

# MEERA TERESA GANDHI

## Humanitarian, Businesswoman, Diplomat and Mother

BORN: MUMBAI, INDIA

**Meera Teresa Gandhi** was born on January 28<sup>th</sup>, to an Irish mother **Ellen Mary McCarthy** and an Indian father **Admiral Perbodh Nath Agarwal**. “Teresa” is Meera’s Baptism name and the name of her Irish Grandmother **Teresa McCarthy**.

Ms. Gandhi was raised mostly in India in the cities of **Mumbai, Pune, and Delhi**. She also spent childhood years in **London, UK, Dublin, Ireland**. She spent two years of her youth in **Canada** and then came to the **United States** after she was married to do her MBA at Boston University.

### **Academics:**

**Meera Gandhi** has an **MBA** from **Boston University** (1987-89) where she graduated in the **top 5%** her MBA class with **Beta Gamma Sigma honors**. She has a **Bachelor’s degree** in Economics from the **University of Delhi** (1982-85) where Meera was **Student Body President** in her final year 1984 – 85 and **Vice President** the year before at **The Jesus and Mary College**. She is a graduate of the **Lester B. Pearson, United World College** (1982), Canada. There she obtained the **International Baccalaureate** diploma with honors.

In 1980, Meera Gandhi completed her HSC exam (High School Certificate) from the **Cathedral and John Connon School** in Mumbai, India with **distinction**. “Meera was **Head Girl** of school and **House Prefect**. Meera Gandhi was an office Bearer of the *Interact* Club (a subsidiary of the Rotary Club) and acted as Director of Community Services. In that capacity, she has visited and worked every weekend at ‘**Asha Dan**’ (**Mother Teresa’s home for the orphaned**), **The Blind Home** and the **Lepers Home**. Meera was awarded the PTA Medal for **Leadership (girls)** and ‘**The Jardine Shield**’ for Head – Girl of the year 1979 - 80...

### **Work:**

- **Former Goodwill Ambassador**, CSRI, United Nations 2006 - 2007
- Co Chairman of the **New York City Ballet** Annual Luncheon February 2006
- Appointed Co Chairman of the US Committee for the **United World Colleges** based in NY USA. (HRH Prince Pavlos of Greece is the Co Chairman and HRH Queen Noor of Jordan is current patron of the UWC movement.) April 2005 – 2006
- Renovated historical landmark home – former home of **First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt** in Manhattan 2000 - 2002
- Owner and founder of the **International Playschool of Mumbai** 1997 - 2000
- **Meera Collections Inc** NY – President and Owner 1994 - 1997.
- **Lord and Taylor Chain USA** Couture Fashion Buyer 1991 - 1994.
- **Macy’s Department Store Chain**, NY - Buyer Men’s Sportswear 1989 - 1991
- **Macy’s** Executive Training Program and internship, Summer 1988.
- **Banque Indo Suez**, Investment Banking Division Mumbai 1986
- **Banque Nationale De Paris** Foreign Exchange Department in Delhi 1985

### **Other Interests:**

In 2000 **Meera Gandhi** moved back to NY where she and her husband bought Mrs. **Eleanor**

**Roosevelt's last home in Manhattan.** She spent two years restoring the home with the help of Harvard Architect **Pedro Castillo** and Interior Decorator **Kenneth Alpert**.

**Spiritual books, Yoga, Meditation and Philosophy.** Enjoys collecting **India Art** and is an avid supporter of the **Performing Arts**.

**Loves to travel** and has visited South Africa, Indonesia, Thailand, The UK, France, Italy, Spain, The Netherlands, Russia, Czechoslovakia, China, Hong Kong, Mexico, The Bahamas, Bermuda, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, The Dominican Republic, Singapore, Germany, Denmark, Canada, Morocco and Ireland.

### **Goal in life:**

To be a great mother to her three children **Kiran (19) Kanika (15) and Kabir (11)** and to serve humanity. "*We are to the Universe only as much as we give to it...*" is the meditation she lives her life by.

### **Admires:**

Her Father **Perbodh Nath Agarwal**, her Mother **Ellen Mary Agarwal**, **Mother Teresa**, her husband **Vikram**, her daughters **Kiran** and **Kanika** Gandhi, son **Kabir** Gandhi, **Mahatma Gandhi**, **Indira Gandhi**, **Hillary Clinton**, **Sonia Gandhi** and women leaders in general.

### **Adores:**

Her loving husband **Vikram** and her three children **Kiran**, **Kanika** and **Kabir**. Her siblings, brother **Rajiv John Agarwal** and sister **Sunita Frances Rana** and their respective spouses. And all her nieces and nephews.

### **Boards and Organizations:**

**Meera Gandhi** is currently on the board of several organizations that serve humanitarian needs.

- New Associations with **CRY** and **Pratham**, 2007
- Board of **The Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute** at Hyde Park, NY, 2002 - 2007.
- Board of **ERVK – Eleanor Roosevelt Val Kill at Hyde Park, NY January 2005 - 2007**.
- **Trustee of The United World Colleges US Board** since 2000.
- **The United World Colleges Pearson College board** – Canada, 2003.
- Board of **Safety Net** since 2003, an organization that reaches out to battered women in 10 countries of the world. India, Morocco, Philippines included.
- **Digital Partners/ Grameen** Board since 2000. Seattle based Organization that looks to close the digital divide between the developed and underdeveloped countries through entrepreneurial projects in India and various countries of the world.
- Trustee of the board of **I – Create**, a non profit organization that creates jobs for Women in 22 villages of India 2003.
- Has worked closely with **Mother Teresa's Asha Dan** since High School and has been associated with **The Happy Home and School for the Blind** in Mumbai, India, since 1997.

### **Other:**

- **Fulbright Humanitarian Award** June 2007
- Hosted a Satsang at her residence for **Swami Parthasathy** 2006.

- Recipient of the SASA (South Asian Students Alliance) **Humanitarian Award** in Los Angeles in 2005.
- Speaks on a number of Panels that deal with Women and Children's issues or education. For example in 2004, Meera Gandhi spoke at the **Fourth Annual Media, IT and Latin American Tele Conference in NY at New York University** on "Broad band : Leave no child behind".
- Co Chair for **Asia Society NY's Asia on my Mind** event. 40 dinners that raised over a quarter million dollars in June 2004.
- Recipient of a **Humanitarian Award** from the Craft Center of Washington at Lord and Taylor, New York's "Into India" Week, in 2003.
- Has hosted a fund raiser to help the **Craft Center of Washington**. (This organization ensures the livelihood of artisans and crafts from developing countries, especially India) 2003.
- Hosted fundraiser **ERVK Girls Leadership** with **Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton** 2003.
- Has supported **Boston University's Alumni office efforts in the greater NY area** 2000 - Present.
- Admissions Team of the **Chapin School in Manhattan, NY** 2000 - 2004.

### **Early Childhood:**

Meera Teresa (Agarwal) Gandhi grew up in a closely knit strong family unit and even today speaks to her siblings and parents almost every day Meera's parents **Ellen** and **Perbodh Agarwal** describe Meera: "As a child she was unusually contemplative and drawn to most spiritual things. She was at the same time gregarious and fun loving. Meera enjoyed spending time in her primary school Chapel and with the nuns who greatly influenced her life".

A Happy child that excelled when she wanted to; She was always a **leader**. Meera was **Head Girl of two schools**. In the 10<sup>th</sup> grade she was Head Girl of St Anne's High School, Convent of Jesus and Mary in Bombay and then in the 12<sup>th</sup> standard Head Girl of Cathedral and John Connon School in Mumbai. At University, Meera was **President** as well as **Vice President of the University of Delhi**. At the **Lester B. Pearson College in Canada**, again a natural leader amongst her peers, Meera was **Social Service Leader of the School**.

Meera has always loved Dramatics and played the lead in the high School production **Joan of Arc**. Many still remember Meera as Joan of Arc!

In 1984 85 went on to do some modeling for Pan Ketchup, Hero Bicycles and Blue Lagoon Jeans and a few fashion shows in 1984 85.

In 1986, Meera Teresa Agarwal married her high school sweetheart Vikram Gandhi whom she met in high school in 1978.

After she was married in 1986, Meera and her husband Vikram came to the USA to do their MBA's together. They have three children Kiran 19, Kanika 15 and Kabir 11 and Meera continues her International work.

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