Acknowledgements

No amount of words would be enough for me to express my gratitude to my thesis supervisor Dr. Ayub Qadri for his guidance throughout my stay at NII. Every discussion I’ve had with him has served to rekindle my interest. He has been amazingly patient, through numerous goof-ups, failed experiments, uncommunicative spells, my all too frequent jaunts to the Himalayas and the remarkably ‘flexible’ timings I keep. Lab has always meant fun and a sure way to de-stress and I’ve never for a single day felt that that coming to lab was a ‘chore’ or was ‘work’ - all entirely due to him! Thank you.

I also thank Dr. Basu and Dr. Surolia, for providing an excellent infrastructure conducive to good research at the institute.

I wish to thank my Doctoral Committee members Dr. Natarajan, Dr. Devinder Sehgal, Dr. Satyajit Rath and Dr. Rahul Pal, for valuable suggestions and encouragement. I wish to specially thank Dr. Sehgal, for being extremely approachable and helpful and for his great sense of humour. Dr. Rahul is easily one of the friendliest and helpful people one can meet. His “Good Show” at the end of even a horrible presentation can do wonders to one’s self-confidence. A warm thanks to Dr. P.K. Upadhyay for being such a wonderful person and friend. His humility is something that I hope I can learn.

I wish to thank Mr. Akhilesh Aggarwal, Mr. Rana and Sanju Madam for all the help given in academic matters. I would also like to thank Mr. Dahra and Mr. Dey for making my stay at NII so comfortable.

Each day I’ve spent in lab has been an experience, and my lab-mates need to take credit for it! I cannot have asked for a better set of people. I’ve had two great seniors Amita and Naeha – both of them, a huge source of inspiration. The many long talks & disagreements I’ve had with Naveen, about sports especially, were extremely welcome. Soma, and especially her baked cakes, has been great to get along with. I’ve lost track of the number of times and ways in which Rohini has helped me out and fed me, but it’s been real great to have her as a lab-mate. Nitika has so often bugged me that I actually miss her nowadays! Suhail and Deepak with their jokes, imitations and songs have made lab a real lively place be in. Neha, with her tendency to emulate Naeha senior, has been fun to interact with. The times I’ve spent with Debjani and Danish have been a pleasure. Tripti, Sneha, Gautam, Monica and Huma have all contributed in numerous ways to make lab a fun place. I wish to thank Sarin Sir for all the help, concern and encouragement he has provided. I also thank Rampalji and Rambodhiji for all the help provided in the lab.

I’ve been extremely fortunate, in that I’ve always found a helping hand in NII, be it work related or otherwise. At no time have I had to hear the dreaded words “No, sorry” or been turned away empty handed. I especially thank ALL the members of the Immunobiology Labs, Cell Biology, IEL and EGE labs for helping out in terms of material or advice. I can never forget Vicky, who practically got a reluctant me to join NII, Neela for all the dinners, Gagan and Bijoy for great companionship, and Samitabh for being so nice. I have pleasant memories of Smita for being a good sport,
Usha and Sangeeta for allowing me to trouble them and Dhruv for the talks and cheese. I’ll also really miss the book club ‘garlic breads’ and FAF.

I will always admire (and be jealous!) of Parashu, Ashutosh, Neetha and Ankush. Neetha’s maturity, caring and niceness will sorely be missed. Parashu, I miss the late night talks, seeing Rajini movies and fighting with you about athirsams and Salma Hayek. Ashutosh is one of the most complete persons I’ve met and I hope to always have his company on many more treks. Another companion on many a peaceful trek is Satish and I hope he finds his ‘Tamil’ girl soon! With Lavanya I’ve had numerous verbal jousts and just hope that she returns my book someday. Will also miss watching late-night football with Sumod, Nagesh, TK, Hamid and Ankush. Baby’s attempts to ‘poison’ me, Shruthi’s ‘kheer’ and ‘chatni’, Nidhi’s laddoos, fights over food with Ruchir, Bharathi’s grandmom (!), Aparna and parathas, bribing Richa with chocolates, Mani, Vikas and movies, Anoop and his flute, Tarun, Kate, talking about birds with Suvendu and T cells with Hridesh, music discussions with Joy, Ravikant’s sketches, Meena’s chirpiness, Maami’s temper and Renu’s pickle are memories which are indelibly printed in my mind. I’ve also been part of a batch with all of whom I’ve had good times. Jitesh has been the prime motivation behind many a concert, Punya with whom I’ve had long discussions on many topics, fun times with Shuchi and Anu, talking about books with Srijita and Surabhi, Vans and Rainbows, cribbing about old age with Ganga and eating in Vineeth’s place made the last five years go in a flash.

Nagarjuna was very friendly and helpful. Chandra, Kumar, Manoj, Ram Singh and Kailash have all been very friendly and helpful. The cooks in RSH have tried their best to fatten me up – to no avail! Thanks to Mohanji, Satishji and Babu Lalji in the library for all the help.

Pooja is a warm and wonderful person to be with and along with Thapaji takes care of me with affection. Splotch for being an uncritical, peaceful, uncomplicated and stress busting friend. I lack words to describe what I owe to my pal Chitra. Vani, Nits, Smites, Vijji, Shiv and Rahul have over the years, constantly shaken me from my lethargy. And finally my whole family, for always being there for me.

Srikanth