



# Raj Varad Kilambi

FEB 1, 1933 - MAR 25, 2021



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# Table of Contents

<b>Obituary</b> .....	Page 3
<b>Tribute Wall</b> .....	Page 6



# **Raj Varad Kilambi**

FEB 1, 1933 - MAR 25, 2021

**R**aj Varad Kilambi, age 88, passed from his earthly life Thursday, March 25, 2021. Born in Tenali, India A.P., he is survived within his immediate family by his loving wife of nearly 64 years, Jaya, his sons Neal, Navin, and Nirmal, and their respective wives, Juanita, Bridget, and Cherie. He is also survived by and proud of his nine grandchildren, and two step-grandchildren.

Our family is sad to say goodbye to a well respected member of the Fayetteville community. As a young man, he left part of his heart with his family in India in the late 1950's to come to North America where he earned a second Master's degree at the University of British Columbia Vancouver. Then with his bride, Jaya, always at his side, he completed a PhD in Zoology at the University of Washington, Seattle where his first two sons Neal and Navin were born. He was offered a position starting as an Assistant Professor at the University of Arkansas in 1966 and has the distinction of being the first Indian and first person if not one of the first persons of color hired at the University of Arkansas in that rank. His youngest son Nirmal was born in Fayetteville. He was highly regarded as he steadily rose through the ranks to full Professor and subsequently Professor Emeritus.

His academic, research achievements, and publications are too numerous to count but included Chair of the Department of Biology, Who's Who of American Educators, and the prestigious Fulbright Scholar award. An immensely popular Professor of Zoology for 35 years, his impact on the lives of many students and colleagues is truly immeasurable. We have been blessed to hear many of their personal stories especially his impact in the education of the health care community which also inspired his sons' careers.

He was also a respected leader, proud Naturalized American Citizen, and advisor in the Indian community and was the founding member of The Friend's of India Society of the University of Arkansas and The Hindu Temple of Northwest Arkansas. He was truly a pioneer.



## Obituary

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But in the end, his source of pride and most important thing to him was his family. He was a loving and devoted husband, and the most loving and supportive father to his three sons. All he wanted in life was to work hard to provide for his wife and his three sons' health, education, and success as the Kilambi family's first generation of Americans.

We will miss his intellect, his personal style, his great sense of humor, his abundant if not often told story telling, his yoga demonstrations, and his wise advice and counsel. But most of all we will miss his unconditional love and great hugs.

We lost the pillar of our family, but take comfort that he is no longer suffering and is in a better place. After a private cremation and family ceremony, a memorial service is planned at a time to be determined soon for all who want to attend, pay their respects, and perhaps share a story. Cremation arrangements are by Nelson Berna Funeral Home of Fayetteville.

The family of Dr. Raj V. Kilambi will be honoring his sad March 25th passing by having a celebration of his life. The celebration will be held Sunday May 16th, 2021 at Agri Park, 1167 W Knapp Drive, in Fayetteville (72704).

We invite all friends and colleagues who wish to come to honor and celebrate his life and achievements. The celebration will be a casual event beginning at 12 pm noon. We will have brief remarks from friends and family which will be followed by a service of Indian food and conversation at tables in the Pavilion and Tent. Weather permitting, we will have some outdoor activities set up (such as Baggo, Badminton, etc.) as we have many fond memories of our Dad with us at this park for Zoology Department picnics.

We kindly ask that if you can attend this celebration or just want to make a comment or tell a story, that you send an Email to:

[CelebrateRajKilambi@gmail.com](mailto:CelebrateRajKilambi@gmail.com) Please leave any comments or stories on that Email and let us know how many may attend the celebration to help us in the planning.

Thank you very much!

Note: This is a University of Arkansas facility and their current COVID 19 rules and precautions will apply. We ask that you wear a mask at all times if not 6 ft apart except while eating. Family groups may sit closer together at the tables, but otherwise appropriate spacing will be required.



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Food will be served to each guest individually in accordance with the Universities COVID guidelines. And of course, alcohol, tobacco products, and illegal products are strictly prohibited at all times.



## Tribute Wall

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CM

**Chris Magann** posted:

Nirmal, Very sorry for your father's passing. Our prayers are with your family. Chris Magann

May 6 at 12:02 PM

CB

**Chris Bell** posted:

I am saddened to hear of Dr Kilambi's passing. He and Jaja were favorite customers at banks I worked for. Always enjoyed visiting with them. Thoughts and prayers with family Chris Bell

May 2 at 9:00 AM

AH

**Aaron Harris** posted:

Nirmal, I am so sorry to hear of your father's passing. You and your family will be in my prayers as you walk this through this difficult time in your life. Be at peace...Aaron Harris

May 2 at 3:45 AM

IM

**Ida Munoz** May 3 at 7:11 AM

The Kilambi family have a precious legend to remember and be proud of. His name is Raj and I was proud to have known him and to have shared grandchildren with him and my friend Jaya. Two beautiful souls.

RL

**Rhonda Lynn** posted:

I am so sorry to hear of the passing of Dr. Kalambi. He was one of my favorite Professors at The U of A. He was a very distinguished man and an individual of very high intelligence. I send prayers and condolences to his family and friends during this very difficult time. 🙏

April 25 at 3:08 PM

NT

**Norman Tubb** posted:

Nirmal, My condolences to you and your family. How fortunate for you to have such an outstanding father to rear and guide you for such a long time. His legacy will continue to grow and be a positive influence for good through many, many students and associates and through his children. Norman Tubb

April 24 at 5:22 AM



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JN

**Joe Neal** posted:

I was working on a book (with Doug James) in Department of Zoology in the 1980s when I met Raj. He invited me to the annual "Friends of India" banquet. Being an Arkansas native, I'd never experienced anything like it. Besides the outstanding food, various people provided entertainment, including Raj. I don't remember a lot of details, except that Raj gave a performance that included standing on his head. That's not something you see very often from anyone, let alone a faculty member! He always made me feel welcome in the department and that never stopped, even after we were both in retirement. I saw Raj and Jaya several times in stores around Fayetteville. It was always a time for smiles and memories. What a great legacy to leave for our world. Joe Neal coauthor (with Doug James) of Arkansas Birds (U of A Press, 1986)

April 24 at 1:44 AM

BM

**Betty Marinoni** posted:

Today is April 9, 2021, and we just learned that our dear neighbor of 50 years had passed away in March. We go back a long time with the Kilambi family and their sons and cherish the memories we share in raising our families for all these many years. The Kilambi family are very special to us and we are grateful for the times we shared together. A lot of our memories were created with their sons especially Nirmal who was the same age as our daughters Lara and Lydia. We most often shared a friendly wave at the mailbox or nice chats as we did our respective yard work. They were wonderful neighbors and life long friends. We shall miss Raj immensely. He and Jaya raised three remarkable sons, and were proud parents and a benefit to our Country. With Corvid 19 being a part of our lives we had not seen Raj and Jaya in awhile. Our thoughts are with each of the Kilambi family members as they grieve the loss of this extraordinary man. Rest in peace, Raj. Jaya, we are here should you ever need anything. Fondly, your neighbor and friends. John and Betty Marinoni, Daughters, Melissa Marinoni Smith, Lara Marinoni Henry, and Lydia Marinoni Tedford.

April 9 at 11:11 AM



## Tribute Wall

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MG

**Marvin L. Galloway** posted:

Raj Kilambi Family:I was a fishery science student at UAF in the 1980's. Dr. Kilambi was my professor, the advisor for my Ph.D. program, and I was a co-author with him on some publications. In the 80's, the Arkansas Legislature passed a bill that had to do with Creation Science and the public school system. It was quickly signed into law by Gov. White. Dr. Kilambi came into our Fishery Science class, and very matter of fact announced the legislation details. He made absolutely no negative comments about the legislative body or the governor. He then preceded to give a serious presentation about a Hindu Creation story. At the end he made a couple of tongue-in-cheek comments about his desire to be compliant with the new law, asked for any questions, and then dismissed the class. I felt that Raj's presentation was masterful, and one of the most memorable lectures of my lifetime. I certainly have many other memories of working with Raj over the years, but this one was near the beginning of our professor/student relationship and thus really stood out. I completed my Ph.D. in 1990, with appreciated assistance from Dr. Kilambi, and was hired by NorthWest Arkansas Community College as an instructor at that time.Marvin L. GallowayDean of Science & MathematicsNWACC

April 6 at 11:19 AM

AH

**Art Hobson** posted:

Dear Jaya,I am so sorry your dear husband has died. I remember him, and you, fairly well from many decades ago when he was a new member of the Department of Zoology. I joined the physics faculty in 1964, and I think Raj joined the Zoology faculty in 1966. He, and you, were always quite friendly to me when we passed each other on the campus. The two of you were quite a handsome, beautiful couple. I was always glad to see both of you. You must feel lonely. I share a part of your grief. We are all together on this Earth--a beautiful but sometimes sad fact of life. Take care of yourself.Art HobsonEmeritus Professor of Physics

April 2 at 4:55 AM

JH

**James Horton** posted:

Nirmal, I was saddened to learn of your great loss. I extend to you and your family my deepest sympathy. Jimmy Horton

March 31 at 4:53 AM

BP

**Becky Peach** posted:

Nirmal,You and your family are in our thoughts and prayers.Herb and Becky Peach

March 31 at 3:02 AM



# Memories only last if you share them

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



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