



IN LOVING MEMORY

In Loving Memory of Priya Subramaniam Nair

22nd November 1937 – 14th March 2025

Teacher, Mother of Three, Heart of the Family





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Priya Subramaniam Nair was born on 22 November 1937 in Palakkad, Kerala, into a family of Sanskrit scholars and schoolteachers. She trained as a primary school teacher at the Government Teachers' Training College in Thrissur, married Gopalan Nair in 1961, and for the next decade taught at a village school where she was known for bribing reluctant readers with murukku she made herself. In 1973 the family moved to Leicester, where Gopalan took up engineering work and Priya, after a short period adjusting, resumed teaching at a local primary school where she would remain for twenty years.

She was a woman of considerable discipline and even greater warmth. Her home in Oadby was run with care: the puja room was swept and flowers placed before dawn each morning, the kitchen produced food in quantities designed for thirty rather than five, and the front door was open to anyone who knocked. Her three children — Deepak, Kavitha and Ananya — grew up understanding that hospitality was not a choice but a moral obligation, a lesson absorbed from watching their mother rather than being told.

In her last years Priya enjoyed visits from eight grandchildren, long phone calls with her sisters in Kerala, and reruns of old Tamil films. She passed away peacefully on 14 March 2025 at the family home in Oadby, surrounded by her children. Gopalan preceded her in death in 2014. She is deeply loved and dearly missed.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Passing of Priya Nair

yasin · 7 June 2026

It is with great sadness that the family of Priya Subramaniam Nair announce her peaceful passing on 14 March 2025 at the age of 87. Priya was a beloved mother, grandmother, teacher and friend. The family will hold prayer gatherings at the family home in Oadby. A memorial puja will take place at the Shree Sanatan Mandir. Details below.

EVENT

Memorial Puja and Prayer Gathering

yasin · 7 June 2026

When: 19 March 2025, 10:00am – 19 March 2025, 1:00pm

Where: Shree Sanatan Mandir, 84–90 St Barnabas Road, Leicester, LE5 4BD

The family invite the community to a memorial puja in honour of Priya Subramaniam Nair. All are welcome regardless of faith. Please come dressed modestly. Prasad will be served afterwards.



EULOGY

For Amma

Deepa Krishnamurthy · 7 June 2026

She never sat still unless she was in puja. Even then, her stillness felt purposeful rather than restful — the way water is still in a deep tank rather than a puddle. She woke before five every day of her adult life, swept the puja room, placed fresh flowers at Krishna's feet, and lit the lamp. By the time the rest of us were awake, she had already been in conversation with God for an hour.

She cooked as an act of love and she loved on an industrial scale. She would cook for twelve when six were expected, on the logic that someone would always knock on the door. Someone always did. Neighbours, students from the university who had heard there was a Kerala household that made proper sambar, distant relatives materialising after years of absence — all were fed. She made it look effortless. I know now it was not.

She taught primary school for nearly three decades and she maintained that children were her best teachers. She said they showed her where she had not been clear, and she respected them for it. She brought the same attentiveness home. She listened properly. She asked real questions. She held the family together not by will but by attention, and that is a rarer gift.

We miss her every hour. We will light the lamp.

MEMORY

The Sambar

Deepa Krishnamurthy · 7 June 2026

Priya Amma's sambar was something my mother used to talk about before I ever tasted it. When I finally married into the family and came to Leicester, the sambar was exactly what she had described: the particular sourness of real Palakkad tamarind, the freshness of the curry leaves she grew on the kitchen windowsill, a depth of spicing that took her two hours and she would not share the method. She tried to teach me twice. Both times she kept adding things after I thought we were done. I think the secret was in what she did not measure.



MEMORY

Deepak's Wedding: What She Said

Ravi Venkataraman · 7 June 2026

At Deepak's wedding Priya Amma pulled me aside during the reception and told me, very calmly, that I was going to be a good son-in-law. Not that she hoped so. That I was going to be. It felt less like a prediction and more like an instruction from someone with the authority to issue them. I have tried to live up to it every year since.

MEMORY

Forty Years of Friendship

Sunita Pillai · 7 June 2026

Priya and I arrived in Leicester within six months of each other. We were both strangers to England and to each other, and we became the kind of friends you only make when you are both slightly lost in the same place. She taught me how to find a GP, how to read a gas bill, how to make English people feel comfortable at Indian functions. She was sharper than she let on and funnier than people realised. She had a way of saying the most devastating thing in the most gentle voice. I will miss her every day.

MEMORY

She Still Wrote Letters

Ravi Venkataraman · 7 June 2026

Priya Amma never got comfortable with WhatsApp. She would read the messages and then ask Deepak to respond for her. But she wrote letters. Actual letters, on blue inland-mail paper, to her sisters in Kerala, to old friends from the training college, to a former student who had moved to Canada. She wrote them in a small precise hand. After she died we found two boxes of letters written back to her, going back decades. People had kept them because they were worth keeping.

CONDOLENCE

From the Pillai and Kumar families

Sunita Pillai · 7 June 2026

Priya was a mother to all of us in the Leicester Tamil community, whether or not we were family. She fed us, advised us, scolded us when necessary, and loved us without conditions. The loss of such a person leaves a space that cannot be filled. We are holding Deepak, Kavitha, Ananya and the whole family in our hearts and prayers. Om Shanti.

CONDOLENCE

From Her Former Pupils

Deepa Krishnamurthy · 7 June 2026

Several of us from Highfields Primary School in the class of 1989 have been in touch since hearing the news. Mrs Nair was the teacher many of us remember most. She expected a great deal and she gave a great deal. She told us, when we were seven and eight years old, that we could do anything we set our minds to, and she said it in a way that made us believe her. Some of us became doctors and engineers and teachers ourselves. We would like to think she would be pleased.

PRAYER

Shanti Patha

Ravi Venkataraman · 7 June 2026

Om dyauh shantir antariksha shantih prithivi shantir apah shantir oshadhayah shantih.
May peace radiate there in the whole sky as well as in the vast ethereal space everywhere. May all beings be happy, may all be healthy. May all enjoy good fortune and none suffer in any way. Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.

MEMORY

She Never Told Anyone

7 June 2026

I am keeping my name out of this because it is not my story to claim. I know for a fact that Priya Amma sponsored three girls from her home village in Kerala through secondary school, for fifteen years. She found out about them through her sisters and set up a small standing order that she told no one about. I only know because one of those girls contacted the family after she died to say thank you. That is who she was.

MEMORY

Diwali at Oadby

Ravi Venkataraman · 10 June 2026

Diwali at Amma's house was not optional. However far you had moved, you came back to Oadby for it. She would have been cooking for three days – the whole house smelled of ghee and cardamom – and the front room filled up with cousins and neighbours and people none of us could quite place. She lit the diyas herself, every single one, and would not let the children do it until they were old enough to be careful about it. The photographs from those evenings are some of the only ones where she is sitting down. She is always smiling in them, usually mid-sentence, usually telling someone to eat more.



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