



Aruna Desai

July 3, 1937 - November 16, 2020

Aruna Desai, 83, passed away peacefully on November 16th, 2020 at home under hospice care. Aruna was born on July 3, 1937 in Choravad, India to the late Purushottam and Vijaya Gandhi. Her parents were freedom fighters for the Independence of India. She is preceded in her death by her grandchild Amaani Desai. She is survived by her devoted husband of 57 years, Hemendra Desai. Her pride and joy - her children, Palash (Anjali) Desai and Sonali (Vivek) Kamath and loving grandchildren Roshni and Nikita Desai along with several nieces and nephews will miss her.

Aruna received her Master of Social Work from University of Baroda in 1961 after earning her Bachelor degree in Chemistry. As an accomplished musician she earned a degree in Indian Music before she finished high school and sang on All India Radio. She also learned to play the sitar and other Indian musical instruments. Aruna was one of ten students selected to visit the US as part of a cross-cultural exchange program. In 1962 she arrived in the small town of Charlton, MA and welcomed by Bob and Winnie Ewing. Little did any of them realize that this would be the start of an unbreakable friendship that has lasted 60 years. Aruna and Hem lived in Toronto, Canada for 20 years. Aruna was a social worker working at the Canadian Institute for the Blind and Children's Aid Society. She was a founding member of the Political Activist group Indian American Forum in Canada and also volunteered with battered Indian women. She made a difference and positively impacted so many families.

Aruna was a student and follower of Ramakrishna Mission under Swami Adishwarananda. She learned Bengali so she could read the original texts. She also lived in Boston, MA and Frederick MD and even with ailing health she tended to beautiful gardens (she loved flowers) and entertaining guests with love and food in each home. She was particularly creative in the kitchen inventing new dishes. She was a gifted writer, sharing poetry and philosophies through this medium. In the last 7 years, as a retiree in Shanti Niketan, wherever she sat, a group would form and laughter would fill the air.

A memorial service followed by cremation will be held at Beyer Funeral Home, 1123 W. Main St in Leesburg, FL on Monday November 23rd at 10am. Because of Covid-19, the number of guests will be limited. However, the ceremony can be viewed on YouTube link

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In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorial donations to Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of New York, 17 East 94th Street, New York, NY 10128..

If you are unable to attend services in person, please join us virtually on Youtube using the following link: <https://youtu.be/PPwyEZm-uEg>

Tribute Wall

CT

“ *Namaste, Hemendrabhai,
I'm so sorry for our loss! I just got this sad news and thought, this is the only time Annaben has not responded to my email from September, now I know why! My prayers are with you and family. I don't know whom I'll share any of my cultural news with! She was like my second late Vijayaben Gandhi near me to encourage all these years. I'll miss her terribly. You take care.*
Regards
Chaula

Chaula Thacker - December 14, 2020 at 04:37 PM

AP

“ *Please accept our deepest condolences. Arunaben will never be forgotten and will live in our hearts. We will keep you and family in our prayers.*

Anjani and Ashok

Anjani and Ashok Parekh - November 30, 2020 at 10:46 AM

CP

“ *we are sadriendl at Aruna passing away. A great person, multi talented,
hospitable ans her characteristic smile inspire of her aches and pains.
She will be remembered for all this virtues.
our heartfelt condolences to Hemendra and family.*

Chanteldrakant and Nalini Pa - November 23, 2020 at 02:25 PM

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Chanteldrakant and Nalini Pa - November 23, 2020 at 02:22 PM

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Chanteldrakant and Nalini Pa - November 23, 2020 at 02:21 PM

GH

“ Our heartfelt condolences to Hemendra, Palash, Sona Kalpak and family. I have known Anna since the day I landed in Canada in 1969. We have always admired her cheerful nature and positive attitude towards life. We will miss her.

Girish and Nita

Girish and Nita Hansoti - November 23, 2020 at 11:56 AM

DK

“ *Hemendra Palash and Sona
Kokila and my family are very heartbroken to hear the sad news of
Aruna passing away
What a wonderful lady always smiling and appreciating with good
humor and respect to others
Lots of memories from all aspects of life and true friendships
God bless the sprit and provide you enough strength to bear with
this loss*

Dr Dinesh Patel and Kokilla - November 23, 2020 at 10:01 AM

FI

“ *Dear Hem,
Judy and I share your deep sorrow at this time. Aruna and I have
been close friends since 1960 as students at the faculty of Social
Work in Baroda. We kept in touch all these years.
We will miss her immensely. You and family are in our thoughts and
prayers,
Fred and Judy Isaacs.*

Fred Isaacs - November 23, 2020 at 09:59 AM

SM

“ *I miss Arunaji and her friendly nature.*

Satyanarayana Mamidi - November 22, 2020 at 10:08 PM

DM

“ Dear Hemendra bhai, Palash, Sonali and family,
I can not find appropriate words to express our deep sorrow and
condolence to you all on loss of our very dear long time friend Aruna
Ben Desai. She was a Gem of a person-kind, caring, loving, strong
willed, intelligent, talented, inspiration to all of us. Instead of so
many health problems, she handled them all with great courage,
positive attitude and tender loving care and support by
Hemendrabhai and family. At present so many fond memories of
her come to the mind. We pray to Almighty to give her golden pious
soul eternal peace and give Hemendra bhai and family strength and
comfort in this very difficult time. Our thoughts and prayers are with
you all. She will be alive with fond memories in our heart.

OM SHANTI

Jigisha and Kishor Mehta of Weston , MA 02493 USA

Drs Jigisha and Kishor Mehta - November 22, 2020 at 09:43 PM

AS

“ I am Arunakaki's nephew Asit. I had the privilege of knowing her and having a deep connection with her even though she lived far away, in Canada and the US, and I used to live in India. Without the internet in those days, we only talked when she visited us. We did not spend as much time together, though I am being selfish here as even if we would have spent more time together, I still would have said the same. Even then, she is one of the few people that I remember always looking forward to meeting since one of my earliest childhood memories. She made me feel like she was a close friend rather than an aunt. Whenever she visited us, she spent a lot of time with me personally. I will always remember one of the summers that she spent with us where we played card games every day.

After I moved to the US, I am so glad that I was able to talk to her more and see her more, though I still wish I could have spent more time with her. I will always remember her ability to connect with anyone and make everyone laugh. She will always have a special place in my heart and memory.

Asit - November 22, 2020 at 04:54 PM

GP

“ *ShantiNiketan-1, 999 David Walker Drive, Florida, has been blessed as Arunabehen Desai used to live with her husband Hemendra Desai in their home here.*

My wife Hasu and I moved to ShantiNiketan-1 in September 2018 and met Arunabehen. We cannot describe in words our joy of meeting her.

Later I found out that there are three direct disciples of Swami Adiswarananda, a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, living in ShantiNiketan-1. Two of them: Arunabehen and hemendrabhai. I believe their Ishta is Sri Ramakrishna. I consider Sri Ramakrishna my Sadaguru.

Let me reveal our experience which is almost like a miracle!

We searched almost whole day in our home but Hasu and I were not finding her gold necklace. Hasu mentioned this to Arunabehen., She immediately said, "You will find it!" And the next day we found it.

In appreciation I presented a book on Holy Mother Saradadevi by Swami Adiswarananda, her guru, to her. She was reluctant to take it and asked What will you do when you need it? "I will borrow it from you," I replied and she took the book.

--Girish Parikh

Girish Parikh - November 22, 2020 at 03:16 PM

PD

“ Not a day has gone by since I was 6 years old when I see red roses, that I do not remember Anna Masi. That was the first time I saw or understood what roses actually were: the most divine of aromas any flower had.

Anna Masi was hosting one of her all famous dinner parties in Toronto and my vivid image of her front porch which had 2 or 3 beautiful red rose bush climbers. The first time I had noticed the bush upon entering and the second time upon exiting her home. She noticed my oggling and kindly wrapped a few blossoms in wet paper towel (dethorned) and gave it to me to inhale all the way home.

Since that very first time.... it had become a tradition with she and I. Whenever I visited I would always return the honour with a bouquet of red roses over the years.

She will always be blossoming in my heart.....

Preety Desai - November 21, 2020 at 08:46 PM