

KATHLEEN GOUGH— THE SPIRITUAL HUMANIST

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Kathleen, my mentor, friend, confidant and benefactor. She was all of these and much more, for words are inadequate to describe the depth of my feelings for her. She descended into my life at a time when I was going through culture shock and intellectual adjustment combined with financial troubles.

At Brandeis University, subsisting on a small graduate fellowship, my living arrangements off-campus were rather unpleasant and interfering with my studies. Kathleen, with her spiritual grace and caring, absolutely stunned me by offering to pay for the difference in costs of staying in the dormitory on campus. Much as I was touched and was extremely grateful to her for her magnanimous gesture, I just could not come around to accepting her generous offer. Somehow, I managed to work out other arrangements to move to the campus dormitory. The story did not end there. One fine day when I went to check my campus mailbox I found an envelope with Kathleen's neat handwriting. Enclosed with her lovely letter was a cheque for \$100. She wanted me to have it, she said, as a token of her appreciation for the many kindnesses she received from the people in Tanjore, India, adding this was the least she could do. Needless to say, I was overwhelmed. In those days—the 1960s—\$100 was a lot of money, especially for a struggling student.

I had written to my father in India, who also was overwhelmed by Kathleen's kindness and generosity: that from somewhere Providence had sent a caretaker for his youngest child in a faraway place without the comforts of home and family. Remember too that in 1962 there were not too many Indians living in the United States. Kathleen's generosity and caring have become legendary in our household in India.

The intellectual refinement I went through under Kathleen's tutelage is something for which I shall be eternally grateful. My master's thesis, based on my field work in the British Virgin Islands, was a product of her coaching and fine-tuning of my central thesis on the impact of migration on the Tortolan class structure. Just as I was relishing the intellectual challenges of studying with Kathleen as my adviser, chaos reigned on the campus as she became controversial with her pronouncements about Cuba and criticism of Ken-

nedy's policy. The university administration's rift with her and all the mental agony she and David Aberle endured became our pain as well, since we students felt rudderless. Kathleen and David were leaving Brandeis, and each one of us tied to Kathleen in our intellectual pursuits had to make decisions about our own future studies.

On a personal plane, however, I feel fortunate that I kept the link with Kathleen as we exchanged annual Christmas letters. This continued until her last. The final expression of her caring was revealed to me when I received copies of her books on Tanjore and Vietnam from the Centre for Human Settlements. Even on her deathbed, as she lay fighting the cancer that ultimately claimed her, Kathleen left word that copies of her latest publication should be sent to a few of her friends. That I was one among the chosen few to receive her books was an honour from Kathleen that I shall always cherish. To me, Kathleen will live on forever.