

Aruna Bodapati Gambhir, 1962–2023

Aruna Bodapati Gambhir passed away at the age of 61 on Wednesday, November 29, 2023, after a long battle with breast cancer. Preceded in death by her husband, Sam, and their son, Milan, she was the last remaining member of the very special Gambhir family. Aruna is survived by her nieces and her nephew: Deepika, Sandhya, and Sunil Bodapati.

Aruna was born on February 4, 1962, in Bangalore and moved with her family to the United States in 1975 after spending 10 years in England. She received a bachelor's degree in biochemistry at the University of California, Berkeley, a master's degree in computer science at Santa Clara University, and an MBA from UCLA. She had a successful career in software development and executive leadership, including her role as chief executive officer of CellSight, a company focused on commercializing PET imaging tracers to visualize the immune status of patients.

There were many facets of the Aruna we knew.

There was the brilliant, witty, and immensely compassionate woman who perfectly matched her husband's intellect and passion for life, people, and purpose. In Sam's most memorable moments, Aruna was there not only as an inspiration for him but as a force of nature in her own right. It was always Sam and Aruna, Aruna and Sam. They were brilliant together, and we loved her as much as we loved and admired him. She was a tower of strength, a change agent, a sharp thinker, and an incredibly genuine person with a sassy sense of humor. She had a bold way of living—a characteristic that inspired and energized those around her. If you went to Aruna with a problem, whether it was about science, business, or life, she would get straight to the heart of the matter without wasting a moment. She wouldn't hold back, especially if the issue was one most people would be afraid to call out or tackle. She operated from a place of urgency to find solutions for the people she cared about and to make progress in medicine.

Then there was the Aruna after Milan passed away. The unimaginable loss of a child, an extraordinary child, transformed Aruna's wicked sense of humor and *joie de vivre* into a sadder, wry, and darker reflection of life. Her purpose was redirected to understanding "why" and how to make sure no other parent ever lost a child to cancer again. It was a testimony to her strength and intelligence that she had great success, of her own volition, in understanding this question, though at times it seemed that it may have come at the expense of her light and love for life.

And finally, there was the Aruna after Sam. She was still purposeful but was dealing with so much loss and heartache. As her health deteriorated, it was almost as though the longing to be with the great loves of her life—Sam and Milan—slowly took her away from us. Incredibly, even in this stage of her life, she put her own unfathomable grief aside to support Sam's former lab members (his "kids"), trainees, and colleagues. During what one could only imagine as the darkest of days, Aruna would tirelessly call each lab member individually to check on them, listen, and see how she could help. She provided honest advice and practical help on the next steps in their careers and supported them through their sadness while, in some cases, cooking them a *dosa* in her Portola Valley home.



Not only was Aruna a woman of action when it came to helping Sam's lab members find jobs and make tough decisions to improve the quality of their lives, but she also did everything she could to ensure that her late husband's vision and wishes were fulfilled. She built a house that Sam designed while he was ill. Importantly to our Stanford community, Aruna also did everything in her power to ensure that the second cyclotron and the expansion of the radiochemistry program went ahead. She met with countless people, learned about every detail of what was planned and what needed to be done, and didn't take no for an answer. Without Aruna's determination, Sam's vision for this second facility, and all the research and discoveries that will emerge as a result of its completion, would not have seen the light of day.

We are forever indebted to Aruna for her courageous, bold, and selfless acts. We thank her for always reminding us to get busy living and, without delay, to do the things that matter the most to us.

Although we miss her dearly, we will forever be inspired by her strength, her love for her family, her resilience, her ability to care and fight for others and help so many around her no matter what she was going through. She was truly a unique human being who has left an indelible mark on all who knew her.

We all love the Gambhir family. We all love Aruna. Aruna, Milan, and Sam are together now. We hope she has regained that smile that could light up a room, that throaty chuckle that infected us with laughter.

Aruna, we hope you have found peace.

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