique geographical location, could be not only a land but also a major water transport hub. He invested much in developing inland water transport, expanding river infrastructure, and growing the fleet of

NIBULON, which before the war included over 80 vessels, all entirely Ukrainian, was designed and built in Ukraine. Oleksiy Opanasovych dreamed of having a fleet of a hundred vessels or more. He restored Mykolaiv's title as a city of shipbuilders, as NIBULON's shipyard launched up to a dozen vessels per year before Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine began. The vessels of NIBULON sailed proudly under the Ukrainian flag, crewed by Ukrainian hands. In 2021, the agroholding transported over 4 million tons of various goods along the inland waterways. The war and the destruction of the Kakhovka dam put the development of river transport on hold, but after victory, Ukraine must turn its attention back to the potential of inland shipping, just as Vadaturskyy once dreamed.

Oleksiy Opanasovych had many dreams – among them, a bold vision to establish a direct transport corridor with Egypt for delivering agricultural goods. His dreams went far beyond growing a private business – he longed to see our country stronger, more prosperous, more appealing to investors, and its people happier. He didn't just aspire – he acted on it every single day, seeing his business not only as work, but as his hobby and his way to unwind. After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Vadaturskyy remained in Mykolaiv the entire time, helping the city, staying "at the helm," mapping out new logistics routes for exporting Ukrainian grain. He cared not only about his country, but also about addressing the global food crisis amid a brutal war. Until his final moments, he worked tirelessly to bring Ukraine closer to victory over the Russian invaders. His company ran like clockwork and was promptly reoriented to a wartime footing, continuing to channel hundreds of millions in taxes to budgets at every level, providing vital support for the country's defense efforts. Vadaturskyy's experience and knowledge were crucial for Ukraine in finding ways to overcome the consequences of Russia's blockade of maritime routes for Ukrainian food exports.

I don't believe the death of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy and his wife from a Russian missile strike was a coincidence. I learned about this tragic news from the media, and it was painfully clear that the massive overnight strike on Mykolaiv at the end of July 2022, targeting NIBULON's facilities and Oleksiy Vadaturskyy's home, was no accident, but a deliberate act. After all, Ukraine's leadership in grain exports – and the leaders of the companies making that possible – were a thorn in Russia's side. His death was not only a personal tragedy for his family. It is a loss for all of Ukraine. Oleksiy Opanasovych was born in Ukraine, lived in Ukraine, worked for Ukraine, dreamed of a strong and powerful Ukraine, and gave his life on Ukrainian soil. He was a true patriot and a remarkable business strategist – a unique individual who never shied away from the challenges fate threw his way. NIBULON agroholding is one of the most ambitious and unique modern infrastructure projects – not just for our country, but far beyond its borders. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy succeeded in bringing together the resources of foreign investors, the hard work of Ukrainian farmers and agrarians, the ingenuity of engineers and designers, and the expertise of shipbuilders. Vadaturskyy planned to replicate this project on the banks of the Nile. He didn't get the chance... I'm confident that in the future, we will see his ideas and projects expand and take shape in other corners of the world. And they will stand as a lasting tribute to a great Ukrainian and a wonderful man – Oleksiy Vadaturskyy.



Olivier Truc

(French journalist, writer, documentary filmmaker, screenwriter, and permanent correspondent for the Paris newspaper Le Monde).

I met the owner of NIBULON, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, in Izmail on July 16, 2022, while he was overseeing the construction of a new terminal on the banks of the Danube.

Later, I was told that I was the last journalist to see him alive. That meeting was strange in many ways – and deeply moving.

For about ten days, I traveled from northern to southern Ukraine alongside French photographer Adrien Vautier and Ukrainian journalist, creative producer, screenwriter, and head of the Ukrainian Guild of Directors, Zhanna Maksymenko-Dovhych, to explore for Le Monde how Ukraine is striving to adapt to Moscow's blockade of Black Sea ports.

I focused more on what was happening in the small ports along the Danube. I watched as traders and grain producers struggled to find new export routes amid the chaos caused by the Russians. We

arrived in Bessarabia after passing tens of thousands of trucks loaded with wheat and corn, and then followed them to Izmail – my main destination – because that's likely where everything was happening, or more precisely, in Bessarabia itself. We stayed at a hotel overlooking the port of Izmail.

At the time, I didn't yet know that Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was there, too. But the person I met that evening when I arrived at the hotel told me he was a big boss. The founder of NIBULON was there to oversee the construction of the new grain terminal. He was supposed to leave the next day for Mykolaiv, to the headquarters of his company, but I could meet him for breakfast before then.

The next morning, my team and I were the first ones in the breakfast room to make sure we didn't miss him. I had his photo saved on my phone to recognize him, and soon he arrived accompanied by two of his deputies.

He was dressed simply – in jeans, a striped polo shirt, and sneakers. He looked worried.

We knew Vadaturskyy didn't like to appearing in public and avoided the media, but we approached him and started a conversation, explaining the work we were doing. Though I feared he might decline the interview, the conversation ended up lasting much longer than I expected.

He began by saying that Mykolaiv, where he lived and worked, was the leading grain export port during the Russian Empire, at the very start of the 20th century. The first wooden grain elevators were built by the Louis Dreyfus company. He also shared that he had received visits from several ambassadors.

But the tone of the conversation quickly shifted to one of concern. Vadaturskyy spoke about the massive logistical challenges NIBULON and its thousands of employees faced, and I noticed he often looked down, lost in thought.

At the time, there was a popular joke going around among the small ports along the Danube in Bessarabia. A king, a businessman, and a logistician walk into hell. The devil tells them they're allowed only one phone call, but they'll have to pay for it. The king is the first to make a call. He calls the queen and asks about the affairs of the kingdom. After the call, the devil tells him, "You owe one million dollars."

The businessman makes his call next, dialing his deputy and giving instructions about business matters. He pays one million dollars for the call. "Who do you want to call?" the devil finally asks the logistician. "To the port," he replies. He calls. "Do we have railcars? And is the vessel

on schedule? What about the certificates? “And the barges?” And so it went on for several hours before he finally hung up. The devil tells him the price: one dollar. The king and the businessman are outraged, but the devil replies, “He made a local call – from hell to hell”.

It was in this logistical hell that Oleksiy Vadaturskyy sought a way to save NIBULON.

“There are optimists who believe the war will end quickly,” he told me in his quiet voice, “and pessimists who fear things will only get worse. And then there are realists who understand that the war is ongoing, and we must be prepared for anything.” He was grateful for the aid Ukraine was receiving, but he also saw how some were taking advantage of the situation as logistics costs soared. He was angry at the traders and shipowners from neighboring countries, Romania and Bulgaria, who were profiteering from the logistics chaos. Together with one of his assistants, he recalled their early days searching for export routes along the Danube, in one of the sleepy Danube ports they were working to bring back to life.

The day before our meeting, he narrowly escaped a missile strike on Mykolaiv University while traveling to Izmail. When he told this story, he was shaken, and as he prepared to set off again for Mykolaiv – a city still under frequent bombardment – it was clear he feared the journey ahead. He also asked us not to mention his visit to Izmail, because, as he told me, he knew he was a target for the Russians.

In the first article I published in Le Monde, just five days before his death, where I described that logistical hell, I mentioned my meeting with him, but without naming him or revealing the location in Izmail.

When I asked him what he thought of the Istanbul agreements – set to be signed in a few days between Ukraine and Russia under the auspices of Türkiye and the UN to resume grain exports through select Black Sea ports – he replied firmly: “The only outcome of this war must be total victory. Any other outcome is unthinkable. We simply cannot trust the Russians.”

Oleksiy Vadaturskyy knew he was a target – especially since he had openly condemned the organized theft of Ukrainian grain by Russian forces, a crime he had suffered when his warehouses in Russian-occupied Kherson were looted. He sent us articles and messages on Telegram detailing these thefts, and he also expressed deep concern for the safety of his employees in Kherson region, which at the time was under Russian occupation. It weighed heavily on him – that was seen.

When I learned of his and his wife's deaths on July 31, I wrote an article for Le Monde sharing my meeting with him, the impression he left on me, and the immense challenges he and other entrepreneurs faced. And about his down-to-earth nature. About his determination.

A year later, in July 2023, I returned to Izmail and saw the grain terminal in operation – shown to me by Vadaturskyy's son, Andrii. I saw in him the same determination and commitment to the principles his father fought for.

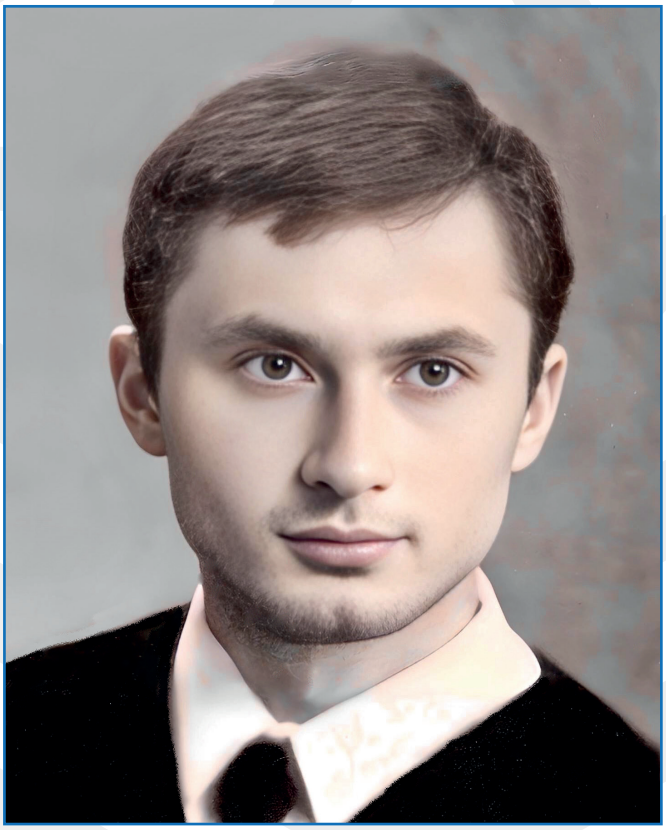
"The Russians want to destroy our agricultural sector," he told me. "This war is also economic, so we cannot give up, no matter the challenges we face."

A few weeks after I returned to Izmail, just as Moscow had withdrawn from the grain deal, Russia began bombing Reni and Izmail for the first time since the start of the full-scale invasion.

As I write these lines in the fall of 2023, Ukraine is resisting with extraordinary courage, determined to restore full sovereignty over its borders and reclaim control of its destiny. At a tremendous cost in lives.

During my time in Ukraine since 2022, I have deeply felt that the future of Europe passes through Kyiv, and that the Ukrainian people's determination to join Europe – with weapons in hand – must be heard in Paris and beyond. This war to reclaim Ukrainian territories occupied by Russia is also an economic battle – fought by NIBULON and other Ukrainian companies – as well as an information war. Telling Europeans what's really happening here in Ukraine – and fighting against Kremlin disinformation and propaganda – is crucial. Just as important is finding ways to tell the story so this war is never forgotten.

On July 16, 2022, during a brief meeting, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy found time to speak with me before setting off on his journey to Mykolaiv – a journey that would lead to his death. At that moment, with a heavy and somber look, he shared his thought: "If Ukraine doesn't win, the very next day the Russian army will be in Paris. Russia will not stop."



Viktor Khobin

(Doctor of Technical Sciences, Professor, Head of the Department of Technological Process Automation and Robotic Systems at Odesa National University of Technology).

The year was 1966. Today, it's hard even to explain why, as a native of Vologda, I decided to enroll so far away – at the Odesa Technological Institute – after finishing school. But more than that, the most important thing happened next – I stayed for good in the city by the Black Sea, became a scientist, dedicated myself to Ukraine, fell in love with this land and its people, and became Ukrainian! And, thanks to God, I was blessed with a true, decades-long friendship with Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, who became like a brother to me. We enrolled together – he was among the eleventh graders, while I was part of the group that finished ten years of schooling. In essence, we both faced a double competition. Among all of us, Oleksiy was not only the oldest but also stood out for his athletic build, strong will, eagerness to learn, and determination to overcome life's toughest challenges. A hard-working village boy, you might say, feared nothing. To him, being human meant

being a fighter. Such men scaled peaks and walked among innovators and pioneers. Against Oleksiy – toughened by hard rural labor – I, a city boy, looked like a scrawny weakling, even though I did gymnastics and took part in various student competitions.

During our studies, Rector Petro Mykytovych Platonov also served as the Head of the Department of Technological Process Automation (which was allowed at the time) – the very department where Oleksiy and I studied. Who could have imagined, back then, that years later I would hold that very position – a role that, as a student, seemed unbelievable and out of reach?

There were eight groups in our year at the Faculty of Automation and Instrumentation. There were two groups for each specialty: Automation and Telemechanics; Automation and Computing Equipment; Instruments and Dosimetry Tools; and Production Process Automation (the one where Oleksiy and I studied). We were split into different groups. Throughout all our years of study, we lived in the same dormitory, and even in our first year, we sometimes shared a bed. Oleksiy always stood out for his determination; perhaps not everything came easily to him, but his calmness and prudence saw him through. He joined the wrestling club. Back then, no one could have imagined what he would become, but we noticed his charisma from the very first days of university. He had it a bit easier as he could go to the village on weekends and bring back some food or something delicious. He never regretted anything and was generous with everyone. I could only afford something like that during the summer holidays.

Everyone lived in poverty, with no one to rely on for help, and our parents didn't always have the financial means to assist. When we had no money – which was pretty much always – we would agree and go unload railroad cars. Most often, we ended up unloading raw cane sugar. The Odesa sugar factory operated using Cuban raw materials. We worked so hard through the night that we could barely make it back to the dorm. But we never skipped classes. That was sacred. Oleksiy went to unload railroad cars more often than I did; he was much stronger, more accustomed to hard work, tougher and more mature. He wasn't afraid of any kind of work and never shied away from labor. He was capable of handling anything.

During our student years, we didn't even fully understand all the benefits of the specialty we had chosen. Now I realize that, by the grace of God, it was the specialty that chose us. Its advantage, as we later came to understand, was the systematic nature – or, as philosophers would say, the integrity – of the knowledge we gained. Back then, we mostly chose it because automation was in vogue. Our classmates

in industrial thermophysics found a kind of romance in water supply systems for nuclear power plants, in instruments and dosimetry tools... But no one knew or understood what lay ahead. I can't speak for others, but as it turned out, Oleksiy and I hit the bullseye without even aiming!

It was this very sense of system and structure that allowed Oleksiy – who had studied the automation of technological processes – to go on to manage strategic development, financial and economic operations, and social support within the company he founded. And to reach heights that only a few ever achieve. The rule we learned – "Management is the process of achieving a goal" – worked perfectly in this case, and with flying colors! Our graduates believed, and still believe, that automation specialists make the best economists, the best programmers, the best technologists, and the best entrepreneurs. But nothing simply "appears out of nowhere or disappears into thin air." For anyone, effective management is always the result of immense intellectual effort and a willingness to take responsibility for managerial decisions.

Our institute we had a naval military department. Since we specialized in automation, our military registration specialty was called "control systems for vessels and submarines." We didn't undergo special military training camps before graduation, but we did have introductory sessions on submarines and naval vessels.

Some of our classmates went on to serve in the navy in their specialty after graduation. The training was rigorous. We were awarded the rank of junior lieutenant while still at the military department. This meant Oleksiy and I no longer had to serve in the army.

We used to go to Tyumen during the summer as part of the student construction brigades. Oleksiy defended his diploma project on grain dryers. His supervisor was Associate Professor Oleksandr Oleksandrovych Pikersgil, known in Ukraine as a unique electronics expert with an exceptional musical ear. When the Kyiv Radio Factory began producing the stationary stereo reel-to-reel tape recorder "Jupiter," Pikersgil developed its electronic sound correction system, which enhanced the sound quality. He also developed electronic moisture meters to measure the moisture content of grain flowing out of the grain dryers. This was the subject of Oleksiy's diploma project.

In 1971, we graduated and went our separate ways around the world. I, however, stayed at the institute and pursued a career in science, while Oleksiy went to Trykraty in Mykolaiv region, where he focused on practical work. But our friendship didn't end there – in fact, it grew even stronger. In the later years of university, Oleksiy met the love of his life. His beloved, the beautiful Raia, was two years younger than

him (born on November 21, 1949, on St. Michael's Day) and studied at our institute in the Faculty of Technology, majoring in preservation technology. I was at their wedding. He was already working in Trykraty, while she was finishing her final, fifth year.

Oleksiy and Raisa attended the traditional alumni reunions and tried not to miss them. Sometimes we would meet only once every five years, and other times as often as every year. Our youth and unforgettable student days in Odesa brought us that close together. I was completely absorbed in my own challenges, working on control systems – back then, variable-structure control systems were in great request. Once, when Oleksiy was the chief power engineer, we agreed to implement these control systems for hammer mills at the Trykraty Grain Products Plant. In the mid-1970s, we succeeded – everything started working.

When Oleksiy became the chief engineer of the grain products plant, he faced the challenge of ensuring precise loading of railcars with grain and mixed feed. Fines had to be paid for both underloaded and overloaded railcars. We tested the method to control loading directly during the railcar filling process by monitoring the active power consumption of the elevator motor. And we implemented it. The system kept working for as long as Oleksiy was there.

Oleksiy and I accomplished many good things together, even after he began working in Mykolaiv. In 1991, Oleksiy was the first in the industry to implement an automated control system at the Novopoltava Grain Products Plant, where all technological processes were managed by a computer. These were the first IBM personal computers. There, I worked on automating hammer crushers and granulators. I clearly remember the early days of NIBULON and its first office in Mykolaiv on Faleievska Street. I often visited Oleksiy; we talked and exchanged advice. Together, we traveled to what would become the company's first branch in Voznesensk, discussing ways to reduce electricity costs. We discussed how to involve and make the most efficient use of the local inter-collective farm feed mill.

Oleksiy and I discussed the problems with the Turkish grain dryers at the Mykolaiv branch. We identified their design flaw.

We shared the same basic education and knowledge that proved useful throughout our careers, so sometimes we understood each other without saying a word. One time I said, "You have so many innovations, so much science in your work – you have been and still are a pioneer. Write a doctoral dissertation."

He smiled and said, "I'm not interested in that; it would be a waste of time." He could have defended not just one, but two or three

dissertations in different fields. Of course, throughout all these years, my friendship was not only with Oleksiy but also with his wife, Raisa Mykhailivna. Moreover, I had the opportunity to work with her when she was heading the laboratory at the Mykolaiv Grain Products Plant. One of the laboratory's key functions was the regular monitoring and documentation of the temperature of grain stored at the plant, as well as of feed components, in more than 1,500 points. Together with colleagues from our department, we replaced this time-consuming and meticulous work of the lab technicians with a computerized automated system. It was developed according to the technical specifications prepared by Raisa Mykhailivna.

I visited Oleksiy and Raisa at their home many times, both in Trykraty and in Mykolaiv. Sometimes I was welcomed as a guest by the whole family, together with their son Andriy. Through these visits, I could see how quickly other people's children grow – from stroller age to around 12 years old. Sometimes, when his wife and son were away, I would stay overnight at Oleksiy's place. Those times gave us plenty of space for one-on-one conversations, which most often touched on the most difficult moments in business, including threats, as well as the company's development projects.

Much more often, Oleksiy and I would meet in his modest office, which I had visited even before its official opening. During one of my visits, I met a young man who could easily have been mistaken for a Hollywood actor. It turned out to be Andriy, whom I hadn't seen in over 10 years. He came home for the holidays from England, where he was earning a second degree, this time in economics.

When Oleksiy learned that I had become the head of our department, he said, "I'll help you." His gift was grand (2012) – three laboratories equipped with individual computerized workstations. His message to the students urged them to "strain their minds to achieve success." In 2013, Oleksiy was granted the title of honorary professor of the academy.

For our university, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was a golden gem, the top graduate, and a pride forever. For me, he was more than just a lifelong friend – I shared my deepest thoughts with him. For Ukraine, he was a hero whose loss will be felt for decades to come. He was the pillar that steadfastly held up the blue sky over the peaceful wheat fields.

Selflessly investing his own money to deepen the Dnipro River and make it navigable, he demonstrated an enduring love as a son for his Motherland and native land. He affirmed that being born Ukrainian is not enough – you must live up to this noble name!



Yevhen Cherniak

(businessman, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Global Spirits Holding, host of the Big Money YouTube channel).

To be honest, I was impressed when I met Oleksiy Opanasovych at a seminar a few years before the filming of the undoubtedly historic and brilliant program Big Money with him. Then, at the hotel in my hometown of Zaporizhzhia, an ordinary, not-so-new foreign car pulled up – just one of tens of thousands of similar models on our roads. When the owner stepped out of the driver's seat, everyone who saw him was amazed. I asked, "Who is this?" They told me it was the high guest from Mykolaiv, known all over the world! I was also amazed by what I saw because there are people in our country who, through hard work, own large businesses and vast financial resources, yet in everyday life remain incredibly humble and sincere. He didn't have a driver – he was behind the wheel himself! A giant from Ukraine's Forbes list – combining immense financial resources with great personal humility always brought remarkable results. Both in kindness and in honor, respect, and trust. It's no coincidence that people wanted to work

with him, trusted him, and saw him as a person of honor and integrity. We met and even had a brief conversation – though it was short, as there wasn't much time. Oleksiy Opanasovych invited me to visit him at company. Things didn't work out right away – sometimes he didn't have time, sometimes I didn't. No surprise there – busy people are desperately short on time.

If something is meant to happen, it happens – we met at last! But we agreed in advance that we would record and film the Big Money program.

I will never forget those moments when we walked through Vadaturskyy's enterprise – NIBULON Shipbuilding Yard. It is located in the enclosed waters of the Southern Buh River, and nearly every month, a new vessel is launched from the shipyard slipway. As we were walking with the camera, Oleksiy Opanasovych was greeted by his employees, and he returned every smile with one of his own. Of those he met along the way, he asked personal questions like: "How's your son?", "How's your brother doing?", "Did you manage to find the medicine you needed? Do you need my help?" I understood perfectly well that this wasn't staged, not some script for guests – it wasn't done for my sake at all. Everything was genuine, because that's who he truly was – Oleksiy Vadaturskyy. What mattered most to him wasn't the camera or the filming – it was life and people.

What I saw in Oleksiy Opanasovych's business – the one he built and created – was impressive then and remains impressive to this day. Although it was hard to surprise me, since I had seen huge and profitable global enterprises.

He impressed me as a person. He invited me to visit him at his home. When we started talking about sports, and Oleksiy Opanasovych was already over 70, he said there wasn't a single day he didn't swim. I replied that it's not easy because you have to be disciplined, punctual, and focused. And besides, I'm probably not as young as I used to be. Vadaturskyy just smiled and said, "I swim every day. And on weekends, I swim twice the distance."

What stood out was that he was not only the master at the enterprise but also remained so at home. And that quality truly added to his character. I met Raisa Mykhailivna by chance, but she left a warm impression – her eyes sparkled. And that's something not every woman has. The Vadaturskyy family complemented each other perfectly.

When the Big Money seminar was held in Kyiv, many representatives from the Forbes list were present. Oleksiy Opanasovych was very nervous before his speech. He consulted with me about what to say, how to say it, and how to answer questions. I told him then, "Just share the story of your life. A real one – how it was, and how it is." I noticed how nervous he was, how he prepared, and gathered his thoughts.

When he stepped onto the stage, the audience rose to their feet and gave him a standing ovation. Even before he uttered a single word. That's how great people are welcomed. And great people not only deserve applause but also an equally grateful audience. More than three thousand people listened to him spellbound. And that was the answer to all the questions.

All these feelings stemmed from his modesty – he was worried about how people would receive him, and whether they would accept him at all. After the seminar, everyone who wanted could take commemorative photos with the Forbes list representatives. And here, Oleksiy Opanasovych was the undisputed leader. He gave time to everyone, refused no one, and smiled happily in every photo. When it was all over, he thanked the organizers; he truly felt not only accepted but also respected and loved. It's strange that he had any doubts about that.

He didn't switch to Russian; he spoke only in his native language. He only asked me whether I knew and understood Ukrainian well. Of course – I studied at a Ukrainian specialized boarding school in Zaporizhzhia. By the way, among those on the Forbes list, Vadaturskyy was one of the few who spoke exclusively Ukrainian. And not just because he was a Hero of Ukraine – he was truly a son of his land. And he was the kind of person who helped shape the future of the country. And without the language, there can be no such person. And he understood this well.

When the episode of Big Money featuring the General Director of NIBULON, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, was released, the video titled "Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, How to create a business against all odds. The rules of a billionaire's life" gained fifteen hundred comments and one and a half million views in quite a short time! Ukraine was eager to know everything or almost everything about its hero. Even Oleksiy Opanasovych honestly admitted that he had not expected such popularity.

I had a wonderful opportunity to talk with a successful person well known in many countries around the world. Thank you for the opportunity to take a break from everyday concerns with heart and soul and simply let it all out – something we rarely find time for. I'll be honest: I greatly enjoyed the honest conversation with someone who truly understands you.

I was simply fortunate to record this invaluable material. Now I understand how important it is to do everything on time. I'm glad that during his lifetime, he read hundreds of sincere and grateful reviews about himself and his work. To be honest, we still haven't learned to love and support our own people, and, unfortunately, we don't always understand the rich and successful either.

Whenever I read the reviews, both early and recent, a lump always gets stuck in my throat – I can't hold back my emotions and tears. How could it be any different when you come across deeply heartfelt and painful words from viewers' comments like: "I consider this episode the best for Ukrainian audience! An exceptionally intelligent person!" "So powerful and impactful!" Titan. He moves forward like an atomic icebreaker, clearing everything in his path. Fantastic motivation. An extraordinary example. He did more for the country than any president," "The best adaptation of Atlas Shrugged set in Ukrainian reality," "It turns out an outstanding person lived right next door – someone you could be proud of. These are the kind of people who streets in cities should be named after, and who should be studied in Ukrainian history lessons," "One of the most heartfelt meetings. Such a person is a treasure!" "I was completely captivated; this isn't even about business – it's about values, convictions, and spiritual strength. Great respect!" "This is the kind of president we need: honest, knowledgeable, the best qualities all in one person. And most importantly – humility..."

"This is the only Big Money report that made me shed a tear...," "I worked on the NIBULON sites. A man of his word!" "It's so heartening that such people are not ashamed to speak Ukrainian!" "How deeply he loved his land and respected every worker," "I'm proud to have lived in the same era as such a person. Thank you, Oleksiy Opanasovych!" "He is a true gem! A true Hero of Ukraine!" "The most powerful episode about the strongest man!" "Grandpa lives for his work, and you're talking to him about money. Thank you for the beautiful Ukrainian language!" "Polite, calm, intelligent, honest, patriotic, experienced, strong..." We have a tradition: after filming and editing the program, we don't show it to anyone beforehand and don't seek any approvals. It was truly heartwarming to see how much Oleksiy Opanasovych appreciated and rightly valued our work. On his page, he shared several reposts and wrote: "Now I have the opportunity to share my experience in building a successful, transparent, and responsible business and its impact on the quality of life of Ukrainians. After all, our company is not only one of the largest taxpayers but also an example of social entrepreneurship in Ukraine. To be honest, an hour-long presentation is very short for a company with nearly 30 years of experience. Therefore, I reached out to Yevhen Cherniak with a proposal to organize this year's Big Money event at our enterprise in Mykolaiv. And believe me, I have plenty to share – I still have many impressive stories about business in Ukraine. Those were two unforgettable days of my life. Thank you to the people of Mykolaiv for their award and recognition. I'm grateful to the organizers and speakers of Big Money for the wonderful event and inspiring presentations. Thank you to all the guests. I don't know

who was the greater motivator yesterday: me for you, or you for me. Events like these, which offer the chance to share my experience with the next generation, definitely motivate me toward new victories and achievements. You have immense potential – believe in yourselves and never give up!

He often used the slogan "Never give up!" on his page.

What was encouraging is that he called me and said, "I'm not a writer, it took me a long time to write this, and I want to tell you, Yevhen: we did a great job together! Let everyone see that in Ukraine, it's possible to build, achieve, and be successful."

There was a twenty-year age gap between us; I was 22 years younger. Vadaturskyy asked me to call him Oleksiy, while he called me Zhenia and was on informal-you terms. I constantly felt an invisible warmth in it, a kind of magnetic energy of trust. We often spoke on the telephone. It was impressive that he was up to date with all the latest global trends. His mind processed a huge amount of information. There was nothing surprising about it, as all the departments at NIBULON worked in harmony – highly skilled experts operated professionally in every area of the company. I noticed what a great team he had – no wonder, as he was a successful entrepreneur.

Vadaturskyy was a world-class businessman – that's who he was, and that was the key to his success. He was physically in Mykolaiv, but he had all the numbers and data needed to make quick and well-considered decisions. That's why NIBULON always thrived. Although he came from the era of Soviet "red directors," he did not follow their traditional path but instead took the only right path of an entrepreneur who built with his own hands a cutting-edge business – a European-style company that is open, transparent, and clear to those who work for it. And such his achievement became an example and a standard to follow. He did not tolerate any under-the-table deals or schemes; the very word "corrupt practice" would make him furious. The "red directors" lived in memories of the past, while Oleksiy Opanasovych spoke only about the future. Like a grandmaster, he looked ahead – not just days, months, or years – but clearly sensed and predicted the future: what opportunities lay ahead, which vessels would be built, and what program he would lead. I called him in the first days of the war in February 2022 and asked, "Do you need any help?" I was probably not the first to offer him to leave Mykolaiv. He calmly replied, "In the toughest times, the head of an enterprise must be on site, together with his team." I wouldn't even consider anything else; that would be a bad sign... I'm staying..."

There is no one to compare him to, but others will always be compared to him! He remained a pure grain. The purest. Without any chaff...



Iryna Shamrai
(doctor, Head of the Health Department of the Mykolaiv City Council since 2017).

Once again, I get goosebumps rereading the words Oleksiy Opanasovych wrote on his Facebook page (he even found time for that!), and I'm once again transported back to those extremely difficult times of confronting the global COVID-19 pandemic – a time that desperately called for a strong alliance between Ukrainian healthcare professionals and Ukrainian business. Vadaturskyy didn't just feel it, he genuinely helped, fully understanding that preserving health and life is a top priority both for medical workers and socially responsible businesses. "I am a Hero of Ukraine, and through my actions during the most difficult times for Mykolaiv and Ukraine, I always reaffirm this title. As 'Person of the Year' of the city of Mykolaiv, I raise the bar higher and higher. Thank you to the expert council, thank you to the organizing committee, and thank you to my NIBULON team who supported me during those extremely challenging times. We invested the equivalent of ten city budgets into Mykolaiv's healthcare system. We invested in

the city's healthcare more than three times the regional budget. Can you imagine the regional budget compared to our company? I can say that we equipped comfortable wards for 100 patients. We installed about 400 oxygen points at patient beds – over 50 percent of all the oxygen points implemented in Mykolaiv throughout the entire year. I can say that thanks to us, two thousand oxygen-dependent patients received treatment. Together with the doctors, we undoubtedly saved many lives. I did all this sincerely, wholeheartedly, and on behalf of the company. I did all this to ensure the health of the people of Mykolaiv.

No one will ever fill the emptiness left by the loss of Oleksiy Opanasovych for me, as well as for our beloved city of Mykolaiv. I had never come across anyone who could handle so many tasks at once. He was always multifaceted and never treated anything as secondary. No matter what task was assigned to him or what issue was raised, it always became a top priority for him. Here and now!

I can't quite understand how he managed to fit it all into one mind, but he always got right to the heart of the matter. It was on his initiative that massive equipment of in-patient facilities in Mykolaiv began – we never even imagined that they would one day be used in treating the coronavirus infection.

To be honest, we couldn't imagine the scale of the tragedy that suddenly swept over us like a tsunami. Oleksiy Opanasovych insisted with particular persistence that we needed to do everything urgently because tomorrow would be too late. He not only invested huge sums of money, but thanks to him, thousands of Mykolaiv residents were saved. Unfortunately, his civic heroism went unnoticed by many. There is a certain kind of people who never see what you have done but always notice what you haven't.

Around 20,000 patients with suspected COVID-19 passed through the city's in-patient facilities, and for more than 14,000 of them, the diagnosis was confirmed. And all of them were treated in beds equipped with oxygen. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy helped us with that. And not only with that. In December 2020, at City Hospital No. 1, an oxygen station was put into operation to supply the oxygen network with 150 delivery points for patients; 12 wards in the departments were rapidly renovated, modern restrooms were installed, including separate facilities for people with disabilities; and a modern communication system was set up between medical staff and patients (radio communication between hospital departments and patient call buttons). Vadaturskyy helped bring to life the idea of allowing patients to call medical staff remotely. He donated radios to the First City Hospital and the Second

City Children's Hospital. So that the staff and emergency responders could communicate with each other. It was extremely convenient and saved us time, allowing us to dedicate more of it to interacting with patients. This innovation was adopted and implemented in other facilities. In February 2021, City Hospital No. 1 opened the most modern ward for treating COVID-19 patients with pathological and chronic comorbidities. Everything in this ward meets modern standards – from the equipment and furniture to the medical devices. Patients stay and receive treatment here in comfortable conditions, and the medical staff work in a comfortable environment as well. The total cost of the project was nearly 20 million hryvnias. In November 2020, City Children's Hospital No. 2 commissioned an oxygen supply system with 38 oxygen points and installed two cryogenic cylinders to support the oxygen system. Each of the five departments' wards received modern televisions. A new system was created allowing patients to remotely call medical staff using call buttons, with signals sent not only to screens but also to the doctors' and nurses' watches. Medical staff can communicate with each other using modern multi-mode portable radios. The total cost of the project amounted to nearly five million hryvnias.

...We met quite late; he reached out to me himself in 2019. When the coronavirus pandemic began, the head of NIBULON invited us over and offered help that could only be dreamed of in the most wonderful fairy tales. Unfortunately, I made a big mistake back then, which I deeply regret now; I was short-sighted. I thought that the first hospital to provide assistance during the pandemic would be the infectious disease hospital. After some time, dawn broke and everyone realized that this facility had failed to fulfill its role – neither organizationally nor medically. Although huge donations, specifically from Oleksiy Opanasovych, were invested there. The infectious disease hospital was modernized and equipped with the latest technology. It had all the latest technologies available in our country at that time.

But certain problems arose there out of nowhere – problems I'd rather not even mention... Instead, the city hospitals needed to be re-equipped and upgraded.

Regarding the misunderstandings at the infectious disease hospital, it is worth paying attention to the poem by the great Ivan Franko about popular gratitude:

If in public life you earn a voice, And gain some power, a chance, a choice, To lead the crowd, to dare, to plan, Remember well, keep caution's span:

Trust not the prince's favor bright, Nor people's thanks in fleeting light. Don't think the crowd will count your deed, Or let a single fault proceed! They judge without a question asked.

And if you squander fortune's task, While stepping on the backs of others, They'll crush you hard – no mercy, brother – Like stones beneath the road they pave, Forgotten soon, no one to save.

For some reason, people here don't tend to appreciate their own. Oleksiy Opanasovych could have easily chosen not to invite me back then, could have simply shrugged everything off and focused on his main work – the work he knew well and that awaited him – since he was already working at full capacity, or even beyond that. It hurts when you're punished for doing good.

After our first conversation, we became partners. Unfortunately, a great misfortune brought us together, as we fought the pandemic side by side. There were days when up to 150 patients were admitted to the hospital at the same time. In my entire medical career, this was the first time I had experienced anything like it.

Oleksiy Opanasovych himself contracted the coronavirus, although he held out for a long time and feared nothing. But contacts with doctors and other people during the supervision of the construction and reconstruction processes had their effect. Vadaturskyy led a healthy lifestyle, was physically fit, athletically built, and well-hardened. He never stayed in our hospitals and was hardly ever sick. Looking at him, you'd think he would live to be 120 years old. He was strong and sturdy like an oak tree. It seemed impossible that anything or anyone could ever weaken or break him. And no illness would ever touch him.

Every time I talked with him, I worried about forgetting something, so I always took notes in advance. I'd surround myself with notes, and he'd sit across from me, effortlessly recalling details and insights that left me amazed and wondering how he knew so much and where it all came from! He was incredibly smart; everything in his mind was clear, well-organized, and in perfect order.

A giant, a larger-than-life figure! He inherited and developed within himself a fiery passion and immense positive energy that fueled his creativity and achievements. Everything was put into action and brought positive results. He didn't accept anything else.

We all loved him – it was impossible not to love Oleksiy Opanasovych! He was the epitome of a true man – embodying family values, strong relationships, and genuine connections with people, colleagues, and partners. He is a living presence for me – I still have his number saved in my phone and I'm not going to delete it. He helped me understand

what was going on and completely reset and reshaped my thinking. I even saved our chats on Viber. He is no longer with us physically, but he remains in my soul, in my heart, and in my thoughts. I feel his support from above, from the heavens.

I was captivated by Oleksiy Opanasovych's native melodic voice. By the way, while studying in the language of our oppressors at the Odesa Medical Institute (where I graduated with honors) and working in my native Mykolaiv by assignment, in 1994 I was the first to write medical histories in my native language. I bought a dictionary of medical terms in Ukrainian and gradually mastered everything related to my profession, including specific nuances and terminology. For example, appendicitis was recorded there as a chronic bacterial tail. There are many unusual terms, but they are our own, and we should make them even more familiar and natural to us.

Vadaturskyy was a man without flaws, possessing immense strength and an indomitable spirit. From the very first days of the full-scale war, we communicated frequently. Oleksiy Opanasovych was a source of moral support, comfort, and advice for me. He never doubted for a moment, he believed and was confident in our victory because truth and God are on our side. He said that everyone should do their part for the common cause, each working where they can bring the greatest benefit to Ukraine. I asked him more than once, "Why don't you leave? You have such a possibility."

"Where would I go? I have a production here, people..." he replied to me. He did everything to save NIBULON, preserve the team, keep jobs for people, and ensure the company remained profitable. And he supported the Armed Forces of Ukraine. I spoke with him that very morning when he was caught in a missile attack near the Varvarivskyi Bridge while traveling to Izmail.

It's hard to believe that Oleksiy Opanasovych is gone... I pray for him and thank the Lord for giving Ukraine such a remarkable and powerful man. I was and will always be proud to have known him, and that he brought worldwide fame to our beloved Mykolaiv. I am confident that our enemy will answer for this vile and treacherous murder in the Hague Court.

Bright memory to Oleksiy Vadaturskyy and his wife. Rest in peace.



Taras Shepel

(Chair of the Arbitration Court of the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2000–2012 — lawyer and partner at the Kyiv office of the Interlegal law firm).

I began working at a Kyiv law firm where Vadaturskyy and his company, NIBULON, were our clients. I worked closely with Oleksiy Opanasovych from 2001 to 2005; he reached out to us himself and trusted us. At that time, the legal department of NIBULON was headed by Dmytro Babchenko, with whom I have remained friends and continue to collaborate even after he started his own legal practice. In February 2022, this brave man, a father of three children, was mobilized to the front lines and fought in the frontline unit until the end of the year. He is alive, and I was fortunate to see him before the start of 2023 and reminisce, when fate brought me and my senior partner, Nataliya Shpak together with Oleksiy Vadaturskyy. It's worth noting that thanks to the interesting and challenging cases we handled, I quickly rose from being a junior lawyer to becoming a partner in the law firm. I successfully handled a number of court cases that at the

time were crucial to the future of the owner of NIBULON's business. Back then, we communicated extensively with Oleksiy Opanasovych. The main project was the construction of a grain transshipment terminal with massive storage facilities in Mykolaiv, which became the largest in Ukraine. Everything took place on the grounds of the Chornomorsk Shipbuilding Yard. The first half of the 2000s was extremely challenging for the company; it was difficult to find common ground with the government, as regional elites and political realities were constantly changing. On top of that, there was pressure from corruption factors, which Vadaturskyy tried to avoid as much as possible.

We handled the key court cases. Everyone was suing him – from the Ministry of Economy to the Chornomorsk Shipbuilding Yard itself, which, after privatization, had several private owners who, seizing the opportunity, tried to extract additional profit from NIBULON. They were obstructing the construction of the terminal, so it was urgent to win several crucial court cases that mattered to Oleksiy Opanasovych.

Vadaturskyy received large loans to fund the construction. So he had to show clean assets to the banks, otherwise he wouldn't have been granted the loans. That's why he came to us.

The first dispute we took on was challenging his original contracts for the terminal's construction and for the purchase of assets he had bought from the Chornomorsk Shipbuilding Yard. Next came Ukraine's first case of this scale: for a month and a half, NIBULON had its construction blocked – people and vehicles simply weren't allowed onto the shipyard's grounds. And Vadaturskyy was building his shipyard in an enclave, surrounded by the Chornomorsk Shipbuilding Yard. It had no other access routes except through the shipyard's grounds. We were the first in the country to establish, through the courts, the right to a land easement – the right of the owner, land user, or other stakeholder to limited, paid or unpaid use of someone else's land, by Article 98 of the Land Code of Ukraine. According to Article 100 of the Land Code of Ukraine, an easement may be established by contract, by law, by will, or by a court decision.

In the case of NIBULON, the easement involved the right of passage for both road and rail transport. Both to construct the terminal and for its future operation. Vadaturskyy was only required to cover the costs of setting up and maintaining the access roads and the transport infrastructure in working condition. At its own expense, NIBULON repaired the checkpoints, railway tracks, built roads within the shipyard, and installed surveillance systems, as it was a restricted-access facility where military vessels had once been built. This is how

a large range of problems was resolved. This case also involved a very interesting procedure – the recovery of damages, including lost profits, which at that time was not a common practice in the courts. This was the first case of its kind in Ukraine, as we sought to recover a large amount, over two million dollars. They calculated the damages caused by the delay in the terminal's construction and the unfulfilled contracts with the first clients. His approach to our work demanded absolute transparency in all procedures and the defense of strictly lawful interests. Although Oleksiy Opanasovych wasn't a lawyer, he made an effort to dive into every detail and understand the legal nuances.

Everyone knew that Vadaturskyy didn't drink alcohol. But when we won the case about the land easements (the Chornomorsk Shipbuilding Yard wanted to charge NIBULON a fee – 50 cents per ton – which, given their volumes, would have meant huge sums annually! The price wasn't market-based; it smelled of outright extortion, like highwaymen shaking people down. Oleksiy Opanasovych brought out a wooden box with French cognac, and the three of us – my colleague Nataliya Shpak was with us – shared a bottle. Not even a hint of a buzz! Later, many people didn't believe me when I said I had seen him drink alcohol – and enjoy it – with my own eyes. But it did happen. It was a feeling of shared victory.

What stood out to me most during that time was Oleksiy Vadaturskyy's persistence. Even with us, the lawyers, he could spend half a day calmly waiting, negotiating, and looking for ways to solve certain issues. He didn't yet have the public and social influence he would gain later, so it was quite difficult for him to get meetings with ministers and other high-ranking officials. Because of his honesty, openness, directness, his romanticism and dreaminess – or at least what they perceived as such – they didn't quite take him seriously. At the time, other businessmen and oligarchs were in the spotlight – circles he didn't belong to. But he pursued his goals with polite determination and quiet persistence. He kept hammering away at his rock.

To me, he seemed like a Ukrainian Rockefeller, primarily because of his way of life. He was a very humble person. At that time, he lived in a regular, though spacious, apartment in Mykolaiv, not far from the NIBULON office. At lunchtime, he would go home where his wife, Raisa Mykhailivna, prepared homemade meals. Whenever we went to Kyiv, he made every effort to avoid flying and preferred to travel by car instead. I saw his phobia as a plus because the five-hour drive to the capital gave us plenty of time to talk. He shared his life experience, his

attitudes toward people and things. I learned a great deal from Oleksiy Opanasovych and gained a lot from him. Many people thought that Vadaturskyy had no friends. And that was striking. No one knew who he was friends with – or if he even had time for friendships at all. It was quite a challenging life struggle for him. When Oleksiy Opanasovych reached prosperity in his later years, it was clear that something had changed in his circle.

Someone probably wanted to gain much greater financial benefits from him. But he was completely uninterested in material things. He never worked for the sake of money. Oleksiy Opanasovych always had an idea, a goal that he pursued at any cost. And his dreams were never about material things. He never saw problems in finding funds because the World and European banks trusted him and were willing to lend to NIBULON. There was a period when getting loans was fairly easy because, before the 2008 global crisis, money was relatively cheap. The question of friends bothered me constantly – I felt there was some truth to it. And not just because his work schedule was so packed that everyone wondered when he found time for anything personal. The most he allowed himself was to go home and have lunch with his wife. So, he worked from eight in the morning until midnight.

When we were working on our projects, the hours were completely unstructured. He was just as demanding of people. I remember him saying more than once that, besides him, we shouldn't take on any other clients. We simply couldn't allow ourselves to do that. A law firm can't operate by becoming just a legal department for a single client. Oleksiy Opanasovych kept us so busy that I spent about 70 percent of my time traveling on NIBULON business across the country or directly in Mykolaiv.

Whenever Vadaturskyy began describing any problem that required a legal solution, he tried to immerse us in the ideological or economic aspects of the project. Over time, we resolved the main and most significant issues for NIBULON during that period, after which we ended our collaboration. Oleksiy Opanasovych was a man who wanted to keep all his employees close and avoid involving outsiders. The time came when he shifted to having his in-house legal department. Some internal intrigues surrounding the figure of NIBULON's leader gave a certain push toward an amicable parting. We never aimed to build careers within the company, while other employees sought to minimize the role of outside specialists as much as possible. And there was nothing wrong with that. We accomplished our tasks and goals, and we went through the separation without hardship – calmly, without resentment, and with no grievances toward each other. We maintained

a friendly relationship, and Oleksiy Opanasovych always warmly welcomed us as guests. It was hard for me to imagine Vadaturskyy moving from his city apartment to a private house. It seems that he adopted all the material trappings of a wealthy person in his life only because of public opinion – because "that's how it's supposed to be." Like, for example, using extremely expensive cars. At that time, he bought business-class cars, but fairly modest ones. He himself said that he didn't like luxury and felt weighed down by people's perception of him as a wealthy man – because he clearly wasn't like an oligarch. He kept to the simplest things. On the way to Kyiv, he would always stop at the Zahadka café and order his usual simple dishes: borscht, chopped cabbage, and pancakes. He stayed at a hotel in Hatne; the driver would take me home to Kyiv and then return to Vadaturskyy. By seven in the morning, Oleksiy Opanasovych was already eager to start a new day.

I traveled to Kyiv from Mykolaiv most often with the head of NIBULON, and our first cases were in the Luhansk region, at the Starobilsk elevator. We also frequently visited Odesa. I traveled to Kyiv from Mykolaiv most often with the head of NIBULON, and our first cases were in the Luhansk region, at the Starobilsk elevator. We also frequently visited Odesa. He was a man who seemed to see the goal clearly and believed that any obstacles could be overcome. Sometimes he would set ambitious goals that seemed disconnected from reality. When he was just starting with grain collection and later expanded into terminals and transshipment, we joked that soon NIBULON would be building its own vessels and transporting grain worldwide. Then, we joked that he would build his own shipyard. But in the end, Oleksiy Opanasovych actually made it happen!

For many businessmen, their wives had – and still have – a huge influence on their business decisions. I never once heard Vadaturskyy say, "My wife thinks this" or "My wife says that." He made every business and personnel decision entirely on his own. He was inclined toward micromanagement. Even the replacement of tires on a company car had to be approved by him. Even the hotels we stayed in during business trips had to be approved by the company's director.

People like Oleksiy Opanasovych are not eternal. Why did they kill Vadaturskyy? The most honorable, the most worthy, the most humane? I couldn't imagine this leader of a world-class brand company retiring. He was a man of action for me. The Lord took him as a heroic warrior. His death is a combat loss inflicted by the Russian aggressor with conventional weapons – not only against Ukraine but against the entire world – in this war on the economic front...



Vladyslav Shulha
(engineer of radio communications,
Major General of the Security Service of Ukraine).

I lived in the center of Bendzary, near the collective farm office, while Oleksiy lived on the outskirts of the village. I was fortunate to be friends with Zhenia Vadaturskyy, a classmate of Aliosha (as the villagers called him) who shared the same last name. They also had Anatoliy Vadaturskyy, who lived next to Aliosha, and they were friends from childhood. Unlike my peers in the village, I had a very different childhood. What they were allowed and forgiven for was strictly off-limits to me. I wasn't just a teacher's son – Mom would remind me, "Don't forget, you're the principal's son!" or say things like, "How could you say that?" or "How could you do that?" Everywhere and always, I had to be a role model for others. I don't regret it – in fact, I'm proud that it was that way. It influenced my future and played a role both in my choice of profession and in shaping my character and values.

My mother was the unwavering principal of our village eight-year school in Bendzary from 1952 for over three and a half decades, and she

also initiated the construction of the current ten-year school building. My parents were not only the same age (both born in 1920), but also both history teachers. Before the war, my father managed to complete three years at the history faculty of Kyiv University, and my mother – at Odesa University. After the war, they were offered the chance to complete their studies in Chernivtsi, as both of their alma maters had been destroyed. And so, in 1945, the Lord brought together Tamara Pavlivna Bodnar and Vasyl Hryhorovych Shulha in Bukovyna. They fell in love at first sight, married a year later, and carried the flame of their steadfast love throughout their entire lives. Interestingly, my mother's father – who was also a history teacher in Bendzary and had taught more than one generation – made it a condition that she keep her maiden name so it wouldn't be lost or forgotten. My father, hopelessly in love, didn't object. That's why both my younger sister, Svitlana Shulha, and I kept our father's surname – and it wasn't lost either: over the years, I became a Major General of the Security Service of Ukraine, and my sister became a General of the State Customs Service of Ukraine. And my mother honored her maiden name, ensuring it was not forgotten: in January 2010, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved a proposal from the Ministry of Education and Science and the Odesa Regional Administration to name the Bendzary Secondary School I–III degrees of the Balta District Council in Odesa Region after Tamara Pavlivna Bodnar, a Merited Teacher of Ukraine.

She was known as the initiator and inspiration for the profession throughout the entire country at the time, as you can learn about in the school's memorial museum. My mother earned every teaching title that was possible to receive. By the way, I'm a "wrong" Shulha, while Svitlana is the "right" one – she does everything and writes with her left hand. Her last name truly fits her nature. We were both born in Bendzary, where our parents returned from Chernivtsi at the insistence of our grandfather, our mother's father. It was our mother who initiated the creation of the orchard in Bendzary, which Oleksiy and I planted together.

We had known each other since early childhood, having grown up in the same village. He was almost two years older than me and was one grade ahead in school. When I started first grade, he was already in second. Back in those years, Oleksiy's older brother Volodia often visited our home – not only was he a naturally gifted driver, but he could fix any problem in a car. My father, a history teacher at the Balta Pedagogical College, had an old Moskvich, and almost every week Volodia had to fix something in it.

After completing eight grades at our village school, Oleksiy and I continued our studies at Secondary School No. 1 in Balta. Interestingly, we weren't just in different classes, but in different academic tracks:

I was in the two-year program for grades 9 and 10 (for those born between September 1, 1948, and September 1, 1949), while Oleksiy's class (born between September 1, 1947, and September 1, 1948) followed the three-year track – grades 9, 10, and 11. I caught up with him by graduation.

In the mornings, it was hard – sometimes even impossible – to get on the village bus, since it first picked up passengers in nearby Andriiashivka before returning to Bendzary. No one counted on it. In rain, snow, blizzards, or snowdrifts, we traveled on foot. I had four and a half kilometers to get to school in Balta, while Aliosha had about a kilometer more. Those who had bicycles would switch to them on warm autumn and spring days. I was thin and slender, while Aliosha was sturdy, stocky, and muscular. Some of it was genetic, but he always had a natural inclination to sports and a healthy lifestyle. Our village school didn't even have a proper gym, so it wasn't until he got to school in Balta that he had the chance to do what he loves.

My father had an encyclopedic memory; he completed his postgraduate studies at Chernivtsi University. Oleksiy and I often stayed up late, unable to get enough of talking. It must be said that Aliosha grew up as an intellectual – he read a lot and knew quite a bit. Of course, he was often frustrated by the "blank spots" in our native history. That's why with Dad, he had both understanding and knew how to keep his mouth shut, because the real history was enough to make your hair stand on end.

Later, Oleksiy and I studied in Odesa: he attended the Institute of Technology, while I studied electrical engineering with a focus on communications. In different parts of the city. We saw each other very rarely. When Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was already working in Mykolaiv, I moved to the capital. I remember how, on his first business trip abroad, he brought my mother a tube of Voltaren ointment. She had leg pain. Feeling comforted, she called me and said, "You see, Oleksiy never forgets me – he always stops by whenever he comes to the village. I've asked you for Voltaren many times, but he got it for me..."

They always maintained a warm relationship. Mom loved people very much; all her students became like family to her. She always felt the same kind of warmth from Oleksiy. And indeed, every time he came home to Bendzary, Oleksiy wanted to see Tamara Pavlivna again, who took great joy in his successes and knew almost everything about him, if not everything. What I regret most is that Mom didn't live a few months longer to see the day when her most distinguished student became a Hero of Ukraine. She passed away on February 26, 2007, and Dad died a year earlier...

From time to time, Oleksiy and I would call each other, but we grew closer when he started founding NIBULON in the early 1990s.

He traveled to Kyiv for consultations and discussions with my sister Svitlana, who at that time was the head of the Customs Payments and Duties Department at the State Customs Service. She helped him a lot in this area, which was new to Oleksiy. Those were challenging times – the early steps of statehood, with a sea of laws that often overlapped and contradicted each other. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was always responsible and eager to be the first to understand the legislation thoroughly.

After graduating from the institute, I was offered a job at the State Security Committee, which had an extremely strict approach to staff selection. The training and screening took two years, and then two decades of work quickly flew by. In 2000, according to a resolution by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, I was transferred from the Security Service of Ukraine to the position of Head of the Department of Special Telecommunications and Technical Information Protection at the State Administration. There, I held a highly important and responsible role for a decade during the presidencies of Leonid Kuchma and Viktor Yushchenko.

Knowing Oleksiy well, I can assure you that he never asked for anything. Neither from me nor from Svitlana. Everything was strictly professional – God forbid anything behind the scenes or improper. That was just the way he was, and there was no other way for him. Yes, it was especially pleasant for him that someone from our village had "made it," in life and that he knew us well. We, in turn, along with my sister, were proud of his successes, and they kept growing like mushrooms after the rain.

As for Oleksiy, he never used administrative resources (meaning our friendship) for his benefit. If he needed to meet with top officials, he always did it on his own. He couldn't come to my place; it wasn't allowed. For our meetings in Kyiv (to have coffee, chat, exchange thoughts, or just sit in silence), I would go to wherever he was. He constantly complained that they were getting in the way. It was so, and I understood him well. He was a unique person. And if everyone built the state the way he did, we would be living like the United Arab Emirates! Unfortunately, each presidential entourage (and that was the case with each of them) carried out their own shady business, benefiting only themselves. But not for the people or the state. When the Yanukovych clan came to power, I wrote my resignation letter in 2010 and left. Even if they had forced me to keep working under the barrel of a gun, I wouldn't have agreed to it.

The Yanukovych family, especially his son, made attempts to seize Oleksiy's business. They wanted to take a quarter of it, and then – half. They drained a lot of blood, but ended up biting off more than they could chew. They picked the wrong person to mess with!

Our bureaucratic laws required payment for useless documents for

many institutions. Oleksiy often asked Svitlana to help and advise on how to bypass all of this, so they wouldn't be feeding the parasites. "All of Vadaturskyy's adult life was a struggle for the truth, against the powerful entrenched bureaucracy that was still embedded by the Communists in the Central Committee of the Party, and the oligarchic corruption that has rapidly grown in modern Ukraine.

Corruption is a combination of human vices, such as greed, envy, laziness, and the thirst for pleasure. All of that was never a part of Oleksiy's nature, and it was precisely what he rebelled against. Unfortunately, the world is structured in such a way that human sins and flaws cannot be eradicated. Society and individuals can limit them to reasonable bounds. And this was also one of Oleksiy's principles.

He asked for help just once. Viktor Yushchenko presented the Golden Star of the Hero of Ukraine to the head of NIBULON in Mykolaiv, where he promised to award ten employees of the company. I knew well that it wouldn't happen, and that's exactly how it turned out. The awards department could only honor two people in one decree at most, but I could persuade them to add one more. But not ten. And I told Oleksiy about it. He didn't believe me. When it happened the way it did, my friend shrugged and said, "But he promised!" Oleksiy Vadaturskyy always had respect for promises. If you said it, promised it, then do it. No matter who you are. Even if you're the president.

Honestly, all three of us were most outraged by the state of confusion that existed at that time. It seemed like three dissidents had gathered, all wanting and striving for something better. For both the young state and the native people.

The "good" Ukrainian laws backfired, and there were reasons for that. Everything was being done to destroy the army, the language, and state institutions. And all of this backfired in 2014, with the most glaring manifestation on February 24, 2022. Moscow was involved everywhere, destroying us with our own hands.

I remember calling Oleksiy on the phone and telling him that I was proud of him. It was after the meeting between the then-President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, and his ministers in Mykolaiv. "What's hindering your work? We're all here, you can say it. We will do everything possible," said the president. And then Oleksiy stood up and said, "Here's your 'governor' next to you, your minister, who is against the creation of a river fleet, and here are two members of parliament with you. "If they weren't here, I would do everything, but as long as they are here, I can't do anything!"

The murder of Oleksiy and his wife Raisa was planned and targeted. He had too many enemies, and the most painful thing is that not only among our eternal sworn enemies, the Muscovites, but also among our own... It should not have happened this way! Unhuman, un-Christian.



Svitlana Shulha

(legal expert, state advisor of the Customs Service, 3rd rank).

Someone great once said that the best thing about memories is creating them. Now I believe and am convinced that I am lucky not only to have known Oleksiy Vadaturskyy and played my role in his life, but also to remember so many good and bright moments connected with him. And it's all pure crystal-clear truth.

When, in the early 1990s, Oleksiy founded NIBULON, I had no idea that I would play a certain role in his life. We had met several times before in our native Bendzary, exchanged greetings, maybe exchanged a few words, and that was it. Everyone had their own affairs, and our paths didn't cross.

I was holding the position of Head of the Department of Customs Revenues and Payments of the State Customs Service of Ukraine at that time. Oleksiy called me and asked to meet. I told him I was ready for that anytime, any day. He came to see me at work. At that time, I had no idea what Vadaturskyy was doing or what his work was really about. It was just the time when joint ventures with foreign investments were

emerging. The state was trying to support them by offering specific benefits for importing goods and equipment, as well as for conducting foreign currency transactions.

NIBULON received funding from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to support its promising business. Such institutions don't offer support just to anyone or without good reason. Oleksiy not only managed to persuade them – they trusted him like no one else. It was the EBRD credit facilities that opened my eyes to the work of my fellow villager – not only did he rise in my esteem, he was one of the few who truly became a creator and builder of the young state. The company operated in Mykolaiv and was involved in agriculture, which was close to Oleksiy's heart.

To bring all of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy's ideas and projects to life – even those that seemed unrealistic – he had to walk a hard and thorny path.

NIBULON had to import a large amount of agricultural equipment and machinery from Europe. I listened to Oleksiy and realized that nothing would happen on its own – it was necessary to develop new customs clearance procedures, since many customs-related issues at the time were not regulated by legislation. In front of me sat an innovator – a tireless and inspired pioneer of many new directions, many of which defied ordinary imagination. I didn't say anything to him then, but inside I felt such warmth – a kind of magical light passed through me: we were from the same village in Odesa region! People who grew up in the same village are considered family. I really wanted to help Oleksiy; he was special, endowed with a divine gift for what he spoke about and what he managed to achieve. A stranger might have thought that Vadaturskyy was a fairy-tale dreamer, a romantic. Not much time passed, and he became a realist who never stopped halfway, facing nothing and no one when he felt and knew he was right. He could see ahead and lived with the taste of anticipation of success. It's all about the aftertaste, in everything. It's all about what you feel afterwards. After the conversation, after the look, after the implementation of what was planned. Now, it's hard to imagine the blissful 'afters' that God allowed him to experience on his earthly journey. 82 vessels built (something unimaginable! Only 18 more to fulfill his dream), 50 enterprises and subdivisions (including subsidiaries) across 13 regions of Ukraine! The most important thing is that what Vadaturskyy did was never personal; it always carried a national significance. I myself, when I started working at the State Customs Service of Ukraine, understood and felt the key word – "state." I always looked at whether it would be

beneficial for the state. Interestingly, Oleksiy reached great heights in private business, but with incredible benefit to the state. When I heard and saw how much he cared about everything, how badly he wanted things to happen as quickly as possible, I realized that I needed to help him. It was necessary to establish such a procedure that he would no longer have to go to customs and prove his point, explain, or justify himself, so that no obstacles would be put in his way. This meant creating a customs clearance system for goods imported into Ukraine with the financial support of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. We prepared the order jointly with the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, and registered it with the Ministry of Justice. This expedited and simplified the customs clearance of goods arriving for NIBULON. There were very few such enterprises at the time, but over the years, their numbers grew. So there was no lobbying involved; others followed the path that Vadaturskyy had paved.

The work that Oleksiy was involved in was incredibly global in itself. While most entrepreneurs worked and thought in a provincial, small-town manner, Vadaturskyy managed to rise not only to the national level but also to the European and global levels.

A lot of equipment for NIBULON was imported on a temporary import basis. It was imported on leasing terms. There was also the issue of documentation, as according to customs regulations, this could only be done for a year, meaning it had to be exported and imported again each year. The terms of the contract needed to be changed from temporary importation to leasing. And here, understanding was found, leading to the correct solution through joint work with customs at the border. Oleksiy never bought second-hand – only the latest and most advanced technological achievements from world brands and manufacturers.

When Vadaturskyy and NIBULON experienced a period of extraordinary growth in the 1990s and early 2000s, unforeseen problems began to arise, and forces of evil started interfering in his activities. We met by chance, and he said that he had been called to the Prosecutor General's Office. I couldn't understand who could have done such a thing! A person who is making history, who is doing so much good for the country is prevented from doing anything! Worse yet, they try to take away what he managed to build with such great efforts. I kept asking myself these questions, but with Oleksiy, it even felt awkward to ask what was really going on. And when, at last, will they start helping him instead of getting in his way? Could a person

like that really be a threat to anyone? Things aren't that simple in our country. When Oleksiy approached me with specific issues, I could call the head of customs to clarify what exactly the problem was. If it could be resolved within the framework of existing legislation, then we had to help the people who were working.

There was never a time when Oleksiy allowed himself even the slightest weakness or made a request that went beyond the principles he had followed his entire life. He was pure, untainted by anything, and exemplary not in a virtual or promotional way, but in reality. He was like that from a young age and remained so always. Parental upbringing and the difficult, poor rural life shaped him that way. When a person does everything right, they can never understand why they should be held accountable or have to "thank" others for doing what is right. He never paid anyone. And this was known to all. Somehow, good and noble people always have a tough fate.

At that time, when I became a state customs advisor of rank III (equivalent to the rank of major general), among women, only the Deputy Attorney General of Ukraine had such recognition, and by 1996, there were already four of us.

I went through several twists of fickle fate. I first graduated from the Kyiv Technological Institute of Food Industry, worked in the relevant ministry, and at Ukrkonditerprom. I visited all the confectionery factories in Ukraine dozens of times. In the late 1980s, I was offered a job at the customs. We were all young back then, and the work was exciting. When the serious lawmaking work began at the dawn of our independence, I realized how much I needed legal knowledge. So I went on to earn my law degree from Kharkiv University of Internal Affairs.

As for Oleksiy, my parents – both my father and mother – were very fond of him. My brother and I became like family to him once we were in Kyiv. We all treated one another with deep respect. I was five years younger than Vadaturskyy. He always called me Svitlana – never used my patronymic. I understood the weight that rested on his strong, muscular shoulders. For his part, he fully understood and appreciated the importance of the work my brother and I were doing for the state. Each of us in our own place.

Oh, how proud our mother was that a child from her school had reached such great heights! It affirmed the fundamental truths she held dear: they had taught the right way and done the right thing. She always emphasized that anyone could become someone great – so long as they truly wanted it. He remained humble, sincere, and open-

hearted, never one for luxury. There was a time when I was badly injured and had to walk with crutches. Someone let Oleksiy know about what had happened. He sent me to a sanatorium in Crimea and even arranged for a car to pick me up from Kyiv. Not everyone remains grateful, and not everyone remembers the kindness they've received. But Oleksiy was always attentive to people and their troubles. He always helped in any way he could. And he deeply understood that if you can help but choose not to, it's a grave sin. That is something I will never forget. Oleksiy often congratulated me on my birthday.

I often saw how deeply Oleksiy was hurt when people refused him or didn't want to listen or understand. Many times I thought that you shouldn't give so much of yourself to people who don't deserve it. He didn't worry about himself but about the work he was doing. He told me how he envisioned the day when our beloved Dnipro River would be navigable once again. Sometimes I was even surprised that he cared more about that than the state itself. He had grand plans, and with them came equally significant challenges.

After retiring, I worked in the Office of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, in the Committee on Compliance with the Law in Law Enforcement Agencies, where we saw each other for the last time. That was before the Revolution of Dignity. He came to the committee chairman with some matters to discuss. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy didn't like Kyiv, where he was constantly met with obstacles. No decent person can love a place where they are met with harm instead of help. I know he faced many obstacles and difficulties.

Oleksiy was one of those whose greatness is not easily grasped or fully understood at once. Yet he remained humble until his very last day on earth. Even in Ukraine, people learned about Vadaturskyy and the work he did as one of the country's largest agricultural entrepreneurs, a key figure, and a major employer only through reports of his targeted assassination by Russian fascists. He never had those flashy, all-encompassing commercials or the wild publicity that politicians get during election campaigns.

Perhaps these words by Ivan Franko best describe my most famous contemporary fellow countryman: "...forge your will, shape yourselves into serious, conscientious, and dignified men, full of love for your people and capable of expressing that love not through torrents of loud words, but through tireless, quiet work." Every nation and every era needs such men, and a great historical age will need them twice as much – when, for the very first time in its history, all of Ukraine smiles upon even a glimpse of full civic and political freedom.



Mykhailo Masliy

(teacher, mechanical engineer, journalist).

July 31, 2022, Sunday. It was the 158th day of the full-scale Moskal invasion... As with most nights before, sleep eluded me... Sirens howled while Russian terrorists forced people to hide in basements in the middle of the night. The air raid alert ended, and just as I stepped back into my home, the phone rang. "Petro Gadz," the name flashed on the phone screen. It was 5:30 in the morning. "'Are you okay? The Moskals in Mykolaiv killed Vadaturskyy and his wife with a missile..." my friend said, then unexpectedly added, "Let's write a book about him – he deserves it..."

The name sounded familiar to me, but I knew very little about this, as it turned out, remarkable man. The first thing I came across online was an interview of Oleksiy Opanasovych by Yevhen Cherniak for his YouTube channel. I watched that video in one breath, right to the very last word. It had been watched by one and a half million people, but I was seeing it for the first time. What shocked me most was that they

asked Vadaturskyy in the enemy's "tongue," yet he calmly replied in his melodious native language. Let's face it, for decades when we Galicians were asked something in the Moskal language, we always calmly switched to it without hesitation. What's the big deal? This is supposed to be tolerance... But tolerance with whom? With bad scumbags and monsters? "May a clear lightning strike you all!" – as my grandma used to say.

I spent several years trying to take root in Kyiv. I couldn't. My ears hurt because most people spoke the occupier's language, and I – who never switched to that damn tongue even with a dictionary – was everywhere called a Banderite. Yes, I'm a Banderite because I love what's mine. And this is the highest honor of my life.

The uniqueness of writing this book wasn't just because it wasn't my usual field – I was more familiar with art and artists. Besides, I had never seen Oleksiy Opanasovych or known anything about him. "Don't worry, I'll help you with everything," said Petro Gadz, a Hero of Ukraine for whom there were no secrets in the agricultural sector. He found people, was the first to proofread texts, corrected, gave advice, and helped with everything. And I wrote and uncovered a great Ukrainian. When I put the final period, I felt like a Vadaturskyy expert, since no one knows more about him than I do.

Our days are measured not by years, but by the lives of the people we have touched. God doesn't give a person what they want, but what they need. So never ask, "Why me?" – instead, ask, "What for?" Every person who comes into our lives is a teacher: some teach us to be stronger, some to be wiser, some to be more cautious, some to forgive, and some to be happy and enjoy each day. And some seem to teach us nothing at all, yet simply break all our stereotypes by their example, giving us a valuable lesson. There aren't that many truly good people in our lives to whom we always want to say, "Thank you for being in my life!" So, first of all, I thank Petro – everything started with him. And I thank God for Oleksiy Opanasovych. I am grateful to the Heavenly Father for the chance to come close to such a great figure, though it is deeply sad that his fate was tragic. He bore a very heavy cross. And now so many questions arise:

"Why did the Lord take him from us Ukrainians at the hardest time?" How much more good he could have done for people.

A person can do much more and act much better. A person makes only one mistake – thinking they have plenty of time. Today is just one of many, many days still ahead. But perhaps all those future days depend on what we do today. Let's smile more often, showing kindness

to everyone we meet. Let's not hesitate to encourage someone, praise with a kind word, or offer support. And remember: it's up to us to choose – to judge or to forgive.

Happy is not the one who has the best of everything, but the one who makes the best of what they have. Oleksiy Opanasovych had a God-given gift to grasp and leave the very best to his people, despite the obstacles he constantly had to overcome. He didn't understand – and didn't want to understand – why certain permits that should be approved in minutes took him six months or even longer. He didn't know how to wait. He didn't want to. Here and now! As Hryhorii Skovoroda said, "It's too late to live tomorrow!" So the man from Mykolaiv stood firm: the best day is today! The one who suffered the most was the one who took action. And Vadaturskyy did it every moment, every second, every minute. No days off. And so it was his whole life. His mental computer worked without interruptions or viruses. He drew his energy from work – and nothing else. As Ivan Franko wrote in his poem "O Earth, my all-fruitful Mother..."

Give strength to my hands – to break every chain,
Clarity to thoughts – to strike injustice's heart plain,
Let me toil, toil, and toil again –
And in labor, be slain!

Just as the great Kameniar sharply noted a century and a half ago, this was also the life credo of Oleksiy Opanasovych – the formula behind his progress and success.

How fitting the Star of the Hero of Ukraine looked on his chest – he attached deep significance to that recognition. The marshal's title was not only an honor and acknowledgment of his merits, but a rank that demanded constant reaffirmation. It was the same for him with Ukraine: being born Ukrainian was not enough – one had to live up to that noble name. You must be both Ukrainian and a hero every single day, around the clock. Oleksiy Opanasovych always adhered to this principle.

For Ukraine, having such a majestic figure as Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was a great honor. It always meant a steadfast, unwavering foundation. He not only knew his work inside and out, but also did it in the best possible way. Like a true professional – with style and polish. Because that's exactly who he was; he neither knew how nor wanted to be anyone else. People like that are called a rare gem. Like a magnet, the native literary language spoken by the head of NIBULON drew people

in – something unfortunately quite uncommon among residents and natives of southern Ukraine. His stresses, intonations, and expressions... all came effortlessly, without strain or hesitation – as they say, without a lag – because he dreamed in that language, longed for it, lived it, created in it, and loved it. And he didn't translate from the hostile Moskal language, as many of our officials did. He spoke in his own words, thinking and expressing himself on a grand scale. Which made him all the more captivating. Throughout all the years of its grain trading activities, NIBULON was like a Swiss bank. Always timely, reliable, and honorable! Clearly, such traditions and corporate culture stemmed primarily from the owner. The farther time goes, the more deeply we will feel the loss of a great person and leader, a true Ukrainian whose life's purpose was to build and rebuild his homeland.

For a long time, the book had no title. One publication hailed our hero as the Admiral of the Dnipro – a title that both challenged and inspired. But he was building a peaceful fleet, while admiral is a military rank. Three words seemed to capture the essence of Oleksiy Opanasovych's life: grain, river fleet, and Ukraine. Once, I shared my thoughts with the renowned Andriy Demidenko, a friend of mine for nearly three decades. He listened and asked for a night to think it over. At dawn, the poet – with a special tone in his voice – said, "Write down three words: 'The Grain Captain of Ukraine.'" They have simplicity, and they have Vadaturskyy! The more you get used to it, the deeper you'll feel how deep they are!" He was right – and that's exactly what happened.

Special words of gratitude are due to Andriy Vadaturskyy – the proud son and worthy successor of his renowned Parents' legacy. We did not disturb him during the year following the death of his Father and Mother, but after the anniversary, he, along with the dedicated NIBULON team, actively joined the shared cause – and we now have a result that we hope Oleksiy Opanasovych would also be proud of. We were fortunate to gather unique, heartfelt memories from Oleksiy Opanasovych's family, colleagues, fellow villagers, friends from his student years, bankers, presidents, prime ministers, ministers, Heroes of Ukraine, and members of NIBULON.

These memoirs are the story of the non-public Oleksiy Opanasovych – the one only they knew: a kind and frank person who was always there to help and support, motivate and inspire, a patriot and businessman, whose priority was strengthening and developing Ukraine.

Even the way he lived and made every effort to export grain in wartime, how the Russian fascists took his life, made him a true hero:

he did not betray, did not flee, did not hide, but did everything for our victory without a hint of doubt in our victory. He believed in our Armed Forces and the nation.

We managed to fill the literary space with a unique publication about a prominent figure in Ukraine – one associated with heroic efforts in building the economy of an independent nation. He worked tirelessly and selflessly to elevate Ukraine's agricultural sector and shipbuilding to a world-class level. Oleksiy Opanasovych Vadaturskyy is not just the founder of NIBULON; he is the founder of a new entrepreneurial philosophy of winning. To overcome the laziness of bureaucrats and their greed for extortion, to triumph over those who put obstacles in the way out of envy or foolishness. The hero of this book consistently embraced a statesmanlike approach to everything he undertook. His achievements and experience will serve as a strong example for those who seek to make Ukraine unstoppable – even on the industrial front. Thanks to people like him, with their fresh approaches, Vadaturskyy's approaches, Ukraine's economy has a real chance to flourish in the postwar era. From time to time, recalling the bright image of Oleksiy Opanasovych, the parable of the black dot on a white sheet comes to mind. The professor gave his students an assignment during the practical session. Each student, after turning over the sheet, read and provided a thorough answer to the question that interested the teacher. That's how it was every time. But the students were surprised when they saw a blank sheet of paper with a bold black dot right in the center. They focused and began to write.

At the next lesson, after reviewing the answers, the professor said, "Each of you wrote only about the black dot, and no one noticed the vast white sheet!" Such is our busy, hectic life. People see negativity, darkness, hatred, and contempt; they judge and condemn even their closest friends or family based solely on small, noticeable flaws – ignoring and forgetting their strengths. The fact is that most people tend to see the bad, and sometimes even deliberately want to see it. The devil sneaks up on us and manipulates us. He cannot command us without having any power over us. Each of us, as children of the Lord, must make decisions on our own. Each of us is responsible for what we have done, as well as for what we have failed to do. For what we said, and for what was left unsaid. And only a few immediately see the "white sheet of paper." That is exactly how Oleksiy Vadaturskyy is remembered – someone who, throughout his conscious life, was a child of light, not darkness. He is a legend, a messenger from God. And this is the highest title!

There is a lot of Ukraine on every page of this book, and on all its pages our hero is ALIVE.



Never give up!
(winged phrases of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy).

We do not suffer from gigantomania in Ukraine's agricultural sector. Especially with our flawed legislation, it seems to me that the more land you have, the more problems arise. That's why those who manage vast tracts of land should, above all, focus on ensuring that Ukraine has a civilized legal system, rather than relying on other means to solve their problems.

The most important rule is to be honest – with people, with business partners, with the banking system, and with society. And then any task set before the company will be accomplished.

I consider myself to be a simple person who grew up in a village, who did something only because of my desire. And I am very pleased that our company is well known around the world. But in general, Ukraine is still very weak. Don't we have talented people? Yes, we do, and a lot of them. But the conditions aren't right for them. Not everyone

is ready to shoulder the burden of a constant war with the state and build a business on their own. The easy way out is to go abroad and work somewhere else. Then hope that someone in Ukraine will create the necessary conditions during this time.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was an alternative – either continue working for the state or enter private business. I wanted to establish a company and offer the agricultural sector a new level of service. I told them: we will build a better system and a better company. We set out and made it happen.

Ministers come and go. NIBULON remains. We have seen and heard many. And for a long time now, we have judged the effectiveness of managers, officials, and politicians by their actions. Because it is by this standard that we approach our own work and plans.

I must admit: I am sickened by so-called political games where ministers say one thing but do another. In business, this is unacceptable because one's word and reputation are links in the same chain, and honesty and trust between partners form the foundation for conducting business.

In building a business, an enormous knowledge base, regulatory documentation, and administrative procedures proved useful – all of which had been developed during the Soviet era. At that time, I had a dream: to build a business that would be more powerful and strong, progressive and environmentally friendly, and socially oriented compared to the state system.

For Ukraine's agricultural sector to earn higher income in the future, it needs to reduce the production costs of grown crops and increase output through modern technologies. And then the agricultural sector will be successful. I hope and believe that for Ukraine, harvesting 100 million tons of grains and oilseeds is not a limit.

A representative from that bank in Washington, USA, came to my home. He wanted to see my two-room apartment on the sixth floor of a panel building. He wanted to see my old Volga, my office, and the agricultural equipment I had at the time. I told them, "I'm ready to put everything up as collateral!" But inside, I was afraid that one day I'd wake up and find myself destitute! Having nothing... But the World Bank representative said, "We reviewed your credit history and decided to lend you money without any collateral." That's when I truly understood the meaning of an honest credit history. Before,

NIBULON took out credit facilities with interest rates of 160 percent or even 240 percent per year. And we always repaid them on time, down to the last penny.

I can get to Kyiv in a Mercedes in just the same amount of time as in a Skoda Superb B. So then, why do I need a Mercedes? Why fly on a private plane when I can take a regular commercial flight and arrive in Vienna on schedule? I paid the fare and traveled on my own. What's the point of private planes?

I don't even use a bicycle – in Mykolaiv, I walk from home to work. That's why everything is very simple for me. As a person, I do everything to get the greatest satisfaction from providing people with jobs and building modern industrial facilities. So that Ukraine can be proud to have a company like ours.

I prefer it when people say that we're the No. 1 company in shipbuilding, the No. 1 in inland waterway transportation, the No. 1 for our state-of-the-art fleet, the No. 1 in the grain market, the No. 1 in infrastructure – and in the agricultural sector, among the top twenty by land bank.

Here, using farmers' slang, I'll say: you have to "plow hard"! "To plow hard" day and night. You need to know how to tackle the issues and challenges that arise when you enter the world of business.

It's a titanic, round-the-clock, backbreaking work. Then you won't be thinking about a Rolls-Royce, a yacht, or a villa abroad. Instead, you'll feel immense satisfaction from creating jobs here and doing everything for Ukraine. That's how you become successful – and people love working with those like that.

It comes at a high price. You don't get anything for free. We have never received any benefits or subsidies. All we got from the state were problems and raider attacks. It's all just slogans about "supporting business."

Today, our company produces 8 to 10 vessels per year. And all the other 31 shipbuilding yards in Ukraine combined produce only 6 to 7 vessels. Shipbuilding in Ukraine today is needed by no one; in fact, we are the only efficient company in this sector. Just think about it: Ukrainian vessels pay an excise tax that goes toward repairing roads. In what other country in the world does the excise tax collected go toward road repairs?! We transported 3.5 million tons of cargo via waterways

during the past marketing year. This saved the state approximately three billion hryvnias in road repair costs. On the contrary, everything should be done to reduce the number of vehicles and to ensure the fleet sails the rivers without paying this excise tax. I am confident that within two years, Ukrainian shipyards will be fully capable of handling river transportation with a domestically built fleet.

Officials, why don't you meet with Ukrainian businesses? Why don't you meet with farmers and large agricultural producers? Don't they have any problems? Why do you go to foreigners – ask the French, Germans, or Americans – what needs to be done for them to work in Ukraine? And why don't you listen to us, Ukrainians?

I have invested over 22.1 billion in Ukraine's economy. No one asked me what was needed; instead, they only hindered us.

To have a successful business, you need to do what others don't. There was a problem with transportation – so we built our own fleet. No one is reviving river transport – so we decided to do it ourselves. Thanks to this, we achieve competitiveness and become successful.

I am both happy and unhappy about what we have achieved.

I always say: kind people, don't wait for Vadaturskyy to single-handedly create an investment climate in Ukraine. Let's unite – Ukrainians and foreigners – and reform the economy together. Don't expect to walk in and find everything ready for you. You need to invest your own money, take risks, mobilize, and have a clear plan for addressing various challenges. Only then will Ukraine have an investment-friendly climate.

Our company's model can serve as a blueprint for developing Ukrainian shipbuilding, river transport, and the revival of our rivers. We already have bitter practical experience and know how to do it. I'm glad that many people say if there were ten companies like NIBULON, Ukraine's economy and reputation would be completely different.

As a leader, I have no fear of taking action. I was already doing this back in the 1970s. This is a new challenge – to do everything according to new principles and technologies. We operate in tough market conditions. We shouldn't be afraid – just take action and get the job done.

“The best photographs are those that retain their power and impact over many years, regardless of how many times they are viewed”.
Anne Geddes



“At one time, I read many books written by people who had achieved great success in life, and it was fascinating. I read Henry Ford’s accounts of the difficult conditions he faced building his business and how his successful enterprise influenced the development of the entire United States. But in Ukraine, unlike in America, you had to work under completely different conditions. And to be successful here, you had to read a different book – the book of life.”

Oleksiy Vadaturskyy.



Oleksiy Vadaturskyy: "The best school is life itself. The knowledge we gain from the school of life can't be found in any university, institute, or business manual. The main rule is to be honest with people, business partners, the banking system, and society."



Olena Zalevska: "Aliosha's father was entrusted with the most important thing – the harvest. He was in charge of the warehouse at the village grain elevator. That's where the grain and seeds were stored. He also worked as a weigher, sending grain off to the railway station – it was brought in by carts fitted with special wooden sides. Throughout all his years of work, Afanasii received only words of gratitude – there were never any thefts or shortages. Inspections confirmed it – he never feared them. He was a local, while his wife came to the village as a daughter-in-law."



Olena Zalevska: "Aunt Fenia, Aliosha's mother, born in 1910, was three years older than her husband and worked at our collective farm "Batkivshchyna." Father returned from the war with a leg injury and walked with a cane. Afanasii (as everyone called him in the village dialect) couldn't do any heavy work – for example, even digging the garden near the house with a spade was beyond his strength. His innate wisdom and knowledge, along with his crystal-clear honesty, earned him his daily bread."



Hanna Vadaturska: "My Volodia was born on June 20, 1939. He was 8 years and three months older than Aliosha. Naturally, the young, driven, and energetic older brother appeared more mature than his younger sibling, who was growing not only muscular but also very hardworking. From a young age and throughout their lives, the brothers lived in harmony, understood each other deeply, bore no grudges, and always stuck together through thick and thin. Their brotherly bond could only be envied by others who never experienced such unity."



Hanna Vadaturska:

"Volodia was always a guardian angel for Oleksiy, and the younger brother reached out to the older one, whom he saw as an example. They maintained mutual understanding, love, and care for a lifetime."



Mykhailo Vadaturskyy: "When one of our close relatives passed away, Oleksiy would always come to bid his last farewell. Of course, he always helped financially. The village people knew this well and said: "We should give Oleksiy proper respect. Despite a busy schedule and workload, he never forgets his roots, his lineage."

Photo: late 1950s, Bendzary. The Vadaturskyy family with their fellow villagers.



Hanna Vadaturska:

"Both brothers learned to play the harmonica. The first was Volodia, then Aliosha also began to pick different melodies. Although accordionists played at weddings back then, the boys did not become musicians, I guess, that was not their calling. They played folk songs at home or even in the village club. The older brother had a beautiful voice, so he also sang."



Lidiia Herasymenko: "Almost a hundred percent of the village residents were Ukrainians, so we studied in our native language. Only the teachers spoke in literary language, while we, the children, spoke mainly in surzhyk, just like our parents and grandparents. In senior school, our class teacher was Oksana Opanasivna, a math teacher. We all loved her. I remember only good things about our teachers. I've already forgotten some surnames, but not their names and patronymics. Hence, they were truly remarkable."

Photo: mid-1950s. Bendzary. Teachers of the village school.



Lidiia Herasymenko: "He succeeded in everything he did, and he achieved his goals solely through hard work. It was never easy for our generation. With each passing year, the teachers realized that a true talent was developing – Oleksiy Vadaturskyy would certainly become a great person. The Lord had blessed him with a brilliant mind."

Photo: 1962, Bendzary. Classmates from the village school; Oleksiy Vadaturskyy is second from the left in the top row.



Vladyslav Shulha: "My father had an encyclopedic memory; he completed his postgraduate studies at Chernivtsi University. Oleksiy and I often stayed up late, unable to get enough of talking. Aliosha grew up as an intellectual – he read a lot and knew quite a bit. Of course, he was often frustrated by the "blank spots" in our native history. Mother always felt warmth from Oleksiy. Every time he came home to Bendzary, Oleksiy wanted to see Tamara Pavlivna again, who took great joy in his successes and knew almost everything about him, if not everything."

Photo: the renowned teaching couple – Vasyl Hryhorovych Shulha and Tamara Pavlina Bodnar.

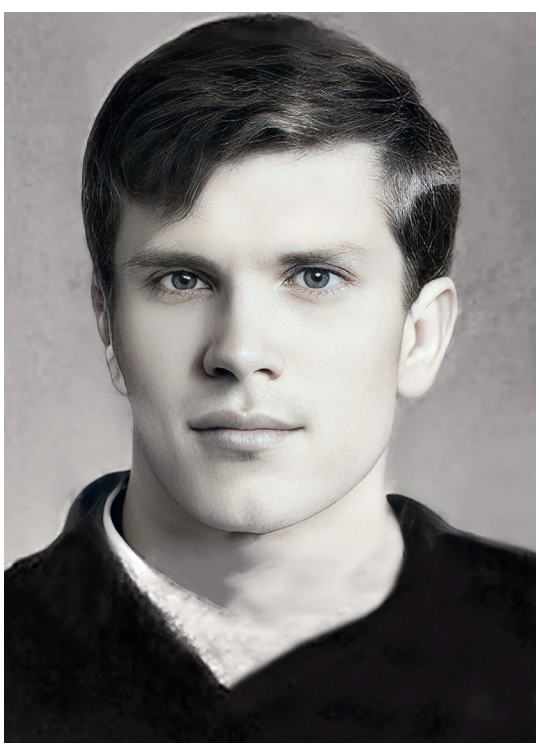


Vladyslav Shulha: "What I regret most is that Mom didn't live a few months longer to see the day when her most distinguished student became a Hero of Ukraine. She passed away on February 26, 2007, and Dad died a year earlier. In January 2010, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the proposal from the Ministry of Education and Science and the Odesa Regional State Administration to name Bendzary Secondary School I–III degrees of the Balta District Council in Odesa Region after Tamara Pavlivna Bodnar, a Merited Teacher of Ukraine."



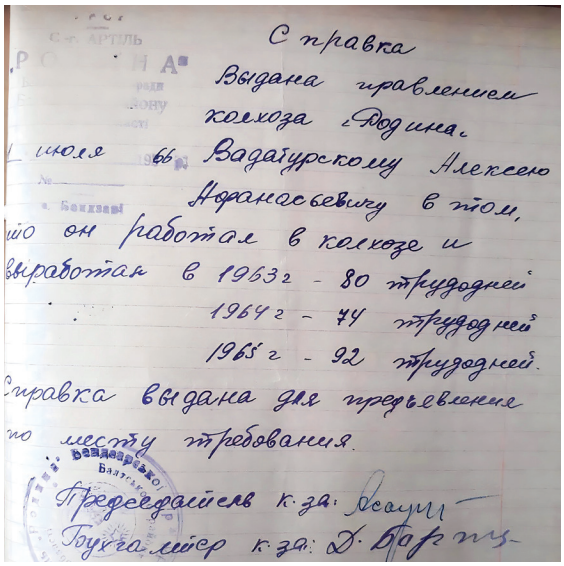
Hanna Vadaturska: "I came to live with my in-laws, where I felt welcomed and appreciated. They all became my closest from the very first day. Of course, brothers were lucky to have such good parents who were an authority for their children. Although they were quite poor, like the rest of us, their source of love never ran dry – on the contrary, it deepened with the years. It must be said that Aliosha immediately approved of Volodia's choice when we got married. They were very close, and there was never even a trace of offense or misunderstanding between them – not even in thought."

Photo: 1963, Bendzary. Volodymyr Vadaturskyy's wedding; Oleksiy is on the far right in the bottom row.



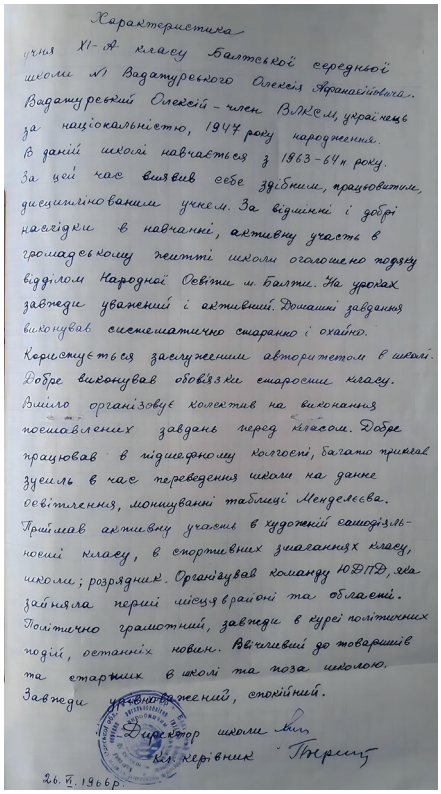
Mykhailo Vadaturskyy:

"Collective farm workers did not have passports back then. Young people could escape village life only if they entered universities or technical schools. Without a passport, you couldn't get a job anywhere except on a collective farm. Thank God, Oleksiy managed to enter the institute in Odesa. He passed three entrance exams with excellent and good marks, but before the fourth, he was so exhausted and drained that he couldn't attend the exam. As it turned out he wasn't the only one, and the institution made some advances given that the talented applicant from Bendzary had three excellent marks. They allowed them to take the exam later. And Oleksiy did not miss the chance."



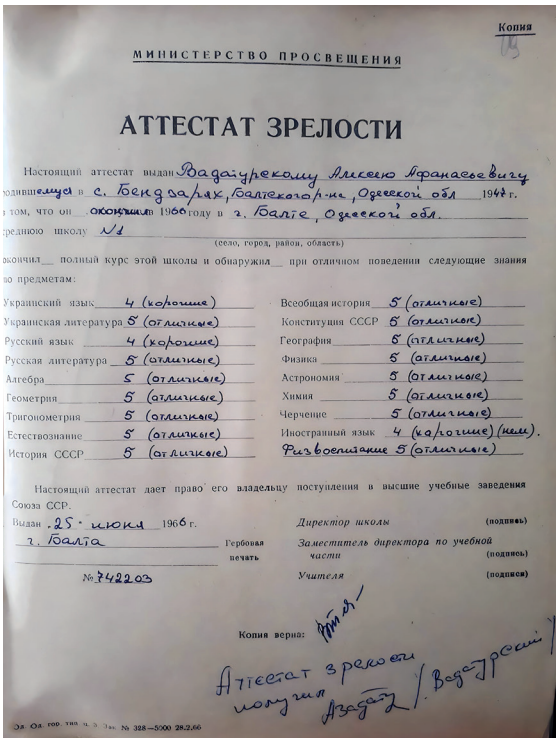
Справка
Выдана правлением
колхоза «Родина»
1 июля 66 Вадатурскому Алексею
Афанасьевичу в том,
что он работал в колхозе и
выработал в 1963 г - 80 трудодней
1964 г - 74 трудодней
1965 г - 92 трудодней.
Справка выдана для предъявления
по месту требования.
Председатель к-за: Ісаєнко
Бухгалтер к-за: Д. Бартиш

Mykhailo Vadaturskyy: "In senior school, he worked in the fields. Whether he worked as a trailer operator on a Belarus tractor with his uncle or as an assistant combine operator, he was always characterized by a responsible attitude to the labor of agricultural workers. During the harvest season, Oleksiy was in the field from the first to the last day. Till harvest festival. He had to work around the clock, so he didn't go home and slept in the hay pile in the field. Volodia, his older brother, brought him something to eat."



Характеристика
ученя XI-Я класу Балтської середньої
школи № Вадатурського Олексія Афанасійовича.
Вадатурський Олексій - член ВЛКСМ, українець
за національністю, 1947 року народження.
В даній школі навчається з 1963-64 н. року.
За цей час виявив себе здібним, працьовитим,
дисциплінованим учнем. За відмінні і добрі
наглядки в навчанні, активну участь в
громадській житті школи оголошено подяку
відділом Народної Освіти м. Балти. На уроках
завжди уважений і активний. Домашні завдання
виконував систематично старанно і охайно.
Користується заслуженим авторитетом в школі.
Добре виконував обов'язки старости класу.
Вміло організовує колектив на виконання
поставлених завдань перед класом. Добре
працював в підшефному колгоспі, багато приклав
зусиль в час переведення школи на денне
освітлення, монтуванні таблиці Менделєєва.
Приймав активну участь в художній самодіяль-
ності класу, в спортивних змаганнях класу,
школи; розрядник. Організував команду ЮДПД, яка
зайняла перші місця в районі та області.
Політично грамотний, завжди в курсі політичних
подій, останніх новин. Ввічливий до товаришів
та старших в школі та поза школою.
Завжди уважний, зосереджений, спокійний.
Директор школи
Кл. керівник
26.V.1966р.

Heorhii (Yurii) Stankevych: "Oleksiy studied in the class with future electricians. I remember when luminescent (some called them fluorescent) daylight lamps first appeared. Before the advent of LED lamps, they were widely used for general lighting because they offered several times greater luminous efficiency and lifespan compared to incandescent bulbs serving the same purpose. Oleksiy and his classmates installed those lamps in the classrooms and corridors of Balta School No. 1. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy earned only good and excellent grades year after year. It's probably no coincidence that he ended up in the electricians class, as in 1966 he enrolled at the Odesa Institute of Technology, specializing in automation and comprehensive mechanization of chemical-technological processes."



Копия

МИНИСТЕРСТВО ПРОСВЕЩЕНИЯ

АТТЕСТАТ ЗРЕЛОСТИ

Настоящий аттестат выдан Радаіуркому Алексею Ифанасьевичу
родившемуся в с. Бендарях, Балтского р-на, Одесской обл 1948 г.
в том, что он окончил в 1966 году в г. Балте, Одесской обл.
среднюю школу №1
(село, город, район, область)
окончил полный курс этой школы и обнаружил при отличном поведении следующие знания
по предметам:

Украинский язык	4 (хорошо)	Всеобщая история	5 (отлично)
Украинская литература	5 (отлично)	Конституция СССР	5 (отлично)
Русский язык	4 (хорошо)	География	5 (отлично)
Русская литература	5 (отлично)	Физика	5 (отлично)
Алгебра	5 (отлично)	Астрономия	5 (отлично)
Геометрия	5 (отлично)	Химия	5 (отлично)
Тригонометрия	5 (отлично)	Черчение	5 (отлично)
Естествознание	5 (отлично)	Иностранный язык	4 (хорошо) (нем).
История СССР	5 (отлично)	Физвоспитание	5 (отлично)

Настоящий аттестат дает право его владельцу поступления в высшие учебные заведения Союза ССР.

Выдан 25 июня 1966 г.
г. Балта

Гербовая печать

№ 742203

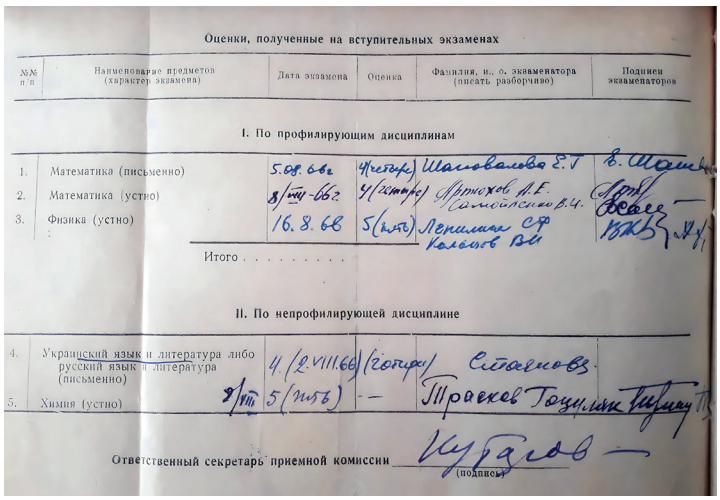
Директор школы (подпись)
Заместитель директора по учебной части (подпись)
Учителя (подписи)

Копия верна:

Аттестат зрелости получил Радаіур / Водотрий

Зл. Од. тип. ч. 3. Зак. № 328—5000 28.2.66

Heorhii (Yurii) Stankevych: "We had wonderful teachers back in Balta. To reach your goal, you first have to keep moving forward. Whether you want to or not, you have to study. From our very first days at school, we had the feeling that it was the best – simply because it was our school. And my teachers were the best, too. And my classmates were the best as well. They are for life; you have no right to hurt or betray anyone. Every day, we should learn and work in a way that leaves the best mark and the fondest memory behind. Then teachers and friends will speak of you as genuine, as a true Person."

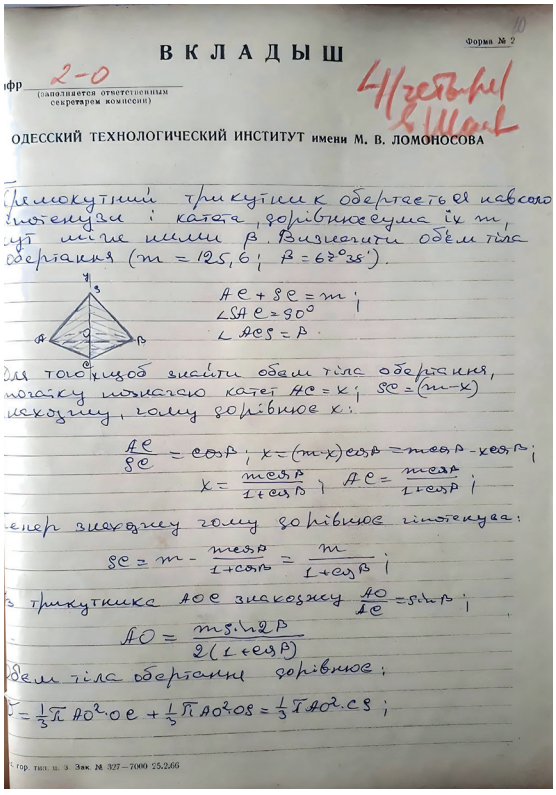


Оценки, полученные на вступительных экзаменах

№№ п/п	Наименование предметов (характер экзамена)	Дата экзамена	Оценка	Фамилия, и., о. экзаменатора (писать разборчиво)	Подписи экзаменаторов
	I. По профилирующим дисциплинам				
1.	Математика (письменно)	5.08.66г	4(четыре)	Шаповалова Е.Т	
2.	Математика (устно)	8/VIII-66г	4(четыре)	Артюхов А.Е. Самойленко В.Ч.	
3.	Физика (устно)	16.8.66	5(пять)	Ленинская СР Колесов В.И.	
	Итого				
	II. По непрофилирующей дисциплине				
4.	Украинский язык и литература либо русский язык и литература (письменно)	4/VIII	4 (2.VIII.66) (сочин)	Стаханова	
5.	Химия (устно)	8/VIII	5(пять)	Трояков Гончаренко	

Ответственный секретарь приемной комиссии (подпись)

Heorhii (Yurii) Stankevych: "Our admission to university was quite unusual. At that time, the secondary education system was transitioning to a ten-year program. Oleksiy and I were among the last to study for 11 years, but we graduated together with those who had completed the school curriculum in 10 years. The number of applicants was twice as high as in previous years, and naturally, the competition for admission doubled as well. But we were lucky – we both got in!"



ВКЛАДЫШ

Форма № 2

ОДЕССКИЙ ТЕХНОЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ ИНСТИТУТ имени М. В. ЛОМОНОСОВА

Viktor Khobin: "We enrolled together – he was among the eleventh graders, while I was part of the group that finished ten years of schooling. In essence, we both faced a double competition."

Photo from the archiv.es of the Odesa National University of Technology: the mathematics exam sheet of applicant Oleksiy Vadaturskyy.



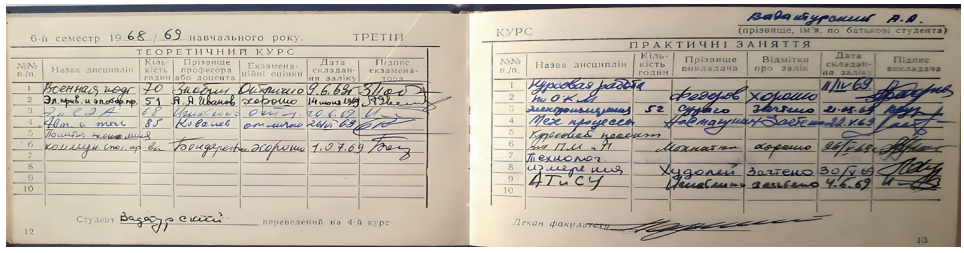
ЗАЛІКОВА КНИЖКА № 66659-АП

Прізвище, ім'я, по батькові Вадатурський А.А.

Факультет Автоматизації приборостроєн

Спеціальність Автоматизація хімічних проц

Вступив переведен на перший курс з 1966г.



6-й семестр 1968/69 навчального року. ТРЕТІЙ

ТЕОРЕТИЧНИЙ КУРС

№№ п/п	Назва дисциплін	Кіль-кість годин	Прізвище професора або доцента	Екзаменаційні оцінки	Дата складання екзамену	Підпис екзаменатора
1	Всенищ. нар.	70	Заборін	Відмінно	9.6.69	Заборін
2	Эл.тех. и эл.обор.	51	Я. А. Шкапов	хорошо	14 июня 1969 г.	
3						
4	Ком. с тех.	85	Кобилев	отлично	24/VI 69	
5	Основы экономики					
6	Коллоид. химия	64	Бондаренко	зарахов.	1.7.69	
7						
8						
9						
10						

Студент Вадатурський переведений на 4-й курс

КУРС

Вадатурський А.А. (прізвище, ім'я, по батькові студента)

ПРАКТИЧНІ ЗАНЯТТЯ

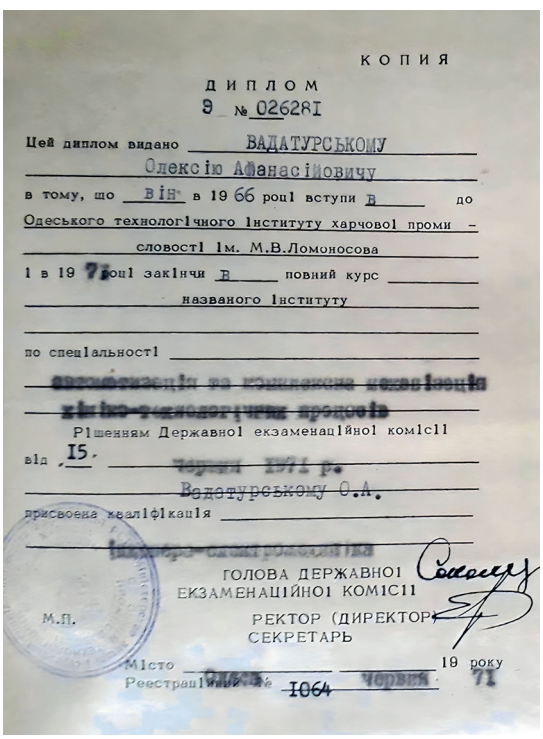
№№ п/п	Назва дисциплін	Кіль-кість годин	Прізвище викладача	Відмітки про залік	Дата складання залік.	Підпис викладача
1	Курсовая работа		Федоров	хорошо	11/VI 69	
2	ТОКУ					
3	Электроника	52	Сухов	зачтено	2.05.69	
4	Тех. процессы		Кобаладзе	зачтено	12.VI.69	
5	Курсовой проект					
6	Эк. Пл. и Уп.		Мелкая	хорошо	26/VI 69	
7	Технолог. измерения		Худолей	зачтено	30/V 69	
8	АТиСУ		Дмитрен	зачтено	4.6.69	
9						
10						

Декан факультету

Bohdan Yehorov: "He studied one of the most challenging and responsible specialties – automation of technological processes. It makes students think systematically and encourages them to be highly organized to make responsible decisions on managing complex technological facilities."



Hanna Vadaturska: "The brothers missed each other when they couldn't meet for a long time. Volodia regularly went to Odesa to deliver a bag packed by their parents to Aliosha, when he was a student. He visited him at the institute and in the dorm. He told me his brother found a very beautiful girl and they were going to get married. So it happened. We all liked Aliosha's Raia. The Lord Almighty paired them, they were a perfect match and complemented each other. I liked her very much, she was gentle and kind. She merged into the family as if she had always been its member. I remember the day when the newlyweds arrived together for the first time."



КОПИЯ

ДИПЛОМ
Э № 026281

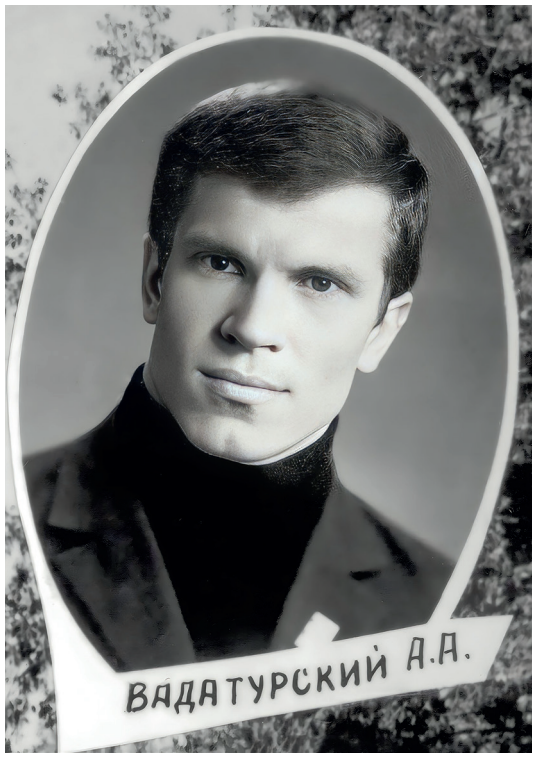
Цей диплом видано ВАДАТУРСЬКОМУ
Олексію Афанасійовичу
в тому, що він в 1966 році вступив в до
Одеського технологічного інституту харчової проми-
словості ім. М.В.Ломоносова
і в 19 71 році закінчив повний курс
названого інституту
по спеціальності

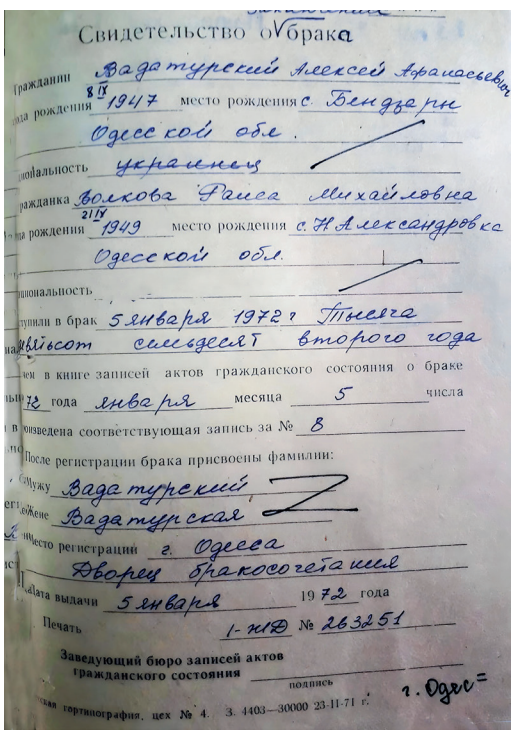
Рішенням Державної екзаменаційної комісії
від 15. червня 1971 р.
Вадатурському О.А.
присвоєна кваліфікація

ГОЛОВА ДЕРЖАВНОЇ
ЕКЗАМЕНАЦІЙНОЇ КОМІСІЇ
М.П. РЕКТОР (ДИРЕКТОР)
СЕКРЕТАРЬ
Місто 19 року
Реєстраційний № 1064 Червня 71

Bohdan Yehorov: "Oleksiy Vadaturskyy is one of the most renowned graduates of the Odesa Institute of Technology. On October 20, 2022, our Alma Mater celebrated its 120th anniversary. In 1902, it was the Odesa Flour Milling School. Nowadays, we are the Odesa National Institute of Technology."

Viktor Khobin: "When we had no money – which was pretty much always – we would agree and go unload railroad cars. Most often, we ended up unloading raw cane sugar. We worked so hard through the night that we could barely make it back to the dorm. But we never skipped classes. That was sacred. Oleksiy went to unload railroad cars more often than I did; he was much stronger, more accustomed to hard work, tougher and more mature. He wasn't afraid of any kind of work and never shied away from labor. He was capable of handling anything. We lacked food and calories, but everyone was eager to study and play sports. We could afford a hard and exhausting job loading freight cars was at least once a month."





Свидетельство о браке

Гражданин Вадатурский Алексей Афанасьевич
года рождения 8 IX 1947 место рождения с. Бендзарн
Одесской обл.
национальность украинец
гражданка Волкова Раиса Михайловна
года рождения 21 IV 1949 место рождения с. Н Александровка
Одесской обл.
национальность
вступили в брак 5 января 1972 г. Тысяча
девятьсот семьдесят второго года
произведена в книге записей актов гражданского состояния о браке
72 года января месяца 5 числа
произведена соответствующая запись за № 8
После регистрации брака присвоены фамилии:
мужу Вадатурский
жене Вадатурская
место регистрации г. Одесса
Дворец бракосочетания
Дата выдачи 5 января 1972 года
Печать I-КВ № 263251
Заведующий бюро записей актов гражданского состояния
подпись
г. Одес=
...ская гортипография, цех № 4. З. 4403—30000 23-11-71 г.

Olena Zalevska: "Oleksiy and Raia's wedding was modest. Father made three liters of home-distilled horilka and went himself, leaving mother to tend the household. Only their closest friends came to celebrate. I read about it in one of the letters. They got married in the winter, after New Year 1972, just before Christmas Eve. Raisa came to the village in the summer. Fenia was just herding the cows out to pasture when she said that Aliosha had come, and not alone. They went out into the garden, and so did we. We started talking there. The Vadaturskyy's daughter-in-law was very pleasant, kind, and hospitable. Aliosha was lucky to have her as his wife, and she was lucky to have him."

The highest happiness on earth is the happiness of marriage. (William Lyon Phelps).



Viktor Khobin: "In the later years of university, Oleksiy met the love of his life. His beloved, the beautiful Raia, was two years younger than him (born on November 21, 1949, on St. Michael's Day) and studied at our institute in the Faculty of Technology, majoring in preservation technology. I was at their wedding. He was already working in Trykraty, while she was finishing her final, fifth year."

Photo: Odesa. January 5, 1972. Raisa and Oleksiy Vadaturskyy To love and be loved is to feel the sun shining from both sides. And they always had that sunshine!



Viacheslav Sokolov: "Oleksiy's faithful and only life partner, Raisa, was kind-hearted, simple, approachable, open, sincere, without any airs or pretensions."



Mykhailo Vadaturskyy: "I wasn't at his wedding as it was a small student party in a dormitory for the closest people. Later, the newlyweds visited Bendzary. Oleksiy's parents gathered their close family. My Dad had passed away but Mom was invited and she couldn't stop praising the young bride. Oleksiy was lucky to find Raia, just as she – him. Oleksiy's Mom and Dad loved her as their child, and they all lived amicably. They had two sons, thus, Raisa was like a daughter to them. It was impossible not to love her. She was sweet, friendly, sincere, and benevolent. She seemed glowing with kindness. All the neighbors liked the Vadaturskyys' daughter-in-law as she was kind to them. She wasn't forced to act like that, it was her natural disposition."



Liudmyla Mekheda: "I want to say special word about Raisa Mykhailivna, a remarkable woman who has been with Oleksiy Vadaturskyy since their student days. Like him, she was incredibly hardworking. He set a goal for himself – that mine would be the best – and he achieved it! He wanted to switch from surzhyk to literary language – and he did! He encouraged all of us to do the same, and today we are grateful as we speak our beautiful, gentle native language."



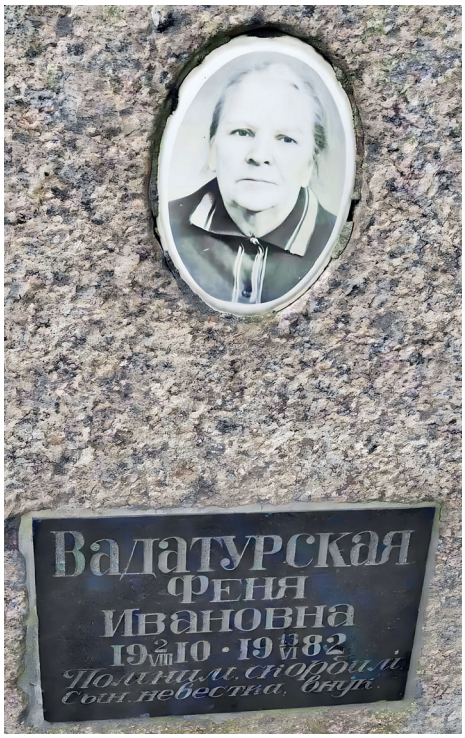
Lidiia Herasymenko: "Oleksiy would occasionally visit Bendzary with his wife Raisa, but most of the time he rushed from Mykolaiv or wherever else he was to his ancestral home alone. Again and again, despite the lack of time. He wished to build a church in the village. He had other plans nurtured in his head, plans that only he knew."





Olena Zalevska: "For the first ten years after his father's death, Aliosha planted beets, potatoes, and carrots in the garden. He could've easily bought everything in Mykolaiv, but those things carried the scent and taste of childhood, his father's home, and the dearest land of all. And then, when he saw he couldn't keep up – more work, more problems piling up – he handed me the keys. He entrusted me with the garden and the homestead. I unlock, open up, and let the fresh air in. Oleksiy carried out the necessary repairs. Everywhere felt cozy, bright, and tidy. Every year, he was either sent or came to collect homegrown walnuts, homegrown grapes (the simple, rustic, deep-blue kind), and homegrown pumpkins."





Olena Zalevska: "Afanasii Fedorovych lived for 77 years, and Fenia Ivanivna for 72. Not very long. Both worn out from hard work. Both were laid to rest with a priest's blessing, carried by hand to the cemetery, though it was quite a distance. After the father's death, the family home was left orphaned. Volodia, the eldest son, had his own home, but this one, the dearest of all, where childhood and school days were spent, where he first saw the light of day, was left to Aliosha. After the funeral, he told me, "I won't sell the house – I'll keep the family home." The son had modest headstones placed for his parents, just like everyone else. It seems there was nothing extraordinary about it, but before the war, he told me he wanted to modernize them – he could already picture how. He didn't get the chance..."



Olena Zalevska: "I had a son, born in 1962, who from almost the very beginning of NIBULON worked as a driver for Aliosha for 17 years in a row. You should have seen the sparkle in his eyes when Yura told me about Aliosha and the important work he was doing for Ukraine. They shared a bond of trust that needed no words. My son understood Oleksiy without a word, at a mere glance, a wave of the hand. And Yura never let anyone down. But then tragedy struck – my son's kidneys began to fail. For eleven years, he fought for his life. Oleksiy did all he could to help us. An surgery was required, but we couldn't find a donor kidney. He passed away at just 47... Aliosha was abroad at the time and couldn't make it to the funeral. But there was Raisa Mykhailivna and the team from NIBULON – they took care of everything, arranged it all, and helped in every way. My Yura is buried not far from Oleksiy's parents..."

"Each hand holds firm a heavy iron hammer,
And from on high, a voice like thunder rings:
"Strike at this rock! Let neither heat nor frost,
Nor thirst nor hunger make your spirit lost!
Endure the toil, the thirst, the hunger's bite,
For you were born to crush this stone with all your might!"
Ivan Franko, "The Stonecutters" (1878).



Oleksiy Vadaturskyy: "Our company was among the very first private enterprises in Ukraine, established just days after the nationwide referendum in which Ukrainians clearly expressed their aspiration for Ukraine's independence. Who survived from those first companies? There are only a few of them, and we became the best because, despite everything, we managed to overcome the trials that then fell upon our shoulders. Hard times forged us. We had to build the company with our efforts, creating our history; page by page, we were writing the book called NIBULON. This is the book of my life about how to become successful in the realities of Ukraine. In work and life, I always follow an inner rule: "You own not what you've acquired but what you've shared" – what you have given to people, to your company, to Ukraine, to society, and the world. That's why today I am an open person and proud of our achievements – I can look people straight in the eyes with confidence."

Photo: a fourth-year student of the Odesa Institute of Technology digging a trench with a pickaxe at the construction site of the Bukhara–Ural gas pipeline.



Tetiana Kviatkovska: "The company was just in its infancy, with only six people working there – I was the seventh. They were all still officially employed by the Regional Administration of Grain Products at the time, and simultaneously working at NIBULON. Since I came from outside, I became the first full-time employee of the newly established company. For many years, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy himself repeatedly emphasized this at various meetings, saying that it all started with me. Although everyone clearly understood who was the very first and most important – the driving force and brain behind NIBULON, so to speak, right from its infancy."



Svitlana Bocharova: "You should've seen us celebrating birthdays together! There was a huge kitchen in the office, which served as a kind of banquet hall. We all were friends and it seemed we could move mountains. Thus, we held small celebrations after hard working days. Oleksiy Opanasovych never missed them. He loved to greet people and say sincere words of gratitude."



Svitlana Bocharova: "In 1996, he sent 10 children of the company's employees to London to a summer training center, where they learned English, relaxed, and went on tours around England. They visited the Madame Tussauds wax museum, saw the Stonehenge megalithic structure, walked along the Thames over the Tower Bridge in central London, and explored many other historical sites. It was fascinating. You never forget things like that."



Liliia Nikitina (Perebyinis): "In 1996, the Hungarians provided us with seeds, and at the newly established Bilovodska branch, equipped with expensive, modern tractors supplied by NIBULON, we carried out a demonstration corn sowing. The boss came from Mykolaiv to witness the event with his own eyes. One of the machine operators was planting corn using a German-made Fendt tractor. Vadaturskyy saw how skillfully he worked, dressed in a branded overall with NIBULON across the back, and was so impressed that he wanted to thank him somehow. Everything was neat, the sown rows lay perfectly straight on the field. Overwhelmed with emotion, Oleksiy Opanasovych was so moved he wanted to hug and kiss the tractor driver. At one point, the boss suddenly took off his expensive watch and gifted it to the machine operator as a token of appreciation for his diligence, dedication, and the masterful care he showed in his work. And it wasn't for show – he was always sincere with his employees, genuinely kind and warm-hearted."



Tetiana Kviatkovska: "I can confirm that at NIBULON, there were never any 'off-the-books' or 'envelope' salaries – everything was transparent and above board." And it's been that way since the very first days of the company's existence. Oleksiy Opanasovych used to say it was a matter of principle for him. All taxes were dutifully paid, and the employees received their salaries clean and clear. Thanks to this, those NIBULON employees who worked for many years now receive substantial pensions. Endless gratitude to Vadaturskyy for that. NIBULON under Oleksiy Opanasovych was all about pace – everything had to be done at full speed, bold decisions were the norm, and your mind had to stay razor-sharp at all times. Some said Vadaturskyy was difficult, not easy to work with, but given the scale of his ambitions and the country where he was born, and had to make his mark, he couldn't have been any other way. Otherwise, he wouldn't have become the man he was."



Oleksandr Vedeneiev: "When Vadaturskyy purchased 15 Fendt tractors in Germany (where farmers typically buy only one or two machines due to the small size of their agricultural lands), the news was covered by a German magazine to which we had sent our photos. When the tractors arrived in our country, company employees drove them from the railway station. I found a spot on a hill where I could see them stretching along a serpentine path, and it looked as though there were hundreds of them! I made a nice photo."



Oleksandr Vedeneiev: "Late in the evening, the terminal was illuminated, and all the lights on the vessel near the pier were also on. We took photos of the bright scenery, as well as the reflections on the water from the boat, from the water itself. Then we climbed onto a large cargo crane in the neighboring port, to the very top of it, and took some photos from there. That was some material for the designer. Kostiantyn Konovalov, the youngest designer on our team, took up this difficult task. This photograph has served as a hallmark image of NIBULON for many years, appearing in brochures, prospectuses, posters, and more."



Roman Vashchuk: "Vadaturskyy had a unique gift of a comprehensive and systematic approach to achieving his goals. Some businesses grow crops, others – transport and manufacture goods. Oleksiy Opanasovych built a successful logistical and agricultural model involving the fleet and shipbuilding capabilities. He was thinking about actions to be taken to defend Ukraine in the field of shipbuilding. He managed to turn all his interests into large-scale operations. The things I saw were impressive, everything was implemented on a grand scale! The agribusiness and fleet that Oleksiy Vadaturskyy built proved the incredible creative energy of the company's management. NIBULON is an outstanding company not only in Ukraine. It has been and remains one of the major global players."



Viktor Slauta: "The world is governed by those countries where information comes first, finance second, and personnel third. All possible and seemingly impossible information is gathered, then the idea and concept are developed through thorough analysis, and only after that do they look for funding and the necessary qualified personnel. This was precisely the principle by which Oleksiy Opanasovych Vadaturskyy lived and worked. Indeed, he constantly sought to learn more, striving for knowledge and frequently traveling abroad to study European and global best practices. And once he made the only right and well-considered decision, he would seek the necessary sources of financing or attract loans. For me, Vadaturskyy was like a mascot – a driving force behind certain achievements."



Yulia Tymoshenko: "He didn't just overcome challenges – he set them himself. Vadaturskyy's ambitious, large-scale projects were more than private business; they drove Ukraine's economy and continue to serve the country's welfare and global food security. Oleksiy Opanasovych firmly believed that both large and small private companies should work for the country, its global standing, and the well-being of its people. Back in the 1990s, he chose to focus on developing his own private business because he didn't want to depend on the state. He lived by the principle of relying on his efforts and the professionalism of like-minded people rather than waiting for favors from others."





Svitlana Shulha: "To bring all of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy's ideas and projects to life – even those that seemed unrealistic – he had to walk a hard and thorny path. NIBULON had to import a large amount of agricultural equipment and machinery from Europe. I listened to Oleksiy and realized that nothing would happen on its own – it was necessary to develop new customs clearance procedures, since many customs-related issues at the time were not regulated by legislation. In front of me sat an innovator – a tireless and inspired pioneer of many new directions, many of which defied ordinary imagination."





Leonid Kozachenko: "Such potential as Oleksiy Opanasovych possessed in the country's agricultural sector was hard to find in anyone else. For him, there were no weekends, holidays, or vacations. Most importantly, it was the work he did and accomplished. Now, looking back in time, you can feel how eager he was to create. Creator! That was his Lord-given purpose. Sometimes he didn't even fully realize what he was doing. The Spirit of the Lord was guiding him."





Yulia Tymoshenko: "His stories about building the agroholding and his plans were sometimes captivating, but the true value of his leadership talent and the scale of his business could only be grasped by visiting NIBULON – its shipyard in Mykolaiv, grain storage facilities, elevators, and terminals. He dreamed of building a successful agribusiness – and he made that dream a reality. He dreamed of restoring Mykolaiv's glory as a city of shipbuilders – and he fulfilled that dream, because NIBULON's vessels were built right at the Mykolaiv shipyard. He aimed to revive and breathe new life into the river transport industry, proving that there are no limits to what can be achieved with determination and vision."





Liudmyla Mekheda: "No one could knock Oleksiy Opanasovych off his path – not fame, not titles, nor vast sums of money. When he set his mind to something, he did it. He understood what legacy he needed to leave behind – and he did. That was the force that guided him, the drive that pushed him forward. Forward and only forward, no matter the cost. His goals in life were higher than what others aimed to achieve."





Oleksandra Kuzhel: "I admire people like Vadaturskyy. I wish I had friends – and even enemies – who would give everything for the sake of a true dream. And he had it – that dream. No, not to buy a new car, a shiny yacht, or an estate in Europe – but to change the country for the better. He worked to improve the well-being of Ukrainians, created jobs, and grew grain – all so that Ukraine could thrive and prosper. I thank him for that. I'm grateful for his son as well – a truly decent and professional man."





Oleksandr Purkha: "Oleksiy Vadaturskyy built a transshipment barge in the Romanian port of Constanta in the summer of 2014 – the only one in the waters of the Black and Mediterranean Seas – and named this creation "St. Mykolai." The unique self-propelled floating crane helped transfer grain from non-self-propelled vessels (barges) to large-tonnage vessels (such as Panamax) that could not reach Mykolaiv due to the insufficient depth of the fairway at the port. Later, Vadaturskyy realized that one such barge was not enough, so he built a similar one in Mykolaiv. NIBULON built its own barges and tugboats. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy didn't just restore the country's river fleet – he created it. He was not only an agriculturist but also a mechanical engineer. And taken together, a great builder."

Photo: "Sviatyi Mykolai" – the first self-propelled floating crane of NIBULON's fleet.



Oleksandr Pysaruk: "In Russian-speaking Mykolaiv (and sadly, it's painful to even recall this), Vadaturskyy managed to grow into a proud and unwavering Ukrainian. When I was already working in Amsterdam at the Dutch bank ING, Oleksiy Opanasovych came to visit us on NIBULON business, speaking only his native language there, which raised him even higher as a patriot of his homeland. Vadaturskyy deeply understood the importance of his native language and, over the years, repeatedly experienced in practice that a Ukrainian can never express his deepest heartfelt aspirations and feelings so subtly in the "tongue" of our eternal enemies, because this can only be done in his native language."



Tetiana Kviatkovska: "He took it very hard whenever someone called him an oligarch. It hurt because, unlike them, he had achieved everything on his own, with his mind and hard work. It pained him that Ukrainians reacted to successful people like a bull to a red flag. For years, our people couldn't believe that a business could be built without corruption and kickbacks."

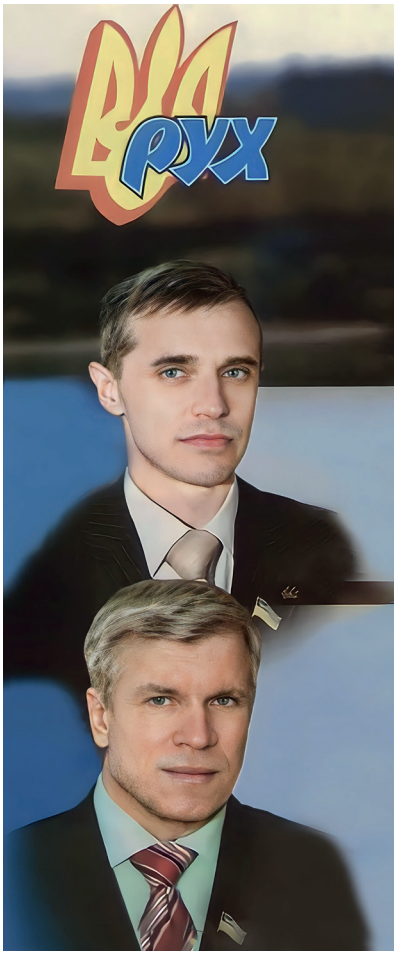


Natalia Nahorna: "Some love people with words – Vadaturskyy loved them through action. And that's much harder. He made sure that Ukrainian money, honestly earned by his workers, was invested back into Ukrainian causes. That's exactly what he believed, and he went to great lengths, doing whatever it took. He loved being in control of every process. He never spared his time when it came to explaining why something was important. It would seem just a grain terminal. What is there even to talk about? It was just a small part of a larger system that worked. He said it wasn't just a pile of grain. A non-self-propelled vessel came for it, towed in by a small tugboat. They cleaned the river for this purpose. Next, everything was loaded onto the vessel that would carry it where it was needed and feed the world. And we'll all have jobs. He was a leader with a grand vision. He hated mistakes; everything had to run smoothly for him. "Why isn't it working?" And he always got what he wanted. People like him are hard to find. That's what made him unique. He loved Ukraine deeply. I was always surprised that, despite having the chance to travel anywhere in the world, he preferred to relax in Zakarpattia, in Shaian. He stayed at the Kooperator Hotel – it always amused us. That place was like a leftover from Soviet times. The first time I saw Shaian mineral water, I bought a bottle – and it's been my favorite ever since. Oleksiy Opanasovych loved those hidden gems of Ukraine that many people didn't even know existed. He did everything in a way that made others fall in love with it, too."



Yuriy Didenko: "Dmytro Kremin had very close relations with Vadaturskyy, as they both were like-minded and lived in Ukraine. The head of NIBULON was proud that the poet was recognized by the state much earlier than him. In 1999, the People's Movement of Ukraine and Viacheslav Chornovil supported him, and he deservedly became a Shevchenko laureate. Years later, Dmytro congratulated Oleksiy Opanasovych with the Star of the Hero of Ukraine. Once, Kremin helped publish the "Ukrainian South," our Movement newspaper, and wrote many materials specifically for us."





Yuriy Didenko: "Those first days, months, and years of the new young state, he actively supported and campaigned for democratic transformations and sided with the democrat Viacheslav Chornovil. Oleksiy Opanasovych was the main and largest patron of the People's Movement in Mykolaiv region. Today, it is even difficult to list all the good deeds he financed, owing to the multitude of them. Perhaps it's easier to recall everything that his mind and his active, pro-Ukrainian democratic position did not contribute to. When I planned certain events, campaigns, festivals, etc., I knew that the NIBULON head would always support and help me. I never asked Vadaturskyy for large sums – he understood the Ukrainian word "treba" ("I have to"), and never hesitated to give honestly earned Ukrainian money for good Ukrainian causes. He believed in the things I was doing and trusted me. He liked our slogan, which one of our smart lads created as the decoding of the word "RUH" (MOVEMENT): Riatuite Ukrainu Hloptsi (Save Ukraine, Guys)!"





Yuriy Didenko: "In the 1990s, Vadaturskyy was mostly focused on the NIBULON development and supported me, and in the early 2000s, he became a more active movement member. There was even an idea to get Oleksiy Opanasovych into our government. I was already a People's Deputy of Ukraine and organized a meeting with the decision-makers responsible for the fate of the state. At first, it seemed that they misunderstood either my efforts or Vadaturskyy's. Over the years, I realized that the head of NIBULON only benefited from that as he was a born businessman, and he would have wasted his time as a civil servant."





Yuriy Didenko: "When the Russians attacked Ukraine, Vadaturskyy supported my idea of the People's Militia. He allocated funds for the militia's activities. His aid allowed us to set up checkpoints on the roads leading to the city, where representatives of the People's Militia, military personnel, and police were on duty on four BDRMs that were on the balance sheet of the People's Movement but were paid by NIBULON. Vadaturskyy used to say that if all the oligarchs acted as he did, Donetsk and Luhansk would never have been occupied. They wished to benefit from the unrest but lost everything. In 2014, he threw everything Russian into the trash. Language, culture, network, joint businesses, or drawn plans that never came true."





Valeriy Asadchev: "The first NIBULON elevators that appeared in Poltava region (Reshetylivka, 2006) caused a revolution in the minds of farmers, who saw the advantages of civilization finally available to them. My fears about counteractivity from the monopolists were not justified, still, another problem appeared, and that was envy. Some major Poltava farmers told me that they could also build modern elevator complexes. Such competition resulted in several elevator complexes constructed by local farmers (Karlivka, Kozelshchyna, Pyriatyn)."





Valeriy Asadchev: "It was a great and inspiring work in cooperation with a great and inspiring person. Our joint work with Oleksiy Opanasovych evolved into friendly relations. We solemnly opened the newly built facilities of NIBULON in Poltava region and laid the first bricks to start the construction of new ones. Oleksiy Opanasovych fell in love with Poltava region. He visited the famous Sorochyntsi Fair and always used Ukrainian designs for the openings of his facilities."



Valeriy Asadchev: "The construction proceeded at fast pace. In 2006–2010, we built seven modern elevator complexes with a capacity of up to one hundred thousand tons of grain each, including two port ones (Kremenchuk, Hradyzk) and in Reshetylivka, Romodan, Hlobyne, Skorokhodove, and Marianivka. Clearly, the driving force of this process was not the "nanny" but Oleksiy Opanasovych. He kept his word that he would make the region the base for the elevator construction project implementation. Modern NIBULON elevators became a kind of business card of Poltava region. These facilities not only comply with all the terms set for grain preservation but also provide modern services."





Mykola Gorbachov: "He was the first to conceive and implement a project for transporting millions of tons of grain along the Dnipro River. And it was an effective solution, not just for show. He understood the technical details in ways that even surprised the engineering departments of many companies. For example, he knew exactly how, where, and why to deepen parts of the Dnipro, and what specific equipment was required. He understood this and shared it with others. He wasn't the type to simply hire employees and pay them to carry out tasks without being personally involved. Vadaturskyy understood the subtleties and nuances of his work. He could simplify or improve processes so that people could work more efficiently."

Photo: Kremenchuk branch (top), Reshetylivka branch (bottom).





Petro Gadz: "I followed him as we walked together along the difficult agrarian path in Ukraine. He was slandered more than once, just like me. Throughout our careers, we were annually approached with offers to sell the business, both formally or informally. There were all kinds of threats and warnings. Strangely, the same happened regardless of the president. Yet, Oleksiy Opanasovych remained big-hearted: "I believe that one day, all those who offered or were interested in that will realize the impossibility of such actions in a civilized country."



Leonid Kozachenko: "He couldn't wait long for change. He wanted them now, and only now. Such potential as Oleksiy Opanasovych possessed in the country's agricultural sector was hard to find in anyone else. For him, there were no weekends, holidays, or vacations. Most importantly, it was the work he did and accomplished. Now, looking back in time, you can feel how eager he was to create. Creator! That was his Lord-given purpose. Sometimes he didn't even fully realize what he was doing. The Spirit of the Lord was guiding him."



Leonid Kozachenko: "I was amazed at how quickly he could strike a deal with the International Finance Corporation, persuading them to support him and provide the initial funds for building logistics centers. I was familiar with this organization, as its representatives had approached me on more than one occasion. And not only regarding matters related to NIBULON's operations. Right after the first tranche, they were so surprised that Mr. Vadaturskyy fulfilled his commitments; they trusted him and weren't afraid of any risks."



Viktor Yushchenko: "He is a true Hero for me and the Ukrainian people, and I am proud that I was the one who awarded him on behalf of the state. I recall talking with Oleksiy Opanasovych a few months before the full-scale war. We may not have met in person but we talked often. I then said: "Oleksiy Opanasovych, I listen to you, your timbre, tonality, and pronunciation. I believe you speak with a Western Ukrainian accent. Your language is so profound, correct, and melodious!" He answered: "The day I was awarded the Hero of Ukraine I spoke that foreign "tongue" for the last time. I devoted most of my life to mastering my native language." This great person was a many-sided man well aware of his national duties. That was our second to last conversation. Vadaturskyy talked to me as in confession, for which I am grateful."



Viktor Yushchenko: "We had some interesting debates with Oleksiy Opanasovych, which I found meaningful as an economist. He could envision logistics step by step and was always striving for optimization. His system has now become one of the best available in the grain sector."



Viktor Yushchenko: "The idea presented by my dear friend Oleksiy Vadaturskyy and NIBULON is an example of how people, despite their age, may have modern, interesting, and contemporary thoughts. This is what heroes should be like! He is a model and an example for others. Vadaturskyy is the Hero who has managed to introduce a super-efficient business model in such a demanding economic sector as grain export."



Viktor Yushchenko: "When there was a need to organize the grain market in Ukraine, namely, the export, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy with his NIBULON project was the first applicant. He managed to launch a relevant pilot project, which started with production as the key to success. Managers from Mykolaiv also successfully addressed the logistics issues. The grain sector is valuable as Ukraine, with its lands, may compete in the world market and be among the leaders. A few years passed, and time proved that Vadaturskyy was right when he gradually but insistently implemented the project as it made him a trusted global exporter of Ukrainian grain."

Photo: 2009, launch of NIBULON's first barge.



Bohdan Muzyka: "Just a few months after starting as a mechanical engineer at the Chyhyryn production branch, I took part in the construction of the terminal in Vitove and witnessed firsthand how everything the General Director had said was coming to life. And the specified construction timeline – three months – turned out to be completely realistic, becoming a true baptism by fire for many of us. At that time, it was Serhii Vasyliovych Besedin – a legendary figure and a true master of his craft – who was practically turning fantasy into reality on the construction site. The Vitove branch was officially opened on October 15, 2009, with President Viktor Yushchenko attending the ceremony."

Photo: 2009, Vitove.



Natalia Nahorna: "Some love people with words – Vadaturskyy loved them through action. And that's much harder. He made sure that Ukrainian money, honestly earned by his workers, was invested back into Ukrainian causes. That's exactly what he believed, and he went to great lengths, doing whatever it took."



Natalia Nahorna: "He truly had incredibly ambitious plans. He was an authoritarian dreamer: "Here's what I've dreamed up, and I don't care how – you just have to make it work!" An adventurer might admit the possibility of failure, but Vadaturskyy wouldn't be himself if something didn't work out. He put in every effort to make sure it did. And if it didn't, he pushed even harder. And made it happen! He opened grain terminals across the country and bought barges, which he called non-self-propelled vessels. He developed waterways, insisted on cleaning the rivers, and fought to restore Ukraine's shipping."



Viktor Slauta: "Oleksiy Opanasovych didn't have any nicknames. When people talked about him, they usually said "NIBULON" or simply "Vadaturskyy." They could and should be considered equivalent. His wisdom, knowledge, and even a certain reservedness were felt everywhere. Sometimes he would stop mid-sentence or leave a thought unfinished, and you had to figure it out yourself."



Oleksandra Kuzhel: "I was ready to support Oleksiy Opanasovych in any way I could. As I traveled to see him on his own "Raketa," I carried a strong belief that together we could make a difference. Unfortunately, not everything depended on me: there were no government officials responsible for decision-making who could think on a national scale and appreciate the vast economic potential of Vadaturskyy's ambitious projects to revive shipping and shipbuilding."



Bohdan Yehorov: "In 2012, the Academic Council unanimously elected Oleksiy Vadaturskyy as an Honorary Doctor of Science of our Odesa National University of Technology. If all leaders were like him, Ukraine would be among the most developed and wealthiest countries in the world. At NIBULON, the core moral essence of its leader remains: his spirit, his word, and his vision. They are unshakable; they inspire faith and hope for the future."



Bohdan Yehorov: "I traveled the world and saw how leading companies placed their laboratories within universities not just for show, but to promote themselves while also contributing to the training of top-tier specialists. We drew up a development plan for our Alma Mater together. Oleksiy Opanasovych took it all upon himself, without seeking any additional approvals from the relevant ministry. "As we plan to do everything on our own, we should count only on ourselves," he said. Two years later, we opened five laboratories. The amount of expenses is frightening, it's hundreds of thousands of US dollars. First, the premises were renovated, after which they were equipped with cutting-edge technology that met the most recent scientific and technical standards. For example, five multiplexers arrived aboard a chartered aircraft from the U.S. Oleksiy Opanasovych called me and said, "Bohdan, get them through customs and use them!" Only later did I learn that in 2012, General Electric – a major American conglomerate and the world's leading manufacturer of various types of equipment – had produced 55 such multiplexers under Vadaturskyy's patent. They were intended for American corporations and companies, ordered to meet U.S. needs – but five of them ended up coming to us. Our researchers spent two years integrating them into the educational process. Now, we use them in teaching, scientific research, and training programs."

Photo: Odesa, December 2012. Oleksiy Opanasovych and Raisa Mykhailivna Vadaturskyy in the familiar halls of the National University of Technology.



Heorhii (Yurii) Stankevych: "Over the years, NIBULON has consistently recruited specialists from our institute to work in the company and its branches. During the ceremonial opening, he gave a very engaging speech, and the students listened with special reverence as he shared stories about his life experiences, studies, trips with construction teams, and the teachers who helped guide him in life."



Heorhii (Yurii) Stankevych: "As graduates of the same school and institute, we both became recipients of State Prizes: first Oleksiy, who received the 2008 State Prize of Ukraine in Architecture for the design of the agricultural transshipment terminal for the NIBULON enterprise in Mykolaiv, and later I, was awarded the 2015 State Prize of Ukraine in Science and Technology for the work titled the System of Energy-Efficient Technologies for Grain Storage and Its Processing into Food and Feed Products."



Viktor Khobin: "We had the same basic education and knowledge that proved useful throughout our careers, so sometimes we understood each other without saying a word. Once I said: "You have introduced so many innovations, so much science into your work – you were and still are a trailblazer. Write a doctoral dissertation." He smiled and said, "I'm not interested in that; it would be a waste of time." He could have defended not just one, but two or three dissertations in different fields."



Heorhii (Yurii) Stankevych: "I am confident that the day will come when our alma mater will be named in honor of its most distinguished graduate, honorary Doctor of Science, and Hero of Ukraine, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy! Forever etched with a chisel! As a benchmark, as a model professional of the highest caliber and a Person who was and will remain the bread captain of Ukraine."



Volodymyr Groysman: "We all remember our image of Vadaturskyy. Undoubtedly, I see Oleksiy Opanasovych as an outstanding personality in national history and on the Ukrainian path. A man with a core. As a grandmaster, he not only kept up with the times but even was ahead. His wisdom and mindset allowed him to see decades into the future. This is the blessing our Lord grants only to the few chosen ones. Not only in business but in all other spheres of life. He was the chosen one. Let's face it, many people of his age become hostages of their previous experience. He took the best of the accumulated expertise to become an innovator, allowing him to pursue paths that most would overlook. But not he."



Volodymyr Groysman: "I visited Oleksiy Opanasovych at his enterprises several times, where we discussed the future and the projects that should become beneficial to the state, in his opinion. His ideas about the revival of shipping, river transport, seafaring, and brand-new logistics were impressive. Thus, he added a new and significant economic and business page in the history of Ukraine. NIBULON played a crucial role in the recovery of river freight and passenger shipping and shipbuilding."



Volodymyr Groysman: "He had never been a show-off person, still, he liked to present his achievements, and he performed great state affairs. He was not one of those who would polish their shoes to a shine in front but leave dirt and a perennial swamp at the back. Every responsible step of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy and NIBULON was backed up by profound, fundamental, serious, and coordinated teamwork."



Volodymyr Zhmur: "The floating crane of Project P-140, NIBULON MAX, is the longest vessel ever commissioned in the history of NIBULON Shipbuilding Yard. It marks an entirely new, higher level of the company's shipbuilding capabilities and stands as the longest "river-sea" class crane vessel under the Ukrainian flag built since Ukraine gained independence. The construction of the P-140 vessel, which has become the flagship of the company's existing fleet and undoubtedly the pride among all the shipyard's achievements, represents not only a completely new and significantly higher level of the company's shipbuilding capabilities but also the skill and professionalism of the shipbuilders – true craftsmen and workers who are building the modern fleet of Ukraine."



Volodymyr Zhmur: "When the P-140 NIBULON MAX was under construction, no matter how busy or demanding Oleksiy Opanasovych's workday was, by seven or eight in the evening, he would rush over to us. Every day, something new was born, and he couldn't bear to miss the birth of his firstborn – his brainchild! He watched as the metal came to life and turned into a vessel."



Vitaliy Skotsyk: "Some people didn't like his character, an others tried to take away part of his business. But how much he was loved and respected by global institutions! He was the first to receive credit facilities from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Large credit facilities, even very large. For him, doors and opportunities opened at the World Bank, and for many years, he remained a national symbol of trust and integrity. In the history of Ukrainian business, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy has become an iconic figure. He became a genius in his lifetime – the conscience of the nation, a guardian of the Ukrainian word of honor and dignity. This story has to be told so that everyone knows how he started, from what and under what conditions he built his vast private business despite all the extremely difficult, epochal challenges and warnings. His example and biography should be the basis for textbooks. the subject of TV series, and a source of pride and inspiration. He had a life story that could fill the biographies of dozens like him."



Petro Poroshenko: "I met Oleksiy Opanasovych many times and knew him well as a strong-spirited man with incredible energy and diligence. And his profession was the most peaceful of all – a grain grower. The most important thing for him was that Ukraine would not only have enough bread for itself but also feed the world as a true granary."



Petro Poroshenko: "It is extremely important that we are commissioning the elevator plant and launching the sea tugboat that also supports this infrastructure. We are participating in the laying of two new vessels. This will increase Ukraine's export capacity and confirm the quality of Ukrainian shipbuilding."



Petro Poroshenko: "NIBULON has always been a symbol of the revival of the shipbuilding industry in Ukraine, and Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, Hero of Ukraine and the company's director, is a person who, under extremely difficult conditions, ensures and accelerates the development of Ukraine's economy, radically changes business approaches, creates jobs, builds a huge export potential for Ukraine, and modernizes infrastructure."



Liudmyla Nazarova: "Oleksiy Opanasovych always listened to others' opinions, and I can't recall a single time when he just listened and then made the final decision on his own. He never said, "This is how it will be, and only this way!" Or: "We're doing it the way I said!" He truly commanded an immense amount of data and knew the details so thoroughly that it was hard to find anyone his equal. He could easily multiply and divide numbers in his head. He was so versatile and exceptionally developed, with a unique memory – a true prodigy of his kind."





Svitlana Shulha: "A stranger might have thought that Vadaturskyy was a fairy-tale dreamer, a romantic. Not much time passed, and he became a realist who never stopped halfway, facing nothing and no one when he felt and knew he was right. He could see ahead and lived with the taste of anticipation of success. It's all about the aftertaste, in everything. It's all about what you feel afterwards. After the conversation, after the look, after the implementation of what was planned. Now, it's hard to imagine the blissful 'afters' that God allowed him to experience on his earthly journey. 82 vessels built (something unimaginable! Only 18 more to fulfill his dream), 50 enterprises and subdivisions (including subsidiaries) across 13 regions of Ukraine!"





Zhanna Maksymenko-Dovhych: "It was thanks to NIBULON that commercial river navigation in Ukraine, along with river tourism routes, began to see a systematic revival. Of course, not without a touch of self-interest, as with any big business. It should also be remembered that it was NIBULON's barges that carried the legendary Kherson watermelons up the Dnipro to Kyiv – and those barges weren't awaited like bread, but like a long-lost song, something tender and nostalgic that transported many straight back to their childhood."



Yevhen Deich: "Oleksiy Vadaturskyy is an Epoch in the history of Mykolaiv. Almost every one of half a million city residents knew him, respected and paid heed to him. For years, he exemplified that it was possible to accomplish a great deal, even if it seemed impossible to most. He loved to prove that not only to himself but to see his team proud after they had reached a new ambitious goal, when almost no one believed that was possible."



Yevhen Deich: "He was like an icebreaker that moved forward not due to but despite, and was not looking for a way but laid it. To his last breath, he devoted himself selflessly to the cause of his life, NIBULON, and united thousands of people to implement the most ambitious ideas and tasks. Numerous challenges only tempered him to achieve the highest performance and push back the limits. Therefore, our descendants will remember Oleksiy Vadaturskyy for his enormous contribution to the Ukrainian economy and as a Titan of the agricultural sector, a Hero of Ukraine."



Ivan Kyrylenko: "We still have the duty to duly appreciate his merits and contributions: who he was for Ukraine, for Mykolaiv region, for the agricultural sector, and, perhaps sounding grandiose, for the global economy, into which we are already integrated at a molecular level."



Serhii Besedin: “Oleksiy Vadaturskyy and his NIBULON launched development not of their integrated infrastructure but of Ukraine as a whole. Ukrainians were constructing our facilities not only by their hands but also by their minds and hearts. We were pioneers: we challenged ourselves, gained experience, introduced cutting-edge technologies, and created jobs and ultimately new production culture. Our transshipment terminal is a miracle comprised of the largest hemispherical structures in Europe and the largest grain storage capacities in the world.”



Serhii Besedin: "Our efforts were not in vain, and we were duly praised by the state. In June 2008, the President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko awarded the company's team headed by Oleksiy Vadaturskyy with the State Prize of Ukraine in the Field of Architecture by the Presidential Decree "On Awarding State Prizes of Ukraine in the Field of Architecture." It was a challenge of time and construction technologies. We learned a lot. It was quite an interesting time."



Serhii Besedin: "Having built the terminal, we switched to linear elevators. At first, we built land elevators at Reshetylivka and Smotrych. After a transshipment terminal, we built river terminals in Vitove, Kremenchuk, Pereiaslav-Khmelnytskyi, Voznesensk, and Nova Odesa. The activity was new to us, but we managed to build new berths and develop shipbuilding at the same time."

Photo: Vitove branch.



Pereiaslavska branch.



Smotrych branch.



Novoodeska branch.



Skorokhodivska branch.



Tetiana Dmytriieva: "Oleksiy Opanasovych was a talented leader and a motivated businessman who never gave up and implemented whatever he planned. In Ukraine and abroad, they knew and described him as a socially responsible leader, a determined and strong-willed person, a professional with a capital letter, and a patron who helps by deed, not by word."



Tetiana Dmytriieva: "He went through a rather complicated path to establish the company and ensured it reached the European level, unattainable for many. He was smart, wise, honest, with a kind and sincere look, and self-confident. He never rested upon the laurels. Oleksiy Opanasovych was a true patriot of Ukraine and our Mykolaiv. Once, he launched a large-scale investment program to restore sea and river transport, as well as cargo transportation along the Southern Buh and Dnipro rivers, the main shipping arteries of Ukraine."





Andriy Hordieiev: "Vadaturskyy faced a challenge with his cargo barge going down the Dnipro and returning empty. He collected grain from all over Ukraine, and NIBULON consistently used river transport to deliver agricultural products to the sea. That's when we came up with the idea of transporting watermelons, a product his vessels had never carried before. Back then, they called us dreamers. However, we didn't just promise but did it. The entire civilized world knows that where rivers exist, failing to utilize river transport is a missed opportunity. It's almost impossible for me to imagine my life, or Ukraine, Kherson region, Mykolaiv region, or Zaporizhzhia region without him. There are few people of such scale in the country. He was often harassed, and he had moments of despair, but he never gave up. Each morning, he would rise as though nothing had happened and say, "Forget them... Let's push through and get our work done!"





Andriy Hordieiev: "Oleksiy Opanasovych was characterized by exceptional publicity, he never recognized any backroom deals, no "grey deals" and "kickback," no "sharing boards"! Everything was done openly, through taxes. No cash, everything was transparent. NIBULON was one of the exemplary companies in Ukraine, and I witnessed this firsthand on more than one occasion. Those who work in the shadows always fear the light, but Vadaturskyy radiated transparency and integrity. Since the beginning of the war in 2014 against the Russians, Oleksiy Opanasovych was a courageous leader who was not afraid to invest in Kherson region. His example inspired others, and as a result, we raised over USD 3 billion in investment funds to the region."





Oleksii Pavlenko: "No amount of fame, wealth, the highest titles, or public recognition could ever spoil Vadaturskyy. He never trampled over others, never pushed, took revenge, flattered or pleased anyone, or paid bribes – he simply walked his path with confidence. With the stride of a pioneering trailblazer and a winner. Moreover, Oleksiy Opanasovych was always physically fit. I only started taking sports seriously after leaving the ministry – as a cross-continental swimmer, I swam the Bosphorus twice (in 2018 and 2020), participated in long-distance swims like Oceanman in Greece, Cyprus, and Italy (five kilometers), and ran in major international marathons in Berlin and Chicago. I had the constant support of Vadaturskyy, who was deeply committed to health and greatly enjoyed discussing wellness-related topics. He was a true professional, paying attention to the smallest details. He often expressed regret over wasted time, once saying, "How long are we going to listen to your blah-blah-blah? How long will you keep promising and doing nothing?" He controlled an enormous number of processes and knew all the details, down to the finest micromanagement. How did he manage all of this?"



Mykola Gorbachov: "On the eve of February 24, 2022, we held a grain congress where Oleksiy Opanasovych was the main speaker. I sat in the audience, thinking to myself: "People around the world pay a lot of money to listen to this brilliant man. And yet, here he is, speaking to Ukrainians with a sparkle in his eyes – open, businesslike, and sincere. He believed that the more people follow this path, the more the critical mass, and the more chances we have to achieve much more. There were moments when it seemed he would say something that would move him deeply, almost to tears... Vadaturskyy was immensely proud of his team and the company's accomplishments, as they worked selflessly and shared his values, business philosophy, and approach to work."



Mykola Gorbachov: "We should give credit to Oleksiy Opanasovych, NIBULON was one of the founders of the Ukrainian Grain Association, and the company got the certificate number one. Vadaturskyy once said, "I will pay the membership fees, and we should unite!"



Roman Vashchuk: "Vadaturskyy had a unique gift of a comprehensive and systematic approach to achieving his goals. Some businesses grow crops, others – transport and manufacture goods. Oleksiy Opanasovych built a successful logistical and agricultural model involving the fleet and shipbuilding capabilities. He was thinking about actions to be taken to defend Ukraine in the field of shipbuilding. He managed to turn all his interests into large-scale operations. The things I saw were impressive, everything was implemented on a grand scale!"





Oleksandr Pysaruk: "Every year, filled out various surveys, and I always placed the businessman Oleksiy Vadaturskyy at the very top. Our Raiffeisen Bank had been the captain steering NIBULON's economic growth for many years. There was a sense of mission in Vadaturskyy – he understood that the world was changing. That he, too, needed to evolve to stay competitive. He kept pace with the time – or even stayed ahead of it. He wasn't a banker, but he had a solid understanding of banks and banking."



Yurii Sydorenko: "I often wondered how he managed to be everywhere and succeed at everything." How does he withstand such intense pressures? He seemed to be made of steel because he could do anything. Oleksiy Opanasovych carried faith in his heart – there were always icons on his desk and walls, and the windows of his office looked out on the bell tower of Mykolaiv's central cathedral."



Yevhen Cherniak: "After the seminar, everyone who wanted could take commemorative photos with the Forbes list representatives. And here, Oleksiy Opanasovych was the undisputed leader. He gave time to everyone, refused no one, and smiled happily in every photo. When it was all over, he thanked the organizers; he truly felt not only accepted but also respected and loved. It's strange that he had any doubts about that. He didn't switch to Russian; he spoke only in his native language. He only asked me whether I knew and understood Ukrainian well. Of course – I studied at a Ukrainian specialized boarding school in Zaporizhzhia. By the way, among those on the Forbes list, Vadaturskyy was one of the few who spoke exclusively Ukrainian. And not just because he was a Hero of Ukraine – he was truly a son of his land. And he was the kind of person who helped shape the future of the country. And without the language, there can be no such person. And he understood this well."



Yevhen Cherniak: "When the Big Money program with the General Director of NIBULON was released, the video 'Oleksiy Vadaturskyy. How to create a business against all odds. The rules of a billionaire's life" gained fifteen hundred comments and one and a half million views in quite a short time! Ukraine was eager to know everything or almost everything about its hero. Even Oleksiy Opanasovych honestly admitted that he had not expected such popularity."





Andrii Pavlushyn: "Oleksiy Opanasovych was an Honored Worker of Agriculture of Ukraine, an Honored Builder, and an Honored Shipbuilder. He celebrated all those special days that meant a lot to him. He was multifaceted and managed to be everywhere at once. We spent a lot of time talking, meeting in person, and speaking over the phone. My memory holds many meaningful, unforgettable moments – things I deeply regret losing but can never get back. Much has been done and said – but also much left unsaid when it mattered most."



Leonid Kozachenko: "In shipbuilding, he managed to preserve the team of specialists who had previously worked in Mykolaiv. He actively supported and promoted educational institutions that trained specialists for this vital sector of the national economy."



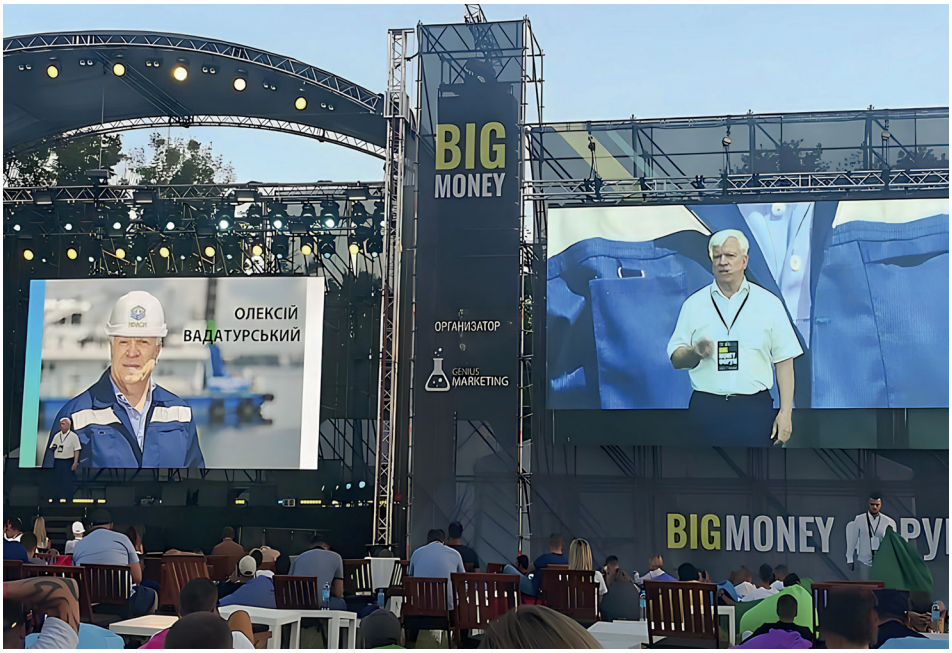
Taras Shepel: "What stood out to me most was Oleksiy Vadaturskyy's persistence. Even with us, the lawyers, he could spend half a day calmly waiting, negotiating, and looking for ways to solve certain issues. He didn't yet have the public and social influence he would gain later, so it was quite difficult for him to get meetings with ministers and other high-ranking officials. Because of his honesty, openness, directness, his romanticism and dreaminess – or at least what they perceived as such – they didn't quite take him seriously. At the time, other businessmen and oligarchs were in the spotlight – circles he didn't belong to. But he pursued his goals with polite determination and quiet persistence. He kept hammering away at his rock."



Svitlana Bocharova: "His love for the team was immeasurable! He worried about everyone, helped as much as possible, and never refused anyone. It hurt him when someone decided to quit. He then got worried and said: "Am I such a bad person that my employees are leaving me?" His dream was a monolith – a unified team he had built from the ground up, one that remained loyal for decades to the cause he had founded."



Yevhen Cherniak: "Whenever I read the reviews, both early and recent, a lump always gets stuck in my throat – I can't hold back my emotions and tears. How could it be any different when you come across deeply heartfelt and painful words from viewers' comments like: "I consider this episode the best for the Ukrainian audience! An exceptionally intelligent person!" "So powerful and impactful!" Titan. He moves forward like an atomic icebreaker, clearing everything in his path. Fantastic motivation. An extraordinary example. He did more for the country than any president," "The best adaptation of Atlas Shrugged set in Ukrainian reality," "It turns out an outstanding person lived right next door – someone you could be proud of. These are the kind of people who streets in cities should be named after, and who should be studied in Ukrainian history lessons," "One of the most heartfelt meetings. Such a person is a treasure!" "I was completely captivated; this isn't even about business – it's about values, convictions, and spiritual strength. Great respect!" "This is the kind of president we need: honest, knowledgeable, the best qualities all in one person. And most importantly – humility..." "This is the only Big Money report that made me shed a tear..." "I worked on the NIBULON sites. A man of his word!" "It's so heartening that such people are not ashamed to speak Ukrainian!" "How deeply he loved his land and respected every worker," "I'm proud to have lived in the same era as such a person. Thank you, Oleksiy Opanasovych!"



Yevhen Cherniak: "We have a tradition: after filming and editing the program, we don't show it to anyone beforehand and don't seek any approvals. It was truly heartwarming to see how much Oleksiy Opanasovych appreciated and rightly valued our work. On his page, he shared several reposts and wrote: "Those were two unforgettable days of my life. Thank you to the people of Mykolaiv for their award and recognition. I'm grateful to the organizers and speakers of Big Money for the wonderful event and inspiring presentations. Thank you to all the guests. I don't know who was the greater motivator yesterday: me for you, or you for me. Events like these, which offer the chance to share my experience with the next generation, definitely motivate me toward new victories and achievements. You have immense potential – believe in yourselves and never give up!"





Serhii Lungu: "We could set off for the capital even at two or three in the morning if the situation called for it. We'd travel from Mykolaiv through Voznesensk, Yuzhnoukrainsk, and Pervomaisk before joining the Odesa-Kyiv highway. Opanasovych loved speed and never once reprimanded me. If time was tight and conditions allowed, the speedometer would even hit 250 kilometers per hour. He remained calm throughout. Now I think, one of us must have been blessed by the Lord – or maybe even both. After all, we never found ourselves in any serious or dangerous accidents. And not once did our "iron steed," that is, German engineering, let us down. Opanasovych didn't divide all cars into two classes – Mercedes and everything else. But he did trust the Germans – they stood for reliability and safety. For shorter trips, mostly around Mykolaiv or nearby, we'd switch to a white Škoda Superb. And no one would've guessed that the person riding in that car was on the Forbes list. He never cared about that – it was comfortable and economical, and that's what mattered. And that was that!"



Viktor Slauta: "To me, Vadaturskyy was like litmus paper – something we all studied in chemistry class. He was unique even in that. There were heads of top state institutions whom he visited, as people say, only twice: the first and the last time! He once confided in me: "When a new head is appointed in Kyiv to a vital position in the agro-industrial complex or to lead a ministry, I make a point of requesting a meeting with each one." I come, observe, and listen carefully. We share a few thoughts. When I see and hear that someone is "empty," that meeting with them is a waste of time, I don't spend another minute on them."



Oleksandr Pysaruk: "When I was serving as Chairman of the Management Board of ING Bank in Ukraine, Oleksiy Opanasovych often invited me to Mykolaiv, to his company. I responded with great pleasure. I visited his modern terminal and elevator. And with what love he showed everything and carefully chose his words to accurately explain all the details. Anyone who has seen and heard something like that even once is left with vivid impressions and unforgettable emotions for a lifetime."



Andrii Pavlushyn: "That was his life motto – "Never give up!" – hanging on the wall of our office, right alongside the famous quotes of Einstein and Churchill. Every day, I see a beautiful NIBULON towel that Oleksiy Opanasovych gave me as a gift. It is my keepsake. It seems that wealth brings its hardships, and many rich people are doomed to loneliness. Especially when you reach such heights. You hardly find understanding with anyone – everyone acts like it just fell from the sky. Hardly anyone realizes just how much effort it took to accomplish all this through immense, tireless work."



Natalia Nahorna: "I remember his long legal battle with the leadership of the Mykolaiv Port. Vadaturskyy insisted that Preventor-class vessels must enter the port, and if that wasn't possible, the problem lay with the port itself and not with the private terminals. I didn't even go home to celebrate New Year, because the NIBULON leader got what he wanted – I was there capturing this historic moment."



Oleksandr Pysaruk: "He wasn't the kind of person to complain, no matter what he had been through. It's strange how, in our country, people who have done and continue to do so much for the state are constantly met with obstacles and setbacks. After all Oleksiy Opanasovych did for Ukraine, why not help him achieve even more? Yet causing harm was something they always managed to do, always and everywhere. Especially government institutions. It must be acknowledged that despite everything, our Ukrainian business is successful. Only God knows how Vadaturskyy managed to get everything done on time despite such pressure."



Yuriy Sydorenko: "Thank God we had such a wise person, from whom thousands, even millions, will always learn the experience of a successful Ukrainian. They will be fllled with it. "Never give up!" – this slogan grew sharper during the war. It's the number one motto for every soldier, for every defender. Everyone must go through difficult trials, survive, and remain alive – remain human."



Liudmyla Mekheda: "I always believed his stars were aligned for him to live forever. He'd just been on the first floor – whoosh – and in a few seconds, he was already on the fifth. Not every young man had as much energy as he did. He was the kind of person who could overcome anything and live up to a hundred years. When he spoke with young people, you couldn't help but listen. He drew energy from them, and gave it back in return. You couldn't even call him a grandfather in real life – he was young, handsome, fit, and lived fully in the moment. And what a bright mind he had! He never allowed himself to relax; he was always working on improving himself. He thought things through and calculated carefully. One time he asked me, "How much did you get?" I looked through my accounting records and answered. His number was much lower. He could calculate not only each operation but several of them within seconds. He had countless essential figures at his command – his mind held them all. Until his very last breath."



Leonid Kazachenko: "For Mykolaiv, the figure of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy is not only surrounded by legend but is also marked by real achievements – things that wouldn't have happened without him. In his homeland, he was like a golden bird, and thank the Lord that this recognition came to him. Generous, just, and kind-hearted. Heavenly Father generously gifted him not only with the talent to multiply good on earth but also with virtues that, sadly, are becoming increasingly rare today. Or are they disappearing altogether..."





Liliia Nikitina (Perebyinis): "He could calculate a hundred, even two hundred steps ahead – always thinking how to keep the company running, thriving, and reaching new heights. But he couldn't foresee his own fate..."



Viacheslav Sokolov: "His life's credo – as a true self-made man – was tireless work for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. And work so worthy that even during his lifetime, vessels, barges, and the finest varieties of wheat deserved to bear his name..."



Olha Babanina: "Oleksiy Opanasovych was always patriot. When telling Europeans about his company, he did that with special warmth and sparkles in his eyes, as he was talking about his native Ukraine. He always stood for its interests. He popularized our native land globally. They always welcomed us at the top level as Vadaturskyy and his company had an excellent long-term credit history and a history of cooperation with European banks, thus, their doors were always opened for us."



Volodymyr Zhmur: "Oleksiy Opanasovych held direct talks with every supplier, negotiating and agreeing on the equipment configuration. Even when we were tempted to choose something cheaper, he would say, "No, it's better to pay more here and get higher-quality and more functional equipment that will last longer. Who knows what tomorrow will bring or what it holds in store?" And he was right, as always."



Yevhen Cherniak: "I constantly felt an invisible warmth in it, a kind of magnetic energy of trust. We often spoke on the telephone. It was impressive that he was up to date with all the latest global trends. His mind processed a huge amount of information. There was nothing surprising about it, as all the departments at NIBULON worked in harmony – highly skilled experts operated professionally in every area of the company. I noticed what a great team he had – no wonder, as he was a successful entrepreneur. Vadaturskyy was a world-class businessman – that's who he was, and that was the key to his success. He was physically in Mykolaiv, but he had all the numbers and data needed to make quick and well-considered decisions. That's why NIBULON always thrived."





Yevhen Cherniak: "I will never forget those moments when we walked through Vadaturskyy's enterprise – NIBULON Shipbuilding Yard. It is located in the enclosed waters of the Southern Buh River, and nearly every month, a new vessel is launched from the shipyard slipway. As we were walking with the camera, Oleksiy Opanasovych was greeted by his employees, and he returned every smile with one of his own. Of those he met along the way, he asked personal questions like: "How's your son?" "How's your brother doing?" "Did you manage to find the medicine you needed? Do you need my help?" I understood perfectly well that this wasn't staged, not some script for guests – it wasn't done for my sake at all. Everything was genuine, because that's who he truly was – Oleksiy Vadaturskyy. What mattered most to him wasn't the camera or the filming – it was life and people."



Gilles Mettetal: "When I first met Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, Ukraine was barely self-sufficient in grain production and imported all of its meat. I worked at the EBRD in the agribusiness sector and was convinced that Ukraine's agricultural potential was largely untapped. I heard about him and his son. I was told that they revived river transport and developed an excellent network of river and land-based grain silos, as well as transshipment terminals for grain export from the country. It was difficult to meet them, but I finally had the chance to get to know them. I understand that Mr. Vadaturskyy was more than just an entrepreneur. He was a man of vision, determined to restore his country as the breadbasket of the world and to contribute to global food security."





Gilles Mettetal: "Some called Oleksiy an oligarch. In my opinion, he was the complete opposite. He lived a simple life. He rarely took vacations. Every morning, he went to the office. His car was an old Mercedes, with over a million kilometers on the odometer! All the profits generated by his company were reinvested. As far as I know, he never took any dividends. I traveled with him several times. He was willing to travel economy class and stayed in mid-range business hotels. He always asked for an iron to press his shirt and look impeccable... Something I learned to do on my own! No signs of luxury in his life. For him, family was the most important – his wife and, of course, his son."



Olha Babanina: "Oleksiy Opanasovych was a very forward-looking person, he had a strategy for many years ahead given that he believed in logistics and its development on the Dnipro River. The said required additional investments. We had to raise funds and attract huge credit facilities to construct elevators, a river fleet, a terminal in Mykolaiv, and floating cranes."



Olha Babanina: "From the very first days of working at NIBULON, I was responsible for investment and credit projects. When I took the position, there were only two banks in Ukraine – later, the number grew to seventeen. For the period, we attracted five international financial organizations: EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development), IFC (International Finance Corporation, one of the five institutions of the World Bank Group), EIB (European Investment Bank, currently, 27 EU countries are its shareholders), FMO (Dutch Entrepreneurial Development Bank, one of the largest private sector development banks in the world), and DEG (global financial company and the largest banking concern). Before the war, NIBULON loan portfolio included credits granted by 35 banks. Apart from Ukrainian banks and IFOs, there were also European institutions."



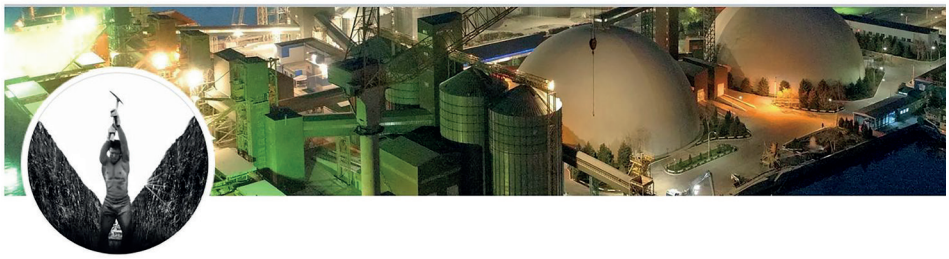
Yuriy Didenko: "In the central Ukrainian church of Mykolaiv, there is an iconostasis of amazing workmanship sponsored by Oleksiy Opanasovych. He never refused Ukrainian money for Ukrainians to implement Ukrainian matters. He did it without extra pride or advertising, almost secretly. Let your good deeds be a secret."



Svitlana Shulha: "He didn't worry about himself but about the work he was doing. He told me how he envisioned the day when our beloved Dnipro River would be navigable once again. Sometimes I was even surprised that he cared more about that than the state itself. He had grand plans, and with them came equally significant challenges."



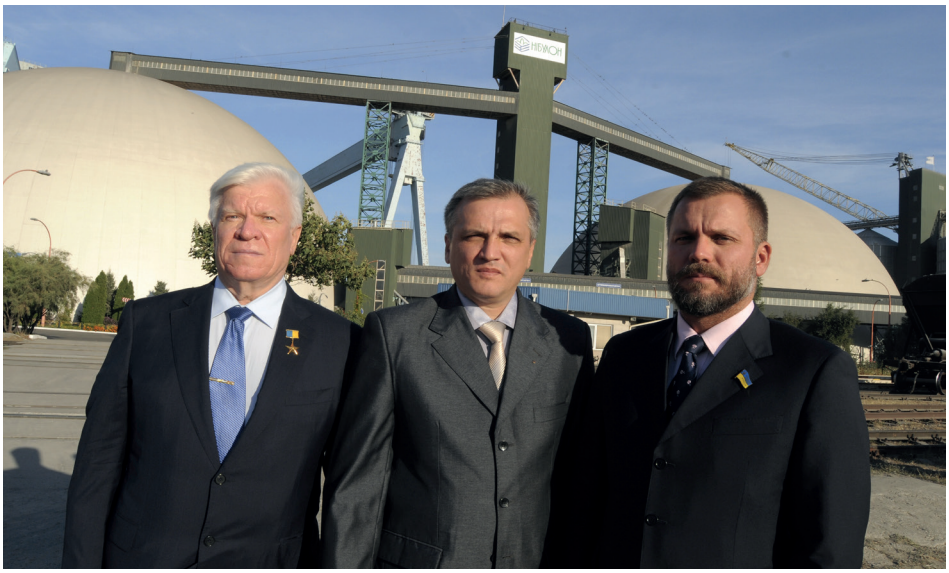
Oleksandra Kuzhel: "Vadaturskyy did everything not to take, but to change and give more. Yes, he also wanted to live well, but not in a poor country. Not in a ruined land, not where people suffer. He always wanted to change Ukraine for the better."



Олексій Вадатурський

Засновник і ген. директор «Нібулон», Герой України, лауреат Держпремії України в галузі архітектури

Olha Babanina: "Oleksiy Opanasovych learned how to use Facebook (he administered his page), he wrote on Viber, WhatsApp, and Telegram... I used to visit Kyiv with him. When we were driving to the capital, his phone would turn hot red. He was either talking to someone or reading something. If no one wrote him, he wrote to someone. If no one wrote him, he wrote to someone. There was always someone asking him to sign, approve, re-approve, ask a question, or answer a question. He worked on weekends, and sometimes even held operations meetings on Sundays. His phone number has not changed for decades, since mobile communication appeared. He always picked up, even if it was a landlord asking for UAH 1,000 as something had happened. He solved even such problems. For a businessman of such a scale as Vadaturskyy, it was clearly a waste of time. Still, he answered everyone. Tens of thousands of people knew his phone number! It's not surprising as there were only 30 thousand landlords at different periods of company operations."



Andriy Volyk: "Oleksiy Opanasovych was a man of his word and always honored his promises. He could never understand how someone could take what wasn't theirs and never give it back. Despite the significant financial loss, he knew he had to move forward. That was a time of regional tensions, and the threat of war with the Russians was palpable. You could sense that trouble was looming, that the Russians weren't just our adversaries, but something far worse – they would kill us all. Although I wasn't an eyewitness, I was told that back in 1999, the Russians set Oleksiy Opanasovych up, and he vowed never to do business or cooperate with them again."



Andriy Volyk: "Raisa Mykhailivna was always there, as if she were married to a military man. She was supportive and had the right words to say. She took care of all the landscaping at the plant, in the terminal, and in the canteens She was a loyal life companion, ensuring a strong and reliable support system."



Oleksandra Kuzhel: "Like all strong, steadfast, and genuine people, he was not "convenient." For no government, for no official. Probably not even for himself."



Volodymyr Groysman: "Oleksiy Opanasovych was a systemic leader, although they got enough of his blood and nerves. Therefore, we were like-minded on those issues. We fought against useless and senseless Soviet and post-Soviet regulations that were hotbeds of corruption. We had the same vision and were on the same side."



Petro Gadz: "He had a finger on the pulse of the times and knew that the agricultural sector, as the driving force behind Ukraine's economic development and the future of the state, needed large agricultural holdings. He believed that only such companies could introduce advanced technologies and modern equipment, as well as create jobs in Ukraine. He was the first to make his business 100% legal. NIBULON never bought grain for cash."



Andriy Volyk: "People like Oleksiy Opanasovych are born once every 100 years. The Lord sends them where they are needed the most. Those who had the privilege of communicating and working alongside such a leader, who will serve as an example for several generations of Ukrainians, are truly the luckiest."



Mykola Solskyi: "Oleksiy Opanasovych was known not only within the business community but was also recognized and respected by ordinary Ukrainians. As a successful entrepreneur, a talented manager, and a simple, down-to-earth man. He was a man of action and a man of honor. Someone you could trust to go into business with and confidently build a partnership. Talking to him was easy – his advice always came naturally and carried real value."



Serhii Besedin: "We built about 30 elevators. Oleksiy Opanasovych could ask to set the stage for the construction in a certain area. I stood there thinking how to do that. Having considered the options, I knew that there we could drive piles, there – dig a gallery, and there – start a net or pour concrete. Somehow it all fit together as Oleksiy Opanasovych saw it. He never took by fear. Still, I can't claim no one was afraid of him. Firstly, we all felt a huge responsibility."



Serhii Besedin: "Oleksiy Opanasovych was aware of all the novelties, new developments in construction. He traveled abroad to gain the experience, and our technologists traveled to Germany and the USA. We were one of the first in Ukraine to start building metal containers. There was nothing like that before, they mainly operated floor warehouses. Still, metal containers are an American technology introduced back in the 1950s. They were first used in ports, and then – on linear elevators. Vadaturskyy saw how grain was transported on the Mississippi, and adopted that experience. He said, "They have many barges transporting grain by water, why do we need vehicles damaging the roads?" That was how Oleksiy Vadaturskyy's era of shipbuilding began. We, the building companies, took an active part in that."





Andrii Pavlushyn: "This man never dreamed of Miami, Monaco, or yachts – he felt best at home in his native Ukraine, in Mykolaiv. And the greatest luxury for him was the vessels he built with his own hands. Vessels that carried grain along the Dnipro and Southern Buh rivers. And how did they deliver watermelons to Kyiv? Some mocked it, and now we realize how much we miss it."



Andrii Pavlushyn: "And you just wanted to help him in any way you could. What was most satisfying was that NIBULON is made in Ukraine! He had Ukrainian hands and minds working on his native land for Ukrainian causes. His story is one of mutual support among their own. We usually invest much into American or German tractors, and French, Italian, or German cars. But deals with NIBULON – that's Ukrainian! Barges and tugboats proudly stamped "Made in Ukraine"! He was proud of it to the point of pain, to the point of tears. It was what drove Vadaturskyy, and me too".



Andrii Pavlushyn: "At one point, there was an opportunity to discuss NIBULON and its leader with Yevhen Cherniak, the host of the YouTube channel Big Money. First, he recorded an episode with me, and then with Oleksiy Opanasovych. When the Big Money seminar was held at VDNG in Kyiv, where many Forbes-listed representatives were invited, and Vadaturskyy took the stage, the audience stood up and applauded the legend for five minutes! He had just stepped out, without saying a single word! Everyone knew about him and eagerly waited for him; every word he spoke was like gold. What pleased him the most was seeing so many young people, in whom he saw the future of the country. Every word touched the hearts of the youth, resonated deeply, and settled forever in their grateful memory. Everyone knew how busy this person was, yet he stood there face to face with them. He spoke as if in confession, saying exactly what they wanted to hear. He was sincere, as always. That's how Vadaturskyy came, saw, and conquered!"



Halyna Demianova: "The Vadaturskyy family invited me to every event organized by NIBULON. Raia could not imagine me not being there. My Lord, the things he did and constructed that was something unrealistic! Something incredible, America in Mykolaiv, our hometown! Each new object was impressive; it seemed he could not do anything better. And yet – he did even better!"



Halyna Demianova: "He was her only and faithful love. She didn't just love her Oleksiy, she worshiped him. He was her idol. She protected him from evil. She was a real Angel. She prayed and worried for him. Raisa cooked tasty dishes, all clothing was ironed, all pleated seams were, and the shirts were snow-white. They spent most of their lives together, and they felt comfortable together. They never got bored with each other and found ways to introduce even more love, affection, and loyalty."



Oleksandr Demianov: "I have always seen Oleksiy Opanasovych not only as the head of NIBULON, a businessman from the cover of Forbes magazine, and a stranger, but as a friend of my family, my parents, and mine. He never refused to help the Mykolaiv Hospital of Emergency Medical Care and gave more than other patrons. That unutterable and awful tragedy cut short a crucial stage of my life. It became history along with Oleksiy Opanasovych."



Oleksandr Demianov: "He never accepted that something could be neglected. He understood the chaos of the war, but managed to bring some order to it, which he was used to at NIBULON." This encouraged our team to face the war as if he had done. In my office, next to the icons given by grateful patients, I can see a portrait of Oleksiy Opanasovych from a distance. There are two icons there that were left by relatives of patients who had died as a way of saying thank you, they'd seen what we did for their relatives. My attitude to Vadaturskyy is precisely in this gesture."



Bohdan Muzyka: "He was the longtime mascot of our plant, its heart – it was said that he held the keys to the whole plant. Every time we talked, Vadaturskyy paid close attention to details. He told me that there's no such thing as small tasks. Whatever you take on, you have to see it through to the end. And in every single task, there are no small details. Because any one of them can turn into a big problem if it's not dealt with early on. Those were the lessons he kept giving me, a young specialist."



Bohdan Muzyka: "On November 30, 2021, I signed a contract on behalf of our NIBULON Shipbuilding Yard with the French company OCEA for the construction of five high-speed patrol boats for the border guard. The plan was to build all the vessels as part of the government project aimed at strengthening Ukraine's maritime security and border protection system. Under the terms of the intergovernmental agreement, we were to build five boats using French technology, while the French company OCEA would construct the remaining fifteen. The total cost of the project was €136.5 million."



Oleksandr Purkha: "It was encouraging that many talented young people worked and continue to work for the company, and Vadaturskyy constantly supported them in all their aspirations. Vadaturskyy also united the young company team into a solid, cohesive unit. To him, everyone was like family, and together they formed a single family known worldwide today as NIBULON."



Vitaliy Skotsyk: "Nowadays, some marketing schools speak of Ukrainian brands as national pride, yet know nothing of their history or origins. And at major meetings discussing investment projects launched in Ukraine, the very first name in the agricultural sector must be NIBULON. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was among the pioneers, forging a path – though thorny, yet the only right one – that his successors continue to follow. He was a businessman with a European and global mindset, a vision far ahead of his time."



Leonid Kozachenko: "When I served as Ukraine's Vice Prime Minister for Agrarian Affairs, I understood that a person like Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was truly worth investing my time in. He was always full of ideas. He was always focused and purposeful. What took others up to five years to achieve, he managed to accomplish in just three. He worked by the principle: it's too late to live tomorrow."



Svitlana Shulha: "Oleksiy was one of those whose greatness is not easily grasped or fully understood at once. Yet he remained humble until his very last day on earth."



Liliia Nikitina (Perebyinis): "It seemed there was a computer in his mind, and that he was like a robot! He possessed a phenomenal memory and could do all the calculations in just three seconds. When you see a person before you who comes up with unimaginable ideas and makes the most unexpected, yet profoundly far-sighted decisions, it draws you in and fascinates you even more. The boss knew all our employees by name and was even well acquainted with their family members. What problems or troubles do they have, and what relationships do they have in their families? He was never indifferent to this. I remember when Oleksiy Opanasovych announced that we all need to tighten our belts and build a grain terminal in Mykolaiv – because without a port, we simply wouldn't have a future. When the now-famous silos appeared at the terminal, I asked him, "So, what's next?" He led me inside and said, "Well, go ahead – shout here." I shouted at the top of my lungs, "Hooray! Glory to NIBULON!" And he was happy like a child. He ran around there himself with such excitement and such an uplifted spirit! That was the joy of his creation."



Andriy Volyk: "I still remember him saying: "We need to explore the Dnipro River and decide what kind of fleet to build." The merchant fleet should be the backbone of Ukraine's transport infrastructure. Therefore, we must cultivate a fleet culture in our country, with the support of the state! Oleksiy Opanasovych truly believed in this vision."



Volodymyr Groysman: "When I learned I would meet Vadaturskyy and see his work, the first thing that came to mind was "order." He was stable, balanced, and flawless in everything. Everything worked and spun like a sophisticated mechanism of a Swiss watch. How could you not love that! Then, there is an uncontrollable desire to live and create, to create and live. I always wanted to help such people, I wished that such companies scale up and grow. I am a democrat, and I know that the energy and synergy of millions of people allow us to achieve major results. There is no other similar form of government to let personalities flourish."



Roman Vashchuk: "I was always struck by the melodic harmony of his first and patronymic name – Oleksiy Opanasovych. It sounded like something timeless, infused with the essence of native traditions and national pride. He was a remarkable man who made his Ukrainian choice with both clarity and conviction. I followed his social media posts, his mastery of the Ukrainian language, and his thoughts, visions, and actions. He excelled in everything he did. He never left anything unfinished. When he committed to something, he always delivered results that left a lasting impression."



Ivan Kyrylenko: "Oleksiy Vadaturskyy was eager to live; he was the kind of person who made you feel like a craftsman by his side. He belonged to those creators who break through the routine logic of existence, intolerant of clichés and stagnation. Here and now! Because tomorrow will be too late! Thanks to such builders, we are living."



Petro Gadz: "It's painful to return to the bright and unforgettable image of the great Man, who has become our Ukrainian sun, the grain captain of the country, to Oleksiy Opanasovych Vadaturskyy, a quick-witted and smart person who always spoke his specific, fiery, sometimes too straightforward but honest mind of a leader on any current matter. He could not have been anyone else, as the Lord gave him the unique gift of being a pioneer. He did not miss his chance. No one who followed the path of Oleksiy Opanasovych, who believed in being his disciple or follower, was interested in villas in Switzerland or Spain, luxurious royal palaces on islands, offshore companies, personal planes, or an army of security guards. Native and solely Ukrainian products were his highest priority!"



Liudmyla Mekheda: "Sometimes he set goals that none of us believed possible – yet he achieved them, and that was truly impressive. With him, I arranged NIBULON's first loan at the First International Bank – the very loan that brought us the combine harvesters. When Oleksiy Opanasovych began working with European banks, spotless credit histories and trust were essential, and he was even asked to put up his own home as collateral. It was very hard at first, but after a night's sleep and some thought, he made up his mind. He came back and said, "I agree!" He knew he would make it work and pay everything back. Even when the war broke out in 2014, European banks still trusted Vadaturskyy. They continued lending and working with him."





Maria Hrachova: "It's worth mentioning that Oleksiy Opanasovych was initially cautious about engaging with politicians. He knew I was a deputy in the city council, which made him wary at first. However, once he learned I was primarily a healthcare professional and saw that we shared the same values and goals, our relationship improved significantly. We became good friends, and our shared vision helped our work thrive. I was always impressed by his clear thinking and common sense, despite his age."



Maria Hrachova: "In all the years I knew him, I never once heard anything negative from him. Even when he was exhausted. I've never heard him raising his voice. I saw him find understanding and manage people who perfectly knew their job, he never had, and could not have chaos. It reminded me of a termite mound, where thousands of ants scurry around, each knowing exactly what to do and how to do it to achieve the desired result."



Olena Kondratiuk: "However, people respected Oleksiy Opanasovych for the fact that he, one of the richest Ukrainians, was aware of his social and public responsibility, and always advocated for a strong Ukrainian state. He invested huge amounts of money in Ukraine, built a unique cutting-edge agricultural infrastructure, and created new jobs. He invested more than three regional budgets in the Mykolaiv healthcare facilities. During the coronavirus pandemic, he helped equip 400 oxygen stations, which saved many lives."



Iryna Shamrai: "For Mykolaiv, Oleksiy Opanasovych was not just a hero, but a true guardian angel who always offered support no matter what difficulties our city faced. When the coronavirus pandemic struck, Vadaturskyy directed all his efforts and substantial funds to help the city's medical facilities. The company implemented four large-scale charitable projects and carried out a significant amount of work, introducing its own "NIBULON Standard" to help medical institutions effectively fight COVID-19."



Iryna Shamrai: "Vadaturskyy was a man without flaws, possessing immense strength and an indomitable spirit. From the very first days of the full-scale war, we communicated frequently. Oleksiy Opanasovych was a source of moral support, comfort, and advice for me. He never doubted for a moment, he believed and was confident in our victory because truth and God are on our side. He said that everyone should do their part for the common cause, each working where they can bring the greatest benefit to Ukraine."



Maria Hrachova: "In 2020, Oleksiy Opanasovych was the only candidate for the 'Person of the Year' award. While we were hopeful, we knew he had no real competition. After the ceremony, he came up to me and said, "Finally, I see you without your white doctor's coat! You're still young, with many days ahead of you! There's still so much you'll have time to do! I was particularly impressed when he, a non-medical professional, explained to me – head doctor and physician – what needed to be done in the healthcare sector. He showed me what would benefit the patients. He oversaw the creation of several very comfortable wards for our patients. He emphasized that everyone receiving care should feel at home, comfortable, and welcomed. I witnessed a man from the agrarian and industrial sector – someone with no medical background – yet he understood healthcare as if he were an expert, an academician."



Iryna Shamrai: "He was incredibly smart; everything in his mind was clear, well-organized, and in perfect order. A giant, a larger-than-life figure! He inherited and developed within himself a fiery passion and immense positive energy that fueled his creativity and achievements. Everything was put into action and brought positive results."



Roman Leshchenko: "Oleksiy Vadaturskyy's project to build the Ochakiv fish canning plant was exceptional in its execution. With a national investor's investment of 50 million dollars and 1,000 jobs created, he envisioned a modern fish processing facility aimed at generating added value and tackling the issue of poaching. Oleksiy Opanasovych's vessels sailed along the Dnipro river, repeatedly getting entangled in poachers' nets. Such was the lawlessness of the homegrown fish mafia. He told me, "Romanchyk, I want to do with fish what we did with grain – build the infrastructure and offer a fair price." We'll focus on processing fish from the Southern Buh, the Dnipro, and the Black Sea – these are truly unique fish resources. Most importantly, we will transform from fish importers into exporters. It's a shame and disgrace: an agricultural country with great rivers and two seas imports fish! Don't we have our hake, pike perch, or flounder? I will be able to maximize the plant's capacity as a fisheries enterprise. I will build fishing vessels and trawlers. "Everything that's needed..." Then I asked Oleksiy Opanasovych: "How many years have you been working on that project?" He snapped back, "Five! Everywhere – total corrupt practice, bribes, obstruction..."



Olena Kondratiuk: "Oleksiy Vadaturskyy went down in the history of Ukraine as the creator of a new agrarian economic miracle. His love for the land, honesty, humane attitude, ethics, zest for life, and transparent and open way of doing business made others respect him."



Roman Leshchenko: "In synergy, government and business can accomplish incredible things that transform the economic landscape and generate added value. This is how a country becomes immortal – it must become so. And it's abnormal when the head of the land agency engages in such practices. But we had to go through all the stages to eliminate bureaucratic obstacles through legislation. And the whole business community benefited from this, not just Vadaturskyy. He was a pioneer in this, and the business community reaped the benefits. It was a great lesson and knowledge from Oleksiy Opanasovych."



Liliia Nikitina (Perebyinis): "Raisa Mykhailivna – his hope and support – also came from our field. Thanks to her, our terminal's café became famous all across Ukraine. In winter, it felt like a true winter garden in there. One hundred blue Canadian spruces were planted at the terminal – brought from the Luhansk region. Employees from our branch offices carefully dug them out – each tree was already 20 to 25 years old. The boss wanted something no one else would have. And those stunningly beautiful rose plantations everywhere – planted with the hands and heart of Raisa Mykhailivna. She also made sure that every NIBULON branch was neat, tidy, cozy, and beautiful, surrounded by blooming flowers and lush greenery. We met often – she would invite me over to her place."



Tetiana Kviatkovska: "NIBULON under Oleksiy Opanasovych was all about pace – everything had to be done at full speed, bold decisions were the norm, and your mind had to stay razor-sharp at all times. Some said Vadaturskyy was difficult, not easy to work with, but given the scale of his ambitions and the country where he was born, and had to make his mark, he couldn't have been any other way. Otherwise, he wouldn't have become the man he was. Only the Lord knows how Oleksiy Opanasovych managed to keep up with such an intense pace. He once shared, "I've always been fascinated by how vessels are built, how it all comes together. I decided to dive into it all, and once I figured it out, I realized I could do it too!" And that's how our shipbuilding plant was born. NIBULON became the first and only agroholding in Ukraine to build its vessels. He was curious about everything. The Spirit of the Lord guided him, the Lord chose him for this, and he had to walk his path and bear his cross."





Gilles Mettetal: "Of course, as a strong entrepreneur, he also had his character. Usually, he would never agree to proposals right away, but would come back after a few weeks with the same proposal as if it were his own. He had a strong temper and could be very harsh with people he believed were untrustworthy. But he knew most of his employees by name and respected everyone, from unskilled laborers to managers."



Olha Babanina: "Wherever he was, he always found something of interest. He took photos of the things he liked. He would know where he would use this or that in his work, who to present to, or where to apply. He tried not to miss a single detail, had a photographic memory, and was capable with a camera. He could even take pictures of things he didn't like, just to show them to someone he knew would love them"



Olha Babanina: "NIBULON document flow was always in Ukrainian, and since 2014, Ukrainian has become the company's only official language. Oleksiy Opanasovych honestly admitted that he had spoken the language of the fascists, the invaders, and murderers for three decades, but finally reconsidered and would only speak his native language from now on. Since then, he was holding all meetings and conferences in Ukrainian only. He was born in a village where they spoke surzhyk, then lived in Russian-speaking Odesa. Unfortunately, Mykolaiv was almost the same in terms of language."



Liudmyla Mekheda: "We taught each of our partners to value order and transparency. No "off-the-books" money and nothing handed over in "envelopes"! Only clear, honest relationships – that's how NIBULON started, and that's how we've always operated! That's why everyone was drawn to us. No one wanted extra trouble, especially since many had been left hanging, unpaid and abandoned. But we always did everything with integrity."



Halyna Demianova: "The Vadaturskyy family were living in our house when the eldest of their three grandchildren, Mykola, was born. They often left the grandson with his grandmother, so, in our free time, we mostly talked about him. He was everything to her, just as she was to him. That's how it should be."



Oleksii Pavlenko: "I don't want to sound overly dramatic, but we always found common ground with Oleksiy Opanasovych. We often greeted each other warmly at numerous events. We have maintained excellent relations, demonstrating that I was not involved in any corruption issues while serving as a minister. Had that been the case, Oleksiy Opanasovych would have simply turned away and forgotten my name."



Oleksii Pavlenko: "Nowadays, I often recall the day we were returning from one of the conferences. I see Oleksiy Opanasovych approaching his company car – not a prestigious Lexus, but a much simpler Toyota Camry. He carefully removes his favorite signature dark-blue (the color of his beloved Dnipro River!) striped business suit. He folds it neatly and changes into simpler clothes. He slips worn-out flip-flops with two crossed straps over his bare feet... That was his charm. Such was the God-given vitality of this great person, who loved his homeland beyond measure. He never betrayed his principles."



Mykhailo Vadaturskyy: "My daughter-in-law underwent an internship at NIBULON. She told me everything with awe. The structure Oleksiy created and the goals he was setting and implementing seemed a miracle, something both obvious and incredible. In 2018, Oleksiy drove me from Bendzary to Pervomaisk. We were talking on the way. "Where is your daughter-in-law? Why does your son work in Pervomaisk, don't they need traumatologists in Mykolaiv?" I explained that the Vadaturskyy family get everything themselves and never ask anyone for anything. He shook his head, but agreed."



Halyna Demianova: "When I had a heart attack and caught the coronavirus in the hospital, my friends, whom I had known and been friends with for over 50 years, were afraid to visit me. However, Raia was always there; she came into the ward and supported me. Envious women often asked me: "Raisa has a huge house, so many flowers, who cleans it up? She probably has a dozen maids?" No one believed she did everything herself, as the Vadaturskyy family had never had any servants. She lived a modest life, just like him. We communicated a lot via Viber, where we texted each other. When I was hit by a car and had surgery, I was in intensive care; thus, she couldn't reach me. She called my son and came to visit me. I had a faithful Lord-given friend."



Liudmyla Nazarova: "He always responded to pain and human sorrow. If someone was in need or struggling with an illness, he would always lend a hand. When Vadaturskyy visited the villages where our branches were located, he listened to every villager, gave each one his full attention, and offered help whenever it was needed. Some he helped financially, others in different ways, but no one was ever left without his attention. In the villages where our branches operated, Oleksiy Opanasovych built modern schools and equipped them with everything they needed, such as up-to-date kindergartens, community clubs, libraries, medical clinics, and even stadiums. He oversaw everything, knew everything, and made sure everyone had what they needed. Some say he was a philanthropist, but it was something much greater than that. He did everything officially; unofficial actions were not tolerated. Otherwise, it wouldn't have been NIBULON, and it wouldn't have been Vadaturskyy. That's how it was, year after year, always and everywhere. Any other way was simply out of the question."



Tetiana Dmytriieva: "He was also a well-known and iconic figure in our city; many residents knew him personally. He was always there to help the residents who turned to him in any matters, and also the city authorities in case of force majeure in the city. In general, he loved Mykolaiv and believed it was his duty to help solve certain problems."



Yulia Tymoshenko: "He didn't just overcome challenges – he set them himself. Vadaturskyy's ambitious, large-scale projects were more than private business; they drove Ukraine's economy and continue to serve the country's welfare and global food security. Oleksiy Opanasovych firmly believed that both large and small private companies should work for the country, its global standing, and the well-being of its people."



Olivier Truc: "In the first article I published in Le Monde, just five days before his death, where I described that logistical hell, I mentioned my meeting with him, but without naming him or revealing the location in Izmail. When I asked him what he thought of the Istanbul agreements – set to be signed in a few days between Ukraine and Russia under the auspices of Türkiye and the UN to resume grain exports through select Black Sea ports – he replied firmly: "The only outcome of this war must be total victory. Any other outcome is unthinkable. We simply cannot trust the Russians." Oleksiy Vadaturskyy knew he was a target, especially since he had openly condemned the organized theft of Ukrainian grain by Russian forces, a crime he had suffered when his warehouses in Russian-occupied Kherson were looted. He sent us articles and messages on Telegram detailing these thefts, and he also expressed deep concern for the safety of his employees in Kherson region, which at the time was under Russian occupation. It weighed heavily on him – that was seen."



Oleksi Vadatoursky (à gauche), fondateur et président de Nibulon, l'opérateur le plus important du marché céréalier ukrainien, à Oumane (Ukraine), le 16 juillet. ADRIEN VAUTIER/ LE PICTORIUM POUR « LE MONDE »

La mort d'un magnat ukrainien des céréales

Oleksi Vadatoursky tentait de poursuivre les exportations. Il est mort après l'attaque sur Mykolaïv, samedi

BESSARABIE (UKRAINE) - *envoyé spécial*

C'était une rencontre un peu provoquée, même s'il n'en savait rien, dans une petite cité portuaire des bords du Danube, *« quelque part dans le sud-ouest de l'Ukraine »*, comme on dit dans ces cas-là, car il savait qu'il était une cible. Sur les traces du chaos des exportations de céréales ukrainiennes, en grande partie bloquées par la Russie, nous avions rencontré Oleksi Vadatoursky, fondateur et président de Nibulon, devenu, en vingt ans, le plus gros opérateur sur le marché céréalier ukrainien.

Avant l'invasion russe du 24 février, Nibulon exportait des millions de tonnes de céréales et d'oléagineux vers le monde entier à partir de Mykolaïv, l'un des principaux ports ukrainiens de la mer Noire, réduit, depuis, au silence et à l'immobilisme par Vladimir Poutine. C'est là, à Mykolaïv, qu'il a été tué avec sa femme, Raïssa, dans la nuit du samedi 30 au dimanche 31 juillet, lors du pire bombardement qu'a connu la cité depuis février.

Logistiques improbables

Oleksi Vadatoursky se trouvait dans sa maison du raïon Zavodsky, une ancienne zone industrielle militaire de l'époque soviétique – Mykolaïv était alors interdite d'accès à ceux qui n'y travaillaient pas –, devenue un quartier huppé pour Ukrainiens enrichis, à deux pas du port où Nibulon a construit une partie de ses infrastructures céréalières. Sur la quarantaine de frappes qui ont touché la ville portuaire cette nuit-là, sept ou huit ont atteint la maison d'Oleksi Vadatoursky, en particulier la chambre du couple. Hasard ? Ou volonté de terroriser, à travers lui, tout un secteur vital pour l'économie ukrainienne ?

Alors que les ports de la mer Noire, d'où partaient avant-guerre les dizaines de millions de tonnes de céréales, sont bloqués et soumis aux menaces russes, une bonne partie des agriculteurs et tradeurs ukrainiens ont, depuis ce printemps, tenté de sortir les céréales par la Bessarabie (région de l'Ukraine, voisine de la Roumanie) et les petits ports du Danube qui bordent la frontière roumaine.

Au fil des rencontres, un endroit, situé dans ce territoire devenu un entonnoir pour des dizaines de milliers de camions de blé, d'orge ou de maïs, avait retenu notre attention. S'y réunissaient, paraît-il, les acteurs centraux du business du blé pour improviser à marche forcée des solutions logistiques improbables.

Les poids lourds convergent vers cette région de tout le pays, leurs chauffeurs font la queue des journées entières, voire des semaines, pour décharger leur cargaison, 25 tonnes à la fois, par le biais des rares élévateurs de petits ports sous-dimensionnés. Une fois pleines, les barges de 3 000 tonnes ou les navires de 7 000 tonnes progressent le long du Danube avec une lenteur exaspérante jusqu'à Sulina ou Constanta, des ports roumains. Là-bas, il faut encore braver la corruption, le manque de pilotes de barges, l'absence de silos pour stocker les céréales, l'embouteillage de dizaines de navires au large de l'embouchure du fleuve, la pression des acheteurs, des brokeurs, des tradeurs étrangers…

M. Vadatoursky se savait d'autant plus visé qu'il dénonçait le vol organisé de céréales par les forces russes, à Kherson

Jusqu'en février, un maillage ferroviaire couvrant toute l'Ukraine dirigeait en bon ordre des milliers de wagons vers les terminaux céréaliers des grands ports de la mer Noire, d'où partaient de supercargos capables de transporter, pour certains, jusqu'à 120 000 tonnes de céréales d'un coup. Mais c'était avant l'invasion russe. Depuis, exporter des céréales est devenu un cauchemar logistique, forcément coûteux.

En arrivant dans ce petit port, on nous avait confié où se retrouvaient quelques-uns de ces acteurs de l'impossible qui tentaient d'organiser le chaos. Dans une salle de restaurant, où certains se réunissaient quelque part sur le Danube. Ce matin-là, coup de chance, Oleksi Vadatoursky y était. Lui qui n'aimait pas apparaître en public, fuyait les médias, nous l'avions approché. Il était entouré de plusieurs de ses proches collaborateurs, certains arrivés depuis des semaines de Mykolaïv. Accrochés à leur téléphone, répliques vives, décisions à l'instinct, gérant des arrivages de barges, des déplacements de camions, des tonnes de graines en déshérence.

Oleksi Vadatoursky était venu superviser la construction d'un nouveau terminal. *« Il y a des optimistes qui pensent que la guerre finira vite,* nous avait-il dit de sa voix grave, *et les pessimistes qui pensent que tout va empirer. Et puis il y a les réalistes qui pensent que cette guerre va durer et qu'il faut s'y préparer. »*

Une cible prioritaire

Avec son tee-shirt rayé et délavé, ses jeans informes et ses baskets, il ne payait pas de mine. Il stigmatisait les pays voisins, Roumanie et Bulgarie, qui faisaient des profits indignes sur la logistique. Avec un de ses assistants, il évoquait leurs premiers jours à chercher des voies d'exportation sur le Danube, dans l'un de ces ports oubliés qu'ils ont ramenés à la vie. *« Il n'y avait rien quand on est arrivés,* disait son jeune adjoint. *Il n'y avait que le gars du port et son chien, c'est tout. »* Et il riait. Pas Oleksi Vadatoursky, qui arrivait à peine à sourire. On essayait de plaisanter, se disant que pour être copain avec le gars du port, il fallait connaître le nom du chien. *« Mais maintenant, ce gars est devenu inaccessible »*, notait juste Oleksi Vadatoursky.

Allure pataude, visage lourd, belle chevelure d'un blanc éclatant et air bougon à la Jean Gabin sur ses vieux jours, le géant des céréales gardait souvent les yeux baissés quand il parlait, tentant de maîtriser un discret tremblement des mains. La veille de notre rencontre, il avait échappé de peu à un tir de missile qui avait visé l'université de Mykolaïv, alors qu'il la longeait en voiture pour rejoindre la Bessarabie. Visiblement secoué, il s'apprêtait pourtant à reprendre la route de Mykolaïv, siège de sa compagnie, régulièrement bombardée ; il semblait apeuré, pour autant qu'on puisse deviner la peur sur le visage d'un homme que l'on ne connaissait pas deux heures avant. Il nous avait demandé de ne pas évoquer sa visite. Il savait qu'il était une cible prioritaire.

Par le passé, il avait déjà été la cible de militants ukrainiens qui reprochaient à Nibulon son lobbying intense auprès des autorités pour faire passer ou pour bloquer des lois. Société de négoce propriétaire d'infrastructures et de navires à travers le pays, Nibulon compte, encore aujourd'hui, de nombreux critiques parmi les fermiers ukrainiens. Après tout, l'entreprise leur impose ses prix pour le transport des céréales aux quatre coins du pays.

Oleksi Vadatoursky était aussi dans le collimateur pour incarner, avec d'autres géants de l'agrobusiness, les conflits d'intérêts entre la politique et le monde des affaires. Son fils, Andrï, sans doute appelé à prendre sa suite, a été député – et financier – du parti de Petro Porochenko, candidat malheureux à sa propre réélection à la présidence de l'Ukraine, en 2019, face à Volodymyr Zelensky.

« Si l'Ukraine ne gagne pas, demain, l'armée russe sera à Paris. La Russie n'arrêtera pas »

OLEKSI VADATOURSKY
président de l'entreprise agricole ukrainienne Nibulon

Mais, cette fois-ci, la menace était réelle. Et mortelle. Lorsqu'on lui avait demandé ce qu'il pensait des récents accords d'Istanbul du 22 juillet, où l'Ukraine et la Russie ont décidé, sous l'égide de la Turquie et des Nations unies, la réouverture des exportations de céréales par certains ports de la mer Noire, il avait été catégorique : *« La seule perspective de cette guerre est la victoire totale. Toute autre issue est impensable. Nous ne pouvons pas faire confiance aux Russes, en aucune manière. »*

Prédations

Oleksi Vadatoursky se savait d'autant plus visé qu'il dénonçait le vol organisé de céréales ukrainiennes par les forces russes, dont il était lui-même victime dans ses entrepôts de Kherson, ville occupée par les Russes. Il nous avait fait passer des articles et des messages Telegram évoquant ces prédations, mais il craignait aussi pour la sécurité de ses employés dans la région de Kherson. Ce poids-là l'écrasait.

Avant de reprendre la route de Mykolaïv, vers sa mort, Oleksi Vadatoursky s'était encore arrêté, renonçant à contrôler le léger tremblement de ses mains, regard triste et lourd : *« Si l'Ukraine ne gagne pas, demain, l'armée russe sera à Paris. La Russie n'arrêtera pas. »* En ce tout début du mois d'août, un premier convoi de navires chargés de maïs ukrainien devait quitter le port d'Odessa, voisin de Mykolaïv, dans le cadre de l'accord d'Istanbul. Les Russes l'ont salué à leur manière. ■

OLIVIER TRUC

Un premier bateau quitte Odessa

Le premier chargement de céréales ukrainiennes a quitté le port d'Odessa, lundi 1er août au matin, a annoncé le ministère de la défense turc, conformément aux termes de l'accord international avec la Russie, signé à Istanbul, le 22 juillet, permettant la reprise des exportations ukrainiennes sous supervision internationale. *« Le navire* Razoni *a quitté le port d'Odessa à destination du port de Tripoli, au Liban. Il est attendu le 2 août, à Istanbul. Il continuera sa route vers sa destination après les inspections qui seront menées à Istanbul »*, a ajouté le ministère. Selon le ministre de l'infrastructure ukrainien, Oleksandr Kubrakov, le bateau est chargé de 26 000 tonnes de maïs. D'autres convois vont suivre ce premier départ en respectant *« le couloir* [maritime] *et les formalités convenues »*, d'après le ministère turc.

Olivier Truc: "I was the last journalist to see him alive. That meeting was strange in many ways – and deeply moving. As a final warning, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy spoke to all Europeans through a French newspaper: "If Ukraine does not win, the very next day, the Russian army will be in Paris. Russia will not stop." The day before our meeting, he narrowly escaped a missile strike on Mykolaiv University while traveling to Bessarabia. He knew he was a prime target and that attacks were coming his way – especially since he openly condemned the organized theft of Ukrainian grain by Russian forces, a crime he suffered from when his warehouses in Russian-occupied Kherson were looted."



Viktor Yushchenko: "I remember him once saying he had become a workshop owner. I asked, "What kind?" "We'll be building barges," he replied. "What barges, Oleksiy Opanasovych?" "Well, those I mentioned when telling about logistics..." I thought he would find a sub-partner to run that business together. Only Vadaturskyy could get a Soviet-era dilapidated facility and turn it into a European production with cutting-edge technologies and equipment. He fabricated 5,000 GT barges that could pass all the gates along the Dnipro River to the sea. That was another project."





Andriy Volyk: "If someone had told me that I, a career military man and border guard, would end up in charge of fleet operations and navigation safety at NIBULON – a Ukrainian agricultural company, one of the largest domestic producers and exporters – it would have seemed impossible, like a whimsical fantasy. I never imagined I would end up in this field, as I had no relevant skills. However, I graduated from the "Maritime Academy" under the mentorship of Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, a Hero of Ukraine, who, like me, didn't have formal training in the profession but possessed a rare, Lord-given talent."





Viktor Yushchenko: "Oleksiy Opanasovych was also a real cossack! Both in body and in spirit. That was what made him a pleasant and likable person – a manufacturer having a great sense of the challenges we faced when setting up a Ukrainian environment, both historical and linguistic. I involved him in several projects, and he never refused. Whether to renovate the theater or to erect monuments to our heroes: craftsmen, politicians, or defenders. In terms of being a true Ukrainian, he was an example of a citizen. He took responsibility not only for the issue in question but also for related ones. I know a few other great Ukrainians acting the same way. Whether we had to renovate the Mystetskyi Arsenal or St. Sophia of Kyiv, raise awareness of the Holodomor, or build a house for a family that adopted five to seven children, any project involving Ukrainian national issues, Oleksiy Opanasovych was always at the forefront. He offered a helping hand and made major Ukrainian deeds. Vadaturskyy was flawless here."



Oleksandra Kuzhel: "I've met a few people like him – those who place their country above their well-being. One of those rare souls who lived and worked in such a way – and whom the Lord sent to our people – was Oleksiy Opanasovych. In my lifetime, I can count people like Oleksiy Vadaturskyy on fewer than the fingers of one hand. And of whom I would be honored to speak such words. He was a nation-builder – that is what matters most. He thought in Ukrainian, lived for Ukraine, because he was Ukraine itself."



Roman Leshchenko: "To our enemies, Vadaturskyy was a bone lodged in their throat. Through his policy of economic patriotism, Oleksiy Opanasovych worked to revive shipbuilding – an industry that had been systematically bought up and driven to bankruptcy by Russians through pro-Russian agents. They destroyed them not only in Mykolaiv, but everywhere."



Oleksii Pavlenko: "We clearly understood all of his plans for NIBULON, especially regarding water logistics, which had already been successful in countries like Holland and France, where water transportation plays a significant role. And Vadaturskyy aimed to implement similar European models and projects on our Dnipro River."



Oleksandr Pysaruk: "He truly was a businessman, a visionary with a mission unlike anyone before him. Vadaturskyy not only always had a clear vision of the future, but he also knew the exact steps he needed to take to achieve it. Oleksiy Opanasovych built NIBULON as a model of the country's best logistics company. A unique advantage was that the company built its fleet."



Roman Leshchenko: "The scale of Oleksiy Opanasovych's project and his plans were ahead of their time – they surpassed the goals of an entire generation. Just like what this man did and the vision he generated. He was respected worldwide, his company and reputation alike. My synergy with Oleksiy Opanasovych was rooted in concrete projects, reforms, and economic results. For me, NIBULON is a flagship and a dedication to Ukraine. I wanted to see such companies thrive, but I didn't fully agree with the policy of economic patriotism, which warned that a minister should not support Ukrainian companies or advocate for them on global markets. Why does French President Emmanuel Macron travel and negotiate for French Alstom locomotives, but we shouldn't negotiate for NIBULON in Egypt, Israel, or the Middle East?! For me, the name of NIBULON is synonymous with the name "Ukraine." Egypt was meant to become our window to Africa. By 2050, Nigeria will have up to 300 million citizens; this country will continue to grow, and Africa will have a significant population increase. Oleksiy Opanasovych understood that we didn't need to fight for European Union markets and shared the view that Southeast Asia and Africa are our future. And Vadaturskyy was a pioneer in this regard – Egypt was meant to become our window to Africa. The lifeblood of Africa. "We will build vessels and infrastructure, starting with Egypt, and then expand across all of Africa. All the way to South Sudan, then gradually down to the Republic of South Africa. We will achieve everything, accomplish it all, "he told me."



Volodymyr Zhmur: "Oleksiy Opanasovych loved talking with the workers. He listened to complaints, requests, and suggestions. He remembered even the smallest details and demanded solutions from his subordinates. He never overlooked or forgot anyone or anything. He could call someone, and after talking with him, the person would feel reassured. And the way Oleksiy Opanasovych handled tech and electronics was impressive! He could grasp the essence of a mechanism "on the fly" and come up with a solution to improve it if needed, often finding an unconventional approach. I was convinced of it time and again, having witnessed it myself. At times, he could look over the drawings and make rational yet original simplifications. Everything he did seemed to succeed, which only drew people to him even more. At meetings, he enjoyed debating with his subordinates, listening carefully to their views. Even if their ideas were unconventional and different from his own. When decisions were made, he demanded they be carried out within the set deadlines. It was a matter of principle to him."





Viktor Slauta: "We, Ukraine's agrarian producers, met monthly to summarize results and exchange information. Oleksiy Opanasovych remained an agrarian to the very end; he respected not only his environment but also the people within it. The place he came from. Even after becoming an oligarch and a Hero of Ukraine, he never got arrogant, never bragged or looked down on others, but remained balanced and consistent. He knew well and never forgot where he came from. I remember and almost see Vadaturskyy right in front of me. A gray-haired, stocky man. I hear his voice and look closely at his blue suit (either solid-colored or striped). How he loved to dress in the color of the sky – how those blue suits matched perfectly with his golden fields! True, he didn't wear ties – they probably didn't give him freedom, felt like they were choking his throat. I don't recall Oleksiy Opanasovych wearing the Hero Star on his chest. If asked or warned, at official ceremonies – yes. He didn't do it unnecessarily. Although some people even put them on pajamas when they go to bed. And in the morning clip it onto the suit. And then he goes to the farm."



Viacheslav Sokolov: "Our institute works on breeding 12 crops: winter wheat, soft wheat (for bread), durum wheat (for pasta), spring barley, winter barley, sunflower, corn, soybeans, peas, chickpeas, alfalfa... Long before the signing of the international mediation agreement to unblock the ports, Vadaturskyy was building grain transshipment facilities at the mouth of the Danube, in Izmail, to export grain either to Central European countries or to the Romanian port of Constanta in the Black Sea. Sadly, he never lived to see the day when native grain would once again be exported by sea. However, through our peaceful and victorious Black Sea, the world will receive a new wheat variety named 'Oleksiy Vadaturskyy', to be developed by our Plant Breeding and Genetics Institute. His life's credo – as a true self-made man – was tireless work for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. And work so worthy that even during his lifetime, vessels, barges, and the finest varieties of wheat deserved to bear his name... Oleksiy belonged to the kind of people you carry in your heart, those you can never forget..."



Yulia Tymoshenko: "Oleksiy Opanasovych was born in Ukraine, lived in Ukraine, worked for Ukraine, dreamed of a strong Ukraine, and gave his life on Ukrainian soil. He was a true patriot and a remarkable business strategist – a unique individual who never shied away from the challenges fate threw his way. NIBULON agroholding is one of the most ambitious and unique modern infrastructure projects – not just for our country, but far beyond its borders. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy succeeded in bringing together the resources of foreign investors, the hard work of Ukrainian farmers and agrarians, the ingenuity of engineers and designers, and the expertise of shipbuilders. Vadaturskyy planned to replicate this project on the banks of the Nile. He didn't get the chance... I'm confident that in the future, we will see his ideas and projects expand and take shape in other corners of the world. And they will stand as a lasting tribute to a great Ukrainian and a wonderful man – Oleksiy Vadaturskyy."



Volodymyr Groysman: "Some high-ranking officials could stand his straightforwardness; still, he remained himself, spoke the truth, and was not afraid to do it. Whoever he faced. That made me be fascinated and inspired by him. I do not like when they create virtual reality. There is such a virus infecting managers from the lowest to the highest positions. Fortunately, Oleksiy Vadaturskyy had a team that argued, criticized, and proved their points. All that allowed them to move forward; otherwise, there would be no progress. He was the one who created added value for the country. On a great scale! Based on his results, he is undoubtedly a true exemplary Hero of Ukraine. Even the way he lived and made every effort to export grain in wartime, how the Russian fascists took his life, made him a true hero: he did not betray, did not flee, did not hide, but did everything for our victory without a hint of doubt in our victory. He believed in our Armed Forces and the nation."



Liudmyla Nazarova: "When the Russo-Ukrainian war began in 2014, the commanders of the Mykolaiv military unit reached out to Oleksiy Opanasovych. First of all, he asked, "What do you need and how much?" He never gave cash. But he purchased and controlled everything. So that everything would be high-quality, comfortable, and safe for life. This is how our soldiers received their first bulletproof vests, thermal imagers, helmets, and combat boots. Almost every day, I had to meet and talk with Raisa Mykhailivna. She was a true connoisseur of beauty, with such a finely tuned sense of style that she could see, organize, and create the very best for NIBULON – all with the unique flair that was hers alone. And she herself was a very beautiful woman. Always. She had a magic touch – people said she could plant a stick in the soil, and it would bloom. Beauty comes in many forms and exists everywhere, but not everyone is able to see it. Raisa Mykhailivna, like Oleksiy Opanasovych, possessed a beauty that was undoubtedly both outward and inward. They were both made for each other by Heaven."



Andriy Vadaturskyy: "If Ukraine had 10 people like Oleksiy Vadaturskyy, it would flourish." I know this for sure. I could feel the warmth of his visionary flame, saturated with the dignity of a freedom-loving person paving the future. The bigger the tasks and the more brazen the attempts to extinguish it, the stronger this flame grew."



Oleksandr Vedeneiev: "If you take a look at the calendars we've been producing since 1994, you'll see a visual history unfold. Each calendar tells its own unique story! Vadaturskyy ensured that every NIBULON employee received one! Not only in the head office but also across the branches, and of course, to the fortunate shareholders. In 2021, we printed 20,000 one-fold calendars and 8,000 three-fold corporate calendars. They were everywhere in Mykolaiv, wherever you come: in a clinic, a hospital, a post office, and government offices..."





Taras Shepel: "For many businessmen, their wives had – and still have – a huge influence on their business decisions. I never once heard Vadaturskyy say, "My wife thinks this" or "My wife says that." He made every business and personnel decision entirely on his own. He was inclined toward micromanagement. Even the replacement of tires on a company car had to be approved by him. Even the hotels we stayed in during business trips had to be approved by the company's director."





Andriy Vadaturskyy: "From the dream of a thirteen-year-old boy who started working at the threshing floor. From the ambitions of a young specialist who traveled the world to meet challenges. With the perseverance of the conqueror of the desert of Mongolia, where he built modern enterprises, the decision to revive Ukraine as a breadbasket of the world was born, sprouted, made its way, and matured. The brave have happiness, and the hardworking have destiny. Add to this the courage to never give up, and you get the genetic code of a Ukrainian hero who managed to build a powerful enterprise at the intersection of several industries: agricultural production, international trade, shipping, and shipbuilding."



Petro Gadz: "Today, all forward-thinking people speak of him as a role model, a true standard for Ukrainians. He was not only known for his resistance to Russian aggression, but also as a businessman and patriot with firmly established spiritual, moral, and national values. I can still hear him saying: "If a German can, if a Frenchman can, if an American can, why can't we?!" Had Vadaturskyy completed all his plans, Ukraine would have been a wealthier country today. One day, we will all come to you, Oleksiy Opanasovych, but not Ukraine!"



Natalia Nahorna: "Killing one of Ukraine's best and brightest talents by the Russians is yet another 'grain crime' committed by our enemies. Grain traders are required to sell their products to afford the seeds for the next planting. He knew how to feed the world with grain. And build a real system from seed to loaf. When I heard about the death of Vadaturskyy and his wife Raisa Mykhailivna, one question echoed in my mind: "Oleksiy Opanasovych, why is everything so wrong?" It was the first time in my life I ever waited for a barge carrying watermelons from Kherson..."



Yuriy Sydorenko: "God has His times and appointed terms for each of us to remain on earth. And we cannot judge whether it is right or wrong. When I see how the Lord takes the best Ukrainians, the nation's finest, I understand that this was their purpose on earth as warriors and defenders. Through their example, God gives a chance to those who remain – through faith, through strong faith in Him. Oleksiy Opanasovych had such faith; he knew and realized in time that this talent and strength were given to him by the Heavenly Father."



Taras Shepel: "People like Oleksiy Opanasovych are not eternal. Why did they kill Vadaturskyy? The most honorable, the most worthy, the most humane? I couldn't imagine this leader of a world-class brand company retiring. He was a man of action for me. The Lord took him as a heroic warrior. His death is a combat loss inflicted by the Russian aggressor with conventional weapons – not only against Ukraine but against the entire world – in this war on the economic front..."



Viktor Yushchenko: "Without Oleksiy Opanasovych, the Dnipro would have been orphaned, and Ukraine would have been orphaned too. If we adequately and properly evaluate his work, what he achieved, and how he looked at the future, we will recognize that it can serve as a vivid example for many of how to organize both today and tomorrow. When the second phase of the cursed Russian occupation began, and we couldn't export grain for three months, the entire world realized what it meant for Ukraine to be absent from the market. It took the country 15 to 20 years to become a truly significant player. In this critical sector of global trade, we have once again arrived at a definition that was an axiom 100–200 years ago. In particular, in the European market, where Ukraine has always been referred to as the breadbasket. No nation in Europe wanted to face the winter without Ukrainian grain. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy's example allowed us to scale up even further. There are still many challenges and tasks ahead, but his model demonstrates the amount of innovative work one person can accomplish."

Photo: the transshipment terminal of NIBULON in Mykolaiv.



Olena Kondratiuk: "He was avenged for being resilient, indomitable, and loving Ukraine. Oleksiy Vadaturskyy and Raisa Mykhailivna, his beloved wife and reliable life companion, were killed when rascists shelled Mykolaiv. Law enforcement officials later claimed that the missile attack on their house was not accidental but targeted... "The more you are doing for your country, the more difficult the challenges you have to face. The more you wish to share, the more efforts you have to make," said Oleksiy Vadaturskyy in one of his last public speeches. And his "Never give up!" motto has become a universal one for Ukraine. We do not give up, Oleksiy Opanasovych, we stand, fight, and the Victory will be ours!"

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