

Abraham Parayil Tharakan Eulogy

Abraham Tharakan (Avirachen Chettan to many of us) was an extra-ordinarily gifted human being who gave so much of himself so willingly to each of us - he was a celebration of life itself!

Avirachen was the ultimate gentleman who loved his family and friends very deeply.

One of his many colleagues from work at the funeral remarked, "Abraham was a great team player. He took on the tough assignments that no one else would take and our customers loved him. In fact several of the company's customers were also at the funeral." It's a rare honor and a tribute to the extra-ordinary relationships he built. His amazing talents and interests in music, chess, bridge and 56 created a wide circle of friends. The most powerful comment from one of his card-playing Canadian friends made me realize the sense of loss when he shook my hand and said simply and plainly, "Abraham was the nicest human being I ever known".

Of course, he traveled long distances for his family. He was there for all the special occasions, the weddings and baptisms and even the first holy communions and mini-family reunions we held.

Several years ago, at our annual cousins re-union for the US Open Tennis Championships, we re-played our traditional Canada versus US family tennis match. Canada was represented by Hormis, Philip and Aneela and the US by the US-resident cousins. Avirachen, of course has always been the referee. With each year, the kids have gotten better and we've gotten worse with age. Avirachen gave us old cousins all the close line calls, just to level the playing field, as he has through-out his life – treating people fairly and w respect regardless of their backgrounds. Just for the record, the kids beat us anyway.

Afterwards we had dinner and moved over to our family room at home to listen to Avirachen play a Beethoven sonata. Some of us were slumped on sofas and others lay down on the carpet, but all of us were transported for that moment in time to another place – a place of peace and harmony.

On a cousins' get-together in Florida, my brother asked him which airline he'd flown in on. He proudly pointed to his car and said "Ford Motor Airlines" and laughed his infectious laugh. You see, Avirachen loved to drive his car. I asked him once how he overcame the boredom of the long drives for these family occasions. He quickly quipped, "It took a couple of extra Beethoven symphonies!"

If there was a road from Canada to Kerala and a symphony long enough, I think he would have considered driving it when he retired. In fact, that's what I think he did. He retired and took the heavenly road home and he's here among us, because I can hear the music. It's his symphony from that heavenly place of peace and harmony forever.

Epilogue

So many years have passed since we lost our first cousin
Someone so beloved to so many of us
That words alone cannot express our sense of loss
Avirachen Chettan was an accomplished pianist
And he was a great interpreter of Beethoven's piano concertos

So, imagine my surprise, when the day before the NCJ 75th reunion,
I received a link to a piece of piano music from Deepa
It was Beethoven's fifth and grandest piano concerto
Called the Emperor played by Deepa's son David
It was Avirachen's favorite piano concerto
If you have 8 minutes of quiet time, listen to this piece
And you will hear Avirachen chatting and his infectious laugh
Copy and paste this link into your browser
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sDQCUWJB5Q>

Thomas Thekkethala