Tribute to Anita Ghulam Ali (1934-2014)
A friend of 50 years

By Zubeida A, Dossal

This article is my loving and fond tribute to Anita -- Anita whom I was honoured and privileged to have as a friend for more than fifty years. She was indeed a friend in every sense of the word -- loving, appreciative, caring and ever so helpful.

Her many gifts of head and heart have helped many a person and friend. She made happy things happier and sad ones a little less so by her sympathy and her sharing and care, which she did so gracefully.

What I enjoyed was her *joie de vivre*, which she passed on to those around her. Here I recall my first meeting with my friend.

Very vivid till today (50+ years later) is my meeting or rather my first view of Anita Ghulamali.

I was then the headmistress of the SMB Fatema Jinnah School and had been asked by Mrs Zia bunissa Hamidullah the editor and owner of the *Mirror*, to interview Anita Ghulamali. I did not know her, but rang her up to request an interview. I told her I was new to Karachi and did not know the roads very well and might be a little early or late.

Surprisingly she told me "Don't worry, I am an old Karachiite. I know your school very well, and will come there myself".

So we arranged the date and time.

She came exactly on time. I saw her from my office and walked towards her, meeting her halfway in the large school compound.

She made a very charming and unforgettable picture in a bright yellow cotton saree.

I think we both saw a person we liked. I know I did.

I took her into my office where we sat and started talking. It seemed very informal and friendly. It was as if we had known each other for long. I realized also that she was the grand daughter of the Chairman of the Sindh Madressah Board, Mr Nuruddin Ghulamali.

To digress a bit, he was my friend at the Board and at every meeting he would keep his attache case on the chair to his left. As soon as I came in he would beckon me, lift his bag and make me sit next to him and tell me, "Sit here! I don't like to sit next to old fogeys!!" though he was the eldest by far. Probably at least 10 years older than the eldest there!!
So I got along fine with Anita and her grandfather. Both were prized friendships, which I enjoyed and valued much.

Over the years we became closer because our interests and work were so similar. Our friendship grew for which I am very grateful. I feel blessed and fortunate that we had many happy working hours together as well as some friendly meetings.

You were truly a woman of substance, Anita. I'm sure in heaven too you must be working, for idle you can never be! God bless you.

All who knew her will miss her greatly and deeply. Many are our prayers for her as she so well deserves.

Rest in peace dear friend.
Tribute to Anita Ghulam Ali

From Zubeida Mustafa

Although I am not in Karachi to attend this meeting to pay homage to a dear friend, Anita Ghulamali, an icon, I can assure you that I am there in spirit as no one who knew Anita can ever stay away from anything connected with her. For those of us who feel she touched us in innumerable ways it is difficult to believe that she is not here with us physically any more.

Yet I feel her presence and many of you will also feel it. Her ideas, her work, her contribution and the impact of her personality on each of us will not melt away. Each of us who is here -- and many who could not make it -- will carry her message forward. That was the magic of Anita Ghulamali.

I want to pay tributes to her qualities as a great human being as well as her attributes as a great professional. It was the way she combined these two dimensions of her being that made her so remarkable. She emerged as a great educationist who had a warm heart and integrity. She cared not just for the person she was connected to -- and there were hundreds and thousands of them who were made to feel special whenever she met them. She cared for the country, its people and its institutions.

It is impossible to sum up her many splendoured personality and multidimensional contributions in a few words here. But I must remind you that what mattered to her most was how we acquitted ourselves as human beings. At times she was impatient with people who didn’t behave as she thought was in the fitness of things. But in the end she brought them round to her way of doing things as friends -- whether it was an MNA who spat paan in the corridor of the SEF office, or the students from Jamshoro who failed to show up on time after inviting her for an event at the University.

Her favourite quote was “Give a child comfortable and clean shoes to wear on his feet and see how it changes his personality and makes him inclined to work, while a person who is casually dressed in loose and baggy clothes will never gear himself for serious work”.

Thank you Baela for being a true disciple of Anita and organizing this meeting. I also thank you for inviting me to send this message.

She once told me,