

Eulogy – Ammachi



Firstly on behalf of the whole family, we would like to thank from the bottom of our hearts each and every one of you, who have made it to Ammachi's funeral. Ammachi would have truly appreciated this ...

The eulogy, which I am just about to recite will be predominantly based from the long conversations that I had with Ammachi, during my brief times here, which

was always a delight, along with some general information about her and information from her children and my cousins.

Ammachi was born as Annamma John to Elikutty and N C John, Nerayath. She was the 5th child and the second daughter to be born to a family of 11. She was born on Jan 20th 1930. Her mother told her that she was born on the same day as St. Sebastian. But unfortunately for Ammachi, her birth certificate and passport records indicate that it was Jan the 23rd. This fortunately was used to the advantage of some of her children who forgot to call her on her original birthday.

Annamma John was born an intelligent child. She, however, did not have the opportunity to study more than the 6th form, which in today's terms was the 10th standard. Her career aspiration went kaput when she was forced to marry at the early age of 15 to my late grandfather, Hormis Tharakan, who we all call fondly as BIG Daddy ...

She agreed to marry provided that she could study further. But given that period of time, it just couldn't materialize. Coming to think of the marriage, we sometimes used to ask big daddy jokingly how come Big daddy you married a girl who was taller than you? And then he would jokingly say that when he married Ammachi, she was so young that she was shorter than him. And, he groomed her well enough for her to grow taller than him, (Pause) in all senses.

Ammachi was born a sickly child but still she survived in spite of her ailments to a blessed age of 84+. She was a fighter from day 1. It was Ammachi who held the family together and took majority of the responsibility of raising the 7 children. She had a very positive and upbeat attitude and never let trials and tribulations of everyday life to wear her down. She could have really complained if she wanted too, but she chose to see opportunity in times of adversity. She chose to see the glass as half full instead of half empty. She was a skilled decision maker and was able to make the right decision at the right time, which, according to me, were great leadership skills. She was way ahead of her time. She had a Skype account way before even I had one!! And was really tech savvy and was someone who could use the I pad with ease. She could also adapt to change quickly. She never believed in wasting time. She kept her mind sharp by playing Sudoku and the card game, patience at a very high difficulty level. She was a crochet expert. Next time you enter the house please pay attention to the curtains in the living room that was handmade by Ammachi. She had a terrific business acumen, and would do all sorts of small businesses from cultivating shrimp, selling wine, coconuts, crochet towels and curtains and even oriflamme. Ammachi also liked to lead a good quality of life. However, she never liked wastage of money but she also did not ever compromise on serving us good food every time we were here. She also loved her card game sessions. She was an excellent rummy player but also made the effort to teach and play fun card games up to the youngest of her grandchildren. She loved her routines and could accomplish many things in a day.

She was also very religious and was very particular about saying the rosary at 6.30 in the evening every day, whatever the circumstance and regardless of how many people were there ...

She was extremely proud of her father and her eyes would always light up with excitement as she would tell me interesting stories of her father, the legendary N C John and about his business acumen. She was extremely proud of his varied accomplishments. She, however, has a few enviable records of which particularly I would like to share one - she has never entered a kitchen to cook in all her life! That was because she was blessed abundantly with excellent staff. Legend goes that Ammachi attended a cooking class and taught everything to Vincent chettan. So we can look at this two ways; one that she couldn't cook or she was an excellent manager. Look at Vincent chettan's culinary skills today. She was really kind to all the people who worked here and was also very charitable. She in fact told me once that her greatest gift from god was the fact that she was very fortunate to have the highly skilled Ayamo and Vincent chettan and who we all consider part of our family.

Both Big Daddy and Ammachi wanted the best for their children and provided them with the best of opportunities to pursue their dreams. She was deeply affected by the death of her oldest and most obedient son, Abraham Tharakan. She, however, regretted her decision that she did not allow Avarachan perapan to pursue music as a career. But she made up for this by encouraging her grand children to pursue the career of their choice. When I was kind of confused about pursuing photography as a career, not knowing whether I was going to make something out of it, she would always tell me to do something I love and stick to it. She has also done the same to all my other cousins. She wanted all of us to do well.

Ammachi was fiercely independent and loved her independence. She was a strong woman and wanted all of us to be independent as early as possible. She is a great example for women in general to be successful and tough. She would also induce healthy competition among us grandchildren by telling me that the girls are scoring better grades than the boys in this house. But this was just her way of motivating the boys. Ammachi was also very creative. She would make us interesting shapes of planes and trains with puttu and ethyaka and then we would enjoy eating this later. This I was shocked to know that she did this for all her children and her 18 grandchildren right upto Miniama's son, Aidan

The best part for us was during Christmas when all the cousins used to meet. We used to have this money grabbing competition which was Ammachi's idea - where she would add a lot of one rupee coins in a shallow box and each grand kid from the youngest to the oldest would grab as much money as one could with one hand. The amount of 1 rupee coins that we grabbed was the amount of money each got. The highest was between 120-140rs, which was not much, but the bigger picture was the amount of satisfaction and happiness we as children got, which was ingenious of Ammachi. This was a great generation gap eliminator and Ammachi's answer to the theory of marginal utility ...

Every year Ammachi calls her children and grandchildren without fail on their birthdays. Whenever she called me I would speak to her about the stuff that I was

doing and tell her that there was an important shoot coming up and would ask her to pray that it goes well and her immediate answer was, "I pray for all my children and grandchildren".

Rest in Peace Ammachi. We love you and Will Miss You Terribly.

Umman Tharakan (son of George Tharakan, Parayil)