



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