



# Chhaya Kulkarni

DEC 29, 1949 - APR 26, 2019



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# Chhaya Kulkarni

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**C**hhaya Kulkarni of Annapolis, Maryland, died peacefully at home on April 26, 2019. She was with her husband, both daughters, son-in-law, three grandchildren, and over a dozen close friends. Chhaya courageously navigated her decade-long journey with cancer with the same positivity and graceful resilience that characterized her entire life.

Chhaya Bhalchandra Rege, the daughter of Bhalchandra Rege and Shanta (Kanta) Kulkarni, was born on December 29, 1949, in Vile Parle, Mumbai, India. She graduated from the Parle Tilak Vidyalaya primary, middle and high school in 1966; that same year she represented the state of Maharashtra in the National Basketball Championship. She studied Microbiology at the University of Bombay while continuing to play basketball for the University, and earned a bachelor's degree in Microbiology in 1970. Shortly thereafter she immigrated to the United States, married Vijay Durgaprasad Kulkarni on May 25, 1970, in the Annapolis Courthouse, and changed her name to Chhaya Vijay Kulkarni. Chhaya and Vijay bought their first home in the Rolling Knolls community of Annapolis, Maryland, in 1975, and built a long and loving life together in Annapolis. Chhaya became a naturalized United States citizen in 1978. She was a dedicated Marylander through and through.

Chhaya worked in the Microbiology Department of Anne Arundel General Hospital in Annapolis from 1971 to 1993. She earned a second bachelor's degree in Biology from UMBC in 1992 and a master's degree in Education from Loyola University in 2000. She taught Biology, Chemistry and Environmental Science for Anne Arundel County Public Schools for 20 years, and retired from Southern High School in 2013.

Chhaya loved gardening, bird watching, cooking, dolphin sightings, dancing, hiking through the United States National Parks and traveling the world with her husband. She passionately celebrated the special occasions of her loved ones, and had many friends of different backgrounds due to her adventurous and non-judgmental nature. Her heart-shaped Rice Krispy treats on Valentine's Day were a delight to all who received them, and her love for sunflowers and



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hummingbirds was legendary. Chhaya committed herself to helping others lead joyful and more meaningful lives in both her birth country and her adopted country. She participated in the Susan G. Komen 3-Day 60 Mile Walk to raise money and awareness for breast cancer. She also supported numerous charities, including the Indian orphanage from which her granddaughter was adopted.

Chhaya was a doting wife, mother, daughter, grandmother and friend. She will be dearly missed.

Chhaya is survived by her husband Vijay Kulkarni; daughter Nina Kulkarni, husband Nathaniel Worden and their three children Rajan, Shekar and Rupa Worden; daughter Shaila Kulkarni; sister Meena Varavdekar, her three children and their families; and countless loved ones that she regarded as family.

Services were held at the family home.

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An additional note from Chhaya's family:

Our dear Chhaya Kulkarni passed away peacefully in her sleep on Friday, April 26. We knew this was coming but thought we had so much more time before we had to say goodbye.

Mom passed away 12 hours before our parents' big 49th Wedding Anniversary party. Since Mom had insisted that the party must go on without her, we honored her wishes and hosted an unconventional Celebration of Life party. We held a private prayer service at home, and then celebrated her life with 20 performances of poetry, songs, karyoke and stories by family members and friends. We danced, laughed and cried together, and then we had an impromptu after-party in our home with a kid vs parent soccer game outside and the best weather imaginable.

Mom was always the life of the party, and she would've loved it. Although we were devastated, we also felt full of joy knowing this was the event she wanted us to host.

Thank you to our wonderful family and friends who came across the country, across the ocean and across General's Highway to help keep us afloat during this challenging week. Thank you also to our Rolling Knolls neighbors who have been a big part of our lives since 1975 and still continue



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to be the same amazing people today that they were back then. Thank you to my NYC colleagues and neighbors + Shaila's South River & AACCC colleagues who are holding everything together until we are back to work. Thank you to all of Mom's friends who are sharing stories with us that we've never heard before. You are the light in the darkness. The hardest part of losing her is knowing that we cannot build any new memories, but hearing new stories, seeing new photos and being reminded of old ones brings So. Much. Comfort.

We are forever grateful to all of you ♥

Love,  
Nina, Shaila, Vijay and Nathaniel

P.s. Out of respect for Mom's wishes, please do not post any specifics about her battle with cancer on Facebook or anywhere else on social media. We used a private page on the Caring Bridge website specifically for that purpose. Any other questions or concerns should be directed to us via text or email.

In Lieu of flowers, donations can be made at the link below to "Team Chhaya" participating in the the Susan G. Komen 3-Day 60-mile Walk to End Cancer in San Diego this November:

[http://www.the3day.org/site/TR/2019/SanDiegoEvent2019?  
pg=team&fr\\_id=2034&team\\_id=262671](http://www.the3day.org/site/TR/2019/SanDiegoEvent2019?pg=team&fr_id=2034&team_id=262671)



# Tribute Wall

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**Priyanka Kulkarni** shared 3 photos to the **Tribute Wall** album.



All of us are deeply saddened on hearing about Chhaya-tai's passing away. We have many fond memories of all her visits to India and to our house. It was always so enjoyable to attend the family get-togethers she organized whenever she came to India. Lots of chatting, laughing and catching up. Her enthusiasm was unparalleled and we loved how she made it a point to appreciate all the little things that would have been so easy to take for granted. We, as a family, also always looked forward to the Christmas card she sent with a nice family photo and letter that told us everything you guys were up to. We are really glad we could meet all of you when we visited USA in December 2017. We still remember her trademark rice-crispie treats! You all are in our prayers and we hope you find the strength to bear this loss. Our heartfelt condolences to you and may Chhaya-tai's soul be at peace always. Sending you all our love. Rajan, Neena, Priyanka, Ankita, Yash

May 1 at 6:03 AM



**Tanuja Deo** posted:

I met Chhaya Aunty for the first time at Shalu Maushi's home in 2002 and I will always remember her as a happy, loving mother and teacher. I am so sorry for your loss.

May 1 at 5:32 AM



**Linda Kilpatrick** posted:

My condolences to your family. I worked with this lovely lady for her entire time at Southern High School. I have many fond memories and she will be missed.

May 1 at 5:12 AM



**Tom Trafton** posted:

Debbie and I first met Chaya and Vijay on a trip to Alaska. We all bonded immediately. Her outgoing personality and sense of humor was captivating. Normally you meet people on a trip and promise to keep in touch, but you never do. With Chaya and Vijay, we did. We kept in touch and got together a few times. I relished those meetings and will never forget the wonderful times we had together. We love you Vijay and Chaya and we are sorry for everyone for this loss.

April 30 at 6:23 PM



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GW

**Gabriella Wood** posted:

I'm so sorry for your family's loss. She was always welcoming to me and has such a warm smile. I'm so glad you had a celebration of life for her. Share the funny and fun stories to help keep those happy memories at the forefront.

April 30 at 3:56 PM

DM

**Dan Mayur** posted:

Vijay my friend, my deepest sympathies to you and to your wonderful family. May God give you the strength to deal with this loss and bring you peace. May Chhaya's soul Rest In Peace. Om Shanti Shanti Shanti:

April 30 at 7:31 AM

AC

**Angela Carpita** posted:

I remember her happy and warm aura. Shaila carries this on in her contagious laugh and compassionate nature. Blessings to her friends and family. May they always live in this beautiful woman's light and hold memories fast.

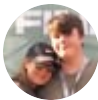
April 30 at 5:21 AM

RD

**Rajas Dalal** lit a candle in honor of Chhaya.



April 30 at 1:51 AM



**Shelly Rawls** posted:

Such a kind, loving, devoted mother. Nina, I remember when we were growing up and there was some sort of misunderstanding between the two of you, she composed a hand-written letter several pages long in order to make things right between you. An absolutely incredible mother.

April 29 at 5:17 PM



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**Jyoti Kumta** posted:

Chaya's smiling face and zest for living will be forever remembered . Our heartfelt condolences to you Vijay and your lovely family. Ashok and Jyoti kumta

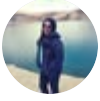
April 29 at 5:12 PM



**Stacie Roberts** lit a candle in honor of Chhaya.



April 29 at 4:46 PM



Priyanka Kulkarni shared 3 photos to the **Tribute Wall** album.

May 1 at 6:03 AM





# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Chhaya by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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