



Therese Gunawardena

May 5, 1936 - July 26, 2013

GUNAWARDENA ?Therese Beatrice Iranganie (Ira)

Therese, known to her family and friends as Ira was born in, Colombo, Sri Lanka on May 5, 1936 to the late Basil and Beryl Perera. She was the 2nd daughter born into a family of 5 siblings. Ira was a curious, feisty, and adventurous little girl who was enormously caring, generous, fearless, and a bit of a tomboy. She was very close in age and in mischievous spirit to her younger brother Anton with whom she enjoyed many escapades, which in later years she would recount in vivid detail to her children, nieces, and nephews to much laughter. She loved traveling and meeting new people and at various stages in her life lived for several years in England and Dubai (the United Arab Emirates), finally moving to Austin, Texas in her later years.

Ira was a keen and brilliant student with a passion for geography and the law but her goal of attaining a University Degree was cut short when she lost her beloved father at sixteen and was compelled to work to support her family. Nevertheless, she pursued higher study independently while she worked and her thirst for knowledge never waned even in her later years. She joined a leading publishing company in Sri Lanka where she met the great love of her life Denzil who was absolutely smitten with her. She obtained membership in the Institute of Chartered Secretaries & Administrators, London, U.K. and at the peak of her career managed the operations of several companies in Sri Lanka including a hotel, publishing enterprise, and a recruitment agency. She also worked as a senior executive for several corporations in Dubai overseeing their financial operations.

Ira married her ?St. Joseph? Denzil on June 15th 1960 and she said on numerous occasions that those early years of their marriage were some of the happiest times of her life. Ira, the bubbly, outgoing, larger-than-life young woman and her beloved shy, kind, and gentle husband Denzil were the perfect match and they enjoyed an extraordinarily close and loving partnership for 53 years. The birth of their two daughters Therese (Priya) and Sue completed their happiness. Their daughters, who Ira unabashedly adored, were her great pride and joy. She was their dedicated protector, ardent champion, and most vocal

cheerleader and she was a source of constant emotional support to them well into their adulthood. She also dearly loved her many nieces and nephews who she treated as her own. She also never failed to remind them about the importance of social justice and the need to practice Christian kindness to all, especially those who were marginalized in society.

Ira's parents who had been raised Anglican and converted to Catholicism in adulthood were devout Roman Catholics and Ira was herself a strong practicing Catholic who lived Christ's teachings of love and charity each and every day. Ira managed to balance a packed work and social schedule while serving for 18 years as a Religious Educator at St. Mary's Catholic Church, Dubai, where she was adored by all her students, their parents, nuns, and priests who encountered her.

In 2005, after they had formally retired, Ira along with her beloved Denzil made the decision to move to the United States so that they could be closer to their daughters and made Austin their home. Ira's younger daughter Sue had attended school in Austin and they had visited her frequently over the years and loved the warmth of the climate as well as the people. Ira was a member of St. Albert the Great Catholic Church in Austin, Texas, where she served as a Religious Educator for several years. Ever devoted to the Holy Blessed Virgin, she also founded and led a Rosary Group among the Sri Lankan Catholic community, which is now one of her many enduring legacies.

Ira lived her faith to the fullest and was a shining example of what it means to be a true Christian. She was loving, thoughtful, selfless, and one of the most kind-hearted individuals who would always notice those that were downtrodden, unloved, or excluded, and she would always draw them in with her wonderful big smile. She was someone who filled the room as soon as she entered it and made the world such a better place with her laughter, kindness, and generosity. Those qualities made an indelible mark on all who met Ira and her family is now bereft with the loss of their darling 'Ammie.' Ira, you are with the angels now and we know that you will be looking down on all of us and saying a rosary on our behalf.

May you rest in eternal peace and protect us always.

A Service of remembrance and thanksgiving will be held at St. Albert The Great Catholic Church, Austin, Texas on Monday, August 19th at 6:30 pm and in Colombo, Sri Lanka, details to follow shortly.

The family also expresses its deep gratitude to the medical personnel of Brackenridge

Hospital, especially the wonderful nurses who were our darling Ammie's angels during her final days.

Memorial donations may be made to The National Ovarian Cancer Coalition(<http://www.ovarian.org>) or the Sri Lanka Cancer Society.

Messages of condolences may be mailed to:

Mr. Denzil Gunawardena

12900 Widge Drive

Austin, Texas, TX 78727

U.S.A.

Comments



“ Dear Uncle Denzil, Priyanthi akki and Sue,

It is with such sadness that I send my condolences to you. I only found out about Theresa's death yesterday from an old colleague who used to work with us at DART days in Dubai.

I tried to find her many times but didn't have any luck as I did not have any contact details for her.

If you do see this message at this late stage, I would appreciate if you could just drop me a line on my email himalids@hotmail.com

Love and prayers to you and your family,

Himali



Himali De Silva - October 15, 2015 at 12:04 AM



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Joaquim and Myrna - November 11, 2013 at 01:56 PM



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Our hearts and our prayers go out to you, Denzil, and your family. May the Lord comfort you and give you peace and solace in this time of grief.

Vic and Indira Chanmugam - August 18, 2013 at 12:00 AM



“ Dear Denzil and family,

It was with great sadness that we heard the news of Ira Akka s death and extend our deepest sympathies to you and the girls.

I still remember the last time I saw her when she called on me along with you on hearing of Emils passing she looked so well and in such good health that it is so hard to beleive she s gone so soon.She was a wonderful person and so full of life and her kindness and generous nature was well known by all and therefore there is no doubt that she is being rewarded for her exemplery life in Gods eternal Kingdom.We also pray that God grant you and the girls the strenght and courage to bear this sorrowful loss.

Please convey our sympathies to Anthony Aiya,Marina Akka and valencie Akka as well.

Ira Akka will be sadly Missed but will be very fondly remembered always!

With Love and Prayers,

Riolene and children

Riolene and Family(Balasuriya) - August 13, 2013 at 12:00 AM



“ Dear Denzil,Priyanthi & Sue,

Please accept our deepest sympathy. Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this difficult time.

Hema and Angela

Hema and Angela Weerasuriya - August 10, 2013 at 12:00 AM



“ Dear Denzil,

Please accept our deepest sympathies on the passing away of dear Ira akka. She was such a close friend of mum and a dear friend to us all when ever we met. We will always remember her sweet gentle spirit in her speech and behaviour. Although we are saddened by her death , We are thankful to God that she lead an exemplary life and now she is with Him in a better place, with no more sorrow or pain. Our sympathies go out to the girls and the rest of the family members.

May the comfort of the Holy Spirit be ever so present with you all during this difficult time.

Our prayers are with you all,

Love & God's Blessings,

Bryan & Nirma Tranchell

Bryan & Nirma Tranchell - August 05, 2013 at 12:00 AM



“ Please accept our deepest sympathies

Rohini, Lionel, Lahiru and Isuru

Rohini - August 04, 2013 at 12:00 AM



“ Dear Denzil,

It is with great sadness that we read the obituary of Ira. We have never forgotten how you welcomed us in your home. Specially the kindness shown by Ira. Running Shyama to the doctors during an emergency and bringing toys like a piano and tea sets and spoiling our daughter Saskia. Those memories of her kindness has never been forgotten by us and we pray for her soul to rest in peace. We pray for you to bear the loss of such a wonderful woman. God Bless you all.

Anil, Shyama, Saskia and Akina.

Anil & Shyama Wijewardene - August 04, 2013 at 12:00 AM



“ Please accept our deepest sympathies.

Hemani and Upendra

Upendra Weerasuriya - August 04, 2013 at 12:00 AM



“ Denzil Aiya / Pre / sue

Please accept our deepest sympathies. May Irakka rest
in peace.

Rani

Rani Cabraal - August 02, 2013 at 12:00 AM



“ We were blessed to have known and to have enjoyed Ira's love, generosity and hospitality over a long period of time. I vividly remember meeting her for the first time on a Thursday evening in May 1986 in Dubai...and the last time in Austin, Texas in September 2011. In that period of time, we were privileged to have known her and will miss her with a deep sense of sadness. Our deepest sympathies are with the family and we pray that Ira's Soul with Rest in Eternal Peace. With much Sorrow.....Mahes & family.

Mahes Fernando - August 02, 2013 at 12:00 AM



“ Dear Denzil and daughters.

My deepest sympathies - The last time I met Ira and u was in Dubai when u both hosted me for dinner. Time has flown and that was I believe almost twenty years back. I also met the daughters in Sri Lanka at the house in Allen Ave about 50years back. I do remember the carefree time I spent at Beryl Aunty's with Anton and the family just horsing around. Ira enjoyed life and was carefree and her absence will be a void for all of you.

Kind regards.

Nihal Goonetilleke - August 02, 2013 at 12:00 AM