



## NIRUPAMA GOSWAMI

### The Never-Say-Die Spirit

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Nirupama Goswami, more popularly known as Niru Baideu, is someone who Guwahatians automatically relate to ‘small savings’. Though physically of a small frame, she was indeed a towering figure in her chosen field.

Born to late Kamaleswar Sarma and Kiron Prabha Devi, on the 27<sup>th</sup> May in 1920 in Golaghat, she was the eldest of a large family of twelve children. Her schooling was done in Golaghat Mission School. When she was in class VI, she was married off to late Debananda Goswami, who was a journalist by profession. She passed out in first division in her matriculation examination and got admitted into the Scottish church College. But during this period, her son was born and she had to appear in her I.A exam as a private candidate. Yet she continued her studies; she got the Narayani Handique Scholarship and joined the Handique Girls’ College. She passed out in 1944 with distinction and became the first woman graduate from the college.

More than her marriage, it was perhaps a turning point in her life when she decided to stop her studies

and start working. She knew that she had to supplement her husband's earnings. Niru Goswami was no doubt a woman of steely determination and ambitions, yet she was practical and down-to-earth.

She never regarded herself as extraordinary but simply as a positive and hardworking person. She first worked in Golaghat Mission School, but then joined T.C. School in Guwahati in 1945 and remained in that post for four years. But she decided to shift jobs as her salary was not enough for her needs. She became the lady organizer for National Savings (plains districts). Her being a woman did not deter her from being mobile as she had to move about a lot, giving lectures on small savings. In 1980, she became the deputy director of small savings and formally retired from her job. But nothing could stop this sprightly 60 year old lady from working. She started social work through the Assam Pradeshik Mahila Samiti and became its working president. She also started work as an agent of small savings, a field in which she excelled. A versatile woman, she could fluently speak Bengali, Assamese, English and Hindi. She earned the title of 'Best Agent' for many years earning love, respect and money. But few know of her philanthropy. Her entire prize money she gave away to the needy year after year.

She was feted and felicitated by Rotary Club, Office of the Chief Justice, Cotton College, Ananda Mahila Samiti and many others. She continued her work in the same spirit till her end in October, 2009 at the age of 89 years. This plucky lady believed in God and attributed her success to her family support and good health. Her attitude to life was amply reflected in an interview where she had said, "If wrinkles are wrought in your face, let them not be written on your mind. The soul should not grow old."