



# Gopal Pati

JAN 9, 1941 - SEP 29, 2025



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## **Gopal Pati**

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**T**he family of Dr. Gopal C. 'Indy' Pati is saddened to announce his passing. After 80+ years of robust living Gopal died on September 29, 2025, from the effects of dementia, in the excellent care of Arden Court and Hope Hospice of Fort Myers, Florida.

Gopal is survived by his wife, Karen; and his legacy continues with son, Justin; daughter, Lucia (Gary); and three grandchildren, Sasha, Sparrow, and Luna; along with numerous nephews and nieces, including, Paul 'Andy' (Kim), Marlo, Robin, and Sapan. Surviving relatives in India include, Hari, Arati, Swati (Narayan), Naba (Tanu), Rajesh, Ritesh, Naba, Deb, Sabitarani (Debu), Nityagopal, Satyagopal, Shaktigopal, Nabagopal, Riktarani, Sabitarani, Sathi, Ashok, Durgadash, Nilima, Anima, and Chandana.

He was also dearly loved by his in-laws including his deceased mother and father and is survived by sisters, Suzi and Julie; along with numerous nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by his parents and siblings along with his first wife, Nancy.

Born in Keshiary, India, Gopal moved to Chicago, Illinois to continue his advanced education. It was there that he learned about the challenges of those living with disabilities which impacted the rest of his life. Chicago was challenging for a young man with little money, but he was resilient. From learning to tend bar at Tip Top Tap (make sure the first one is a good one), to meeting Chicago's elite as a bank employee (hello Ann Landers, AKA Dear Abby), Gopal found his way. He was often assisted by his brother in New Orleans, who kindly sent train tickets. They enjoyed fishing together and it was there that Gopal learned the basics of cooking.

After securing his PhD Gopal taught briefly at Lewis University in Illinois. He then accepted his dream job at Indiana University. Declaring Bloomington a 'little hick town' Gopal opted to teach at Indiana University's Gary, Indiana campus. He and Nancy raised their 2 children in a beautiful home on the shores of Lake Michigan's Miller Beach neighborhood.



## Obituary

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As Professor of Management (now Emeritus) he was an expert in managing transition. He served as a consultant to numerous industrial, government and service organizations nationally and internationally and as a confidential advisor to chief executives of several companies and municipalities. Clients include Midwest Steel, Whirlpool, Bank of Indiana, and Bank One, Portland Newspapers and the Post-Tribune.

Professor Pati was an excellent teacher, as confirmed by the many awards he received. Most notable are the awards for Professor of the Year, Outstanding Educator of America, and finally, Outstanding Faculty, Chancellors Distinguished Service Award, for his numerous contributions to the University and the community.

He conducted and participated in various management conferences, symposia, and workshops in the US and abroad. His work is extensively cited in business periodicals, monographs, text, and casebook chapters, along with numerous social science indexes. He is extensively published in dozens of national and international journals, most notably in Harvard Business Review, Personnel Journal, Organizational Dynamics, and the Encyclopedia of Disability and Rehabilitation. He is author of the book, *Managing and Employing the Handicapped: The Untapped Potential*.

After the ordeal of authoring the book, the Pati family was invited by his then in-laws for their first visit to Sanibel Island, Florida. He fell in love with the island's charms, relating the flora to his memories of home in India. And he discovered the joy of fishing for sheepshead at the Sanibel pier. Within a few years they bought a time share, then a lot, where they built their dream vacation home, later to become his permanent residence.

Dr. Pati was a proud member of many professional and academic organizations. These include the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, National Rehabilitation Association, National Advisory Board, Wichita Rehabilitation Engineering Center, Gary Police Civil Service Commission, and Editorial Board of the Personnel Journal.

Additional highlights include being honored as an Ortale Memorial Lecturer and addressing the convention of the National Rehabilitation Association. He was appointed to the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and honored by the United States Congress with The Americans with Disabilities Act Award. Later he was named recipient of the Albert H. Gary Distinguished Citizenship Award for contributions to the ADA movement.



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Internationally he was invited as a guest of Japan Sun Industries, Beppu and Kyoto, Japan. Later Dr. Pati was chosen as a U.S. labor relations delegate in the Citizens Ambassador Program to the then Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the Soviet Union. It was a result of that delegation that he was invited as Visiting Professor of Management at the University of Hawaii in Honolulu, serving for 3 semesters. There he was an Arthur Whitehill Lecturer at the Pacific Asian Management Institute, College of Business Administration, University of Hawaii.

It was in Hawaii that he retired his 3-piece suits and built a collection of colorful Hawaiian shirts and shorts (worn separately thank goodness). This became his trademark look once he moved full-time to his home on Sanibel Island. He loved fishing and it was on the Sanibel Fishing pier that he was deemed 'Indy,' a moniker that soon became well known on the small island he loved.

More recent community services include serving as Chairman, Wildlife Committee, City of Sanibel where he aided in the passage of 2 laws protecting local wildlife, helped create signage and more. He was also a member of the Southwest Florida Business Advisory Council and served on the Board of Directors for both the Florida Rehabilitation Association and the Sanibel Public Library, Sanibel.

Gopal had many passions, including family, fishing, wildlife, cooking and drinking, travel, and making the world a better place for those with disabilities and for our wildlife. Favorite fishing experiences include many trips to Louisiana, fishing with his brother and nephews. They frequented Delacroix Island, Lake Pontchartrain, and the Reggio Canal. In Sanibel Gopal loved catching sheepshead at the pier and drifting for trout in Pine Island Sound grass flats in his 18' boat 'Dr. Go Fish'. It was a great place to bring friends and family when they visited Sanibel, and he loved experiencing it with his daughter and wife. In Indiana Gopal enjoyed renting a john boat at Willow Slough and fishing with daughter Lucia. His weekends fishing with his father-in-law (and cooking with his mother-in-law) at Crooked Lake were also memorable. Favorite travels included an Alaska cruise with Sanibel friends. Yes, there was fishing at every port of call. He loved the wildlife on a photo safari in Tanzania and Kenya, a tour of the holy sites in Israel and many trips to Europe with friends. His proudest accomplishment was serving on the President's Commission for the Passage of ADA. His greatest stories were about teaching inmates at the Joliet State Penitentiary and his remarks about Stalin turning in his grave at a state dinner in the then Soviet Union. He loved an audience!



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A celebration of life will be held at the Sanibel Community House, Sunday November 30th, 2025, from 1-4. Dress is island casual. In honor of his legacy, memorials may be made to support rebuilding the Sanibel Pier which was destroyed during Hurricane Ian. To donate click this link Charitable Foundation of the Islands Kindful or log in at <https://charitablefoundationoftheislands-bloom.kindful.com/?campaign=1349384>

If preferred, checks may be mailed to: Charitable Foundation of the Islands, P.O. Box 1429, Sanibel, FL 33957. Please note "Fishing Pier" in the memo line.

Please share a memory or picture with Gopal for the family to see on the Tribute Page on Fort Myers Memorial Gardens Website. <https://www.fortmyersmemorial.com/obituaries/gopal-pati/obituary>

Gopal, your life was a blessing to so many. Our memories are like the shells on the beach and the fish in the sea: plentiful, beautiful and each one unique. Rest in Peace.



# Events

**Gopal Pati**

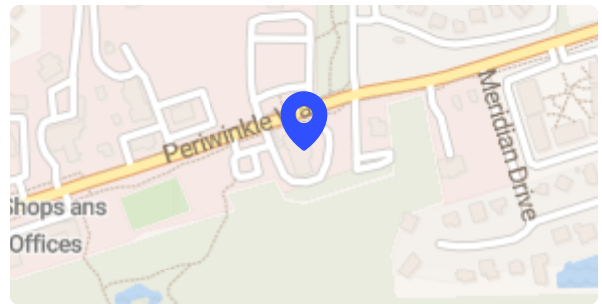
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## Celebration of Life

 **Sunday**, November 30, 2025

 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM ET

 **Sanibel Community House**  
2173 Periwinkle Way , Sanibel FL 33957





# Tribute Wall

**Gopal Pati**

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**Steve & Linda Ketcham** planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Gopal.



October 17 at 6:13 PM



**Linda Ketcham** posted:

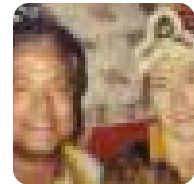
My name is Linda Ketcham & I am Gopal's sister-in-law. Here are two vivid memories;Gopal & Nancy were visiting with us in Grand Lake Colorado & we decided to take them river rafting on inner tubes. Gopal somehow veered off into a strong current unexpectedly & the raft began to bounce around. He cried out to us on the shore & in the raft next to him"Help me Help me I'm going to break my balls!"My other favorite memory was when Gopal taught me to make "real" Indian food'. He opened my cupboard & promptly threw away my "Curry powder" saying : this isn't curry - it's just junk! This is how you make REAL curry, then proceeded to show me the combination of numerous spices for the true curry. I still have most of those spice bottles in my pantry with which I make "real curry" in his honor. Much love,Linda & SteveSteve & I wish we could be present at the memorial but we are having out of state company that weekend for Thanksgiving.Blessings & love to you Luci, Justin, Karen & families.

October 17 at 6:04 PM



**Anit Ranjan Pati** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

Grandfathers give us not only wisdom and encouragement but they are an inspiration to us.Your strength through it all was inspiring. Rest now



October 8 at 6:04 AM



**Anit Ranjan Pati** lit a candle in honor of Gopal.

May your bravery and kindness be remembered always.



October 8 at 5:51 AM



## Tribute Wall

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GM

**Gail Migliorini** posted:

So many to share but I will always remember him drinking martinis on the terrace in Scipione Castello with Gianni. Karen and I had a hard time keeping up. Gail Migliorini

October 5 at 6:30 PM



**Karen Pati** October 6 at 10:06 AM

I will also always remember visiting your beautiful home and enjoying your hospitality. Thank you friend. I now officially have joined the widow club. See you soon I hope.

DM

**Dean Martel** posted:

It was one late afternoon during a visit to see Gopal and Karen, that Gopal took me on a trip on his beloved boat. His passion for the water was palpable, a vibrant part of his identity. As we sailed through the waves, Gopal navigated to his cherished spots, sharing stories that spanned a lifetime. His anecdotes were rich with wildlife education and local trivia, each tale inviting me to see the world through his ardent eyes. I listened intently, absorbing both his words and the tranquil beauty surrounding us. The day culminated in a breathtaking sunset, painting the sky in a tapestry of colors, which deepened my appreciation for both the journey and my companion. This is my memory of Gopal. While writing my first memory, another memory surfaced, this one tinged with spice. At a dinner with Gopal and Karen, he proposed introducing me to a pepper—not just any pepper, but one brought from India. Karen, concerned, urged caution, yet Gopal sliced it generously. I accepted the offer, unwittingly challenging my senses. Moments later, the fiery heat overwhelmed me, rendering my taste buds temporarily mute. Gopal, with a knowing smile, savored his share, ever the connoisseur of heat. Such moments encapsulate Gopal's zest for life, reflecting his infectious enthusiasm and passion for sharing.

October 4 at 3:27 PM



**Karen Pati** October 6 at 10:08 AM

Dean I didn't realize you were such a master of storytelling. Thank you. I enjoyed a good cry over the first story only to break into laughter with the second. With love, Karen



# Media

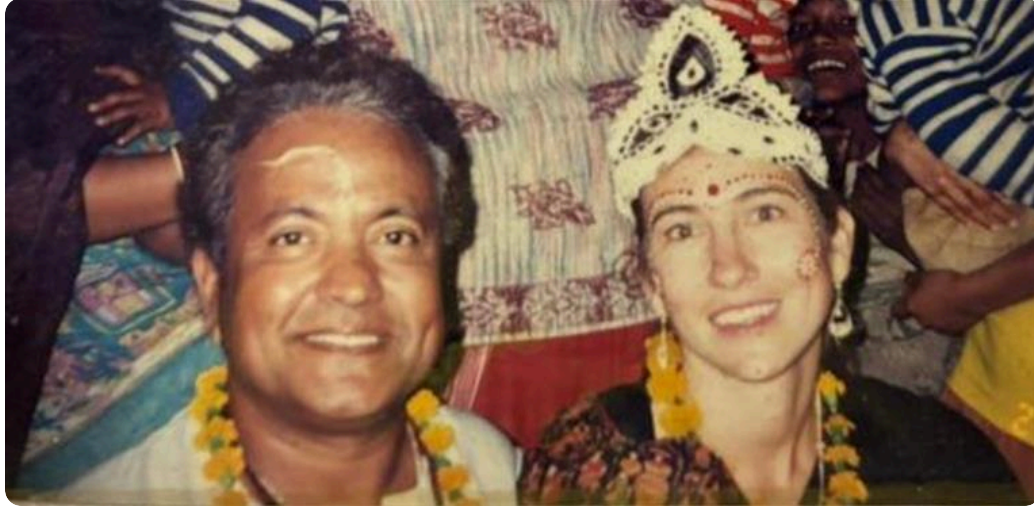
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Anit Ranjan Pati shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

October 8 at 6:04 AM





# Memories only last if you share them

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



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