

Masuda, who was killed in action as a member of the 100th Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team. The 1945 article also mentioned Reagan's presence at Masuda's ceremony.

Even without that call-out by Reagan, Ochi's actions and achievements in her nearly 82 years of life would be notable.



Rose Ochi broke many barriers in her public service career.

Born Takayo Matsui in East Los Angeles, Ochi spent some of her childhood peripatetically, first when her family was uprooted to the Santa Anita Detention Center in California, followed by incarceration at the Rohwer WRA Center in Arkansas, where she was given the moniker "Rose" by her teacher. She acquired the surname Ochi after marrying Thomas Ochi.

Prior to earning her law degree in 1972 from Loyola Law School, Ochi graduated from UCLA in 1959 and earned an M.A. from California State University, Los Angeles, in 1967. She served as a public school teacher in both the Montebello Unified School District and the Los Angeles Unified School District.

After earning her law degree, Ochi was a founding member of the Japanese American Bar Association (JABA), and she served on the L.A. County Bar Association's board of trustees. She also was a presidential appointee to the National Commission on Immigration & Refugee Policy; the attorney general-appointed vice chair of the Department of Justice's National Minority Advisory Council and an appointee to the L.A. County Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee.

Under Los Angeles Mayors Tom Bradley and Richard Riordan, Ochi was the executive director of the Mayor Office of Criminal Justice Planning. She also was staff attorney at USC's Western Center on Law & Poverty.

Under President Jimmy Carter, she served on the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy or SCIRP. Under President Bill Clinton, she served as the associate director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and later was the director of the Department of Justice's Community Relations Service, unanimously approved by the Senate.

Later, Ochi would serve as the executive director of Cal State L.A.'s California Forensic Science Institute. She also became the first Asian American woman police commissioner when she was appointed to the Los Angeles Police Department's Police Commission.

Ochi also was involved in JACL at the local, regional and national levels.

In 1986, she ran for JACL national president, narrowly losing at the Chicago National Convention to Harry Kajihara, 62-1/2 to 59-1/2.

Working with Manzanar Committee co-founder and chair, Sue Kunitomi Embrey, Ochi provided the legal expertise needed to help with having the former WRA Center become a national historic site.

The Japanese American National Museum, meantime, thanked Ochi for her "contributions to our community and our nation." JABA also lauded Ochi, stating, "Rose Ochi's life and contributions to the Japanese American community, the City of Los Angeles, and our country are remarkable and deserve remembrance.

Although Ochi and her husband, Thomas, never had children, Wakabayashi said through her work, Ochi mentored many younger people who she treated as though they were her surrogate children, including Darlene Kuba, who created a tribute website to Ochi at forevermissed.com/rose-takayo-matsuiochi/about.

In the interim since her passing, there have been many political tributes to Ochi's life. The latest came on Jan. 13 from Los Angeles City Councilman Kevin de Leon, who introduced a motion to name the intersection of E. First and San Pedro streets Rose Ochi Square.

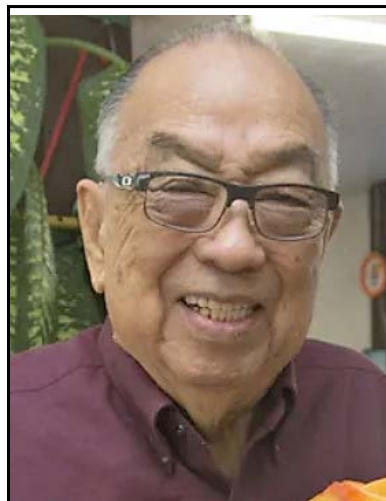
On Jan. 11, when the California Legislature adjourned, it did so in memory of Ochi. Said Assemblyman Al Muratsuchi: "Rose Ochi was a strong, beautiful woman who broke many barriers as the first Japanese American woman to serve in the highest levels of public service under President Bill Clinton and Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, among many other leadership roles she served in. She inspired and supported many women and men like me to continue her legacy of service."

Recalling the lives and contributions of both Imura and Ochi, Wakabayashi praised them as "bad ass," and lamented, "I'm lost without them now." ■

MEMORIAM

TRIBUTE

HIROSHI NAKAGAWA



Hiroshi "Nick" Nakagawa, the proprietor of the only surviving florist shop from the historic south Phoenix "Japanese Flower Farms," died on Jan. 2, 2021, in Tempe, Ariz. He was 97.

Until July of 2020, when he was diagnosed with a small brain tumor, Nick lived independently, running the business, driving and visiting family. Following radiation treatments, he continued to work until late November, when health complications led to a pulmonary embolism. He died peacefully at home, with family caring for him.

Nick was born on July 1, 1923 in Lewiston, Idaho, where his father was a farmer. The family lived in Utah before settling in Arizona in the 1930s to continue farming. Nick was one of 11 children and the eldest son (an older brother predeceased him, dying at seven months old). He and his family were imprisoned during WWII at the Poston, Ariz. incarceration camp along with thousands of other Japanese Americans. Nick graduated high school by correspondence course while in Poston. He enlisted in the U.S. Army during the war but had to return home to help care for his family when his father fell ill.

After the war, Nick and his family returned to farming along Baseline Road. Due to his father's poor health, a lot of responsibility for taking care of the family fell on Nick, and he used his connections and business sense to make deals to purchase land and expand the farm (some deals were made on his word and a handshake!). Other Japanese American families also farmed there, and some, like Nick, experimented with new techniques and seeds to help agricultural researchers. Eventually the area became a major tourist attraction, known for acres and acres of beautiful, fragrant flowers. Nick was one of the first farmers along Baseline Road to ship his flowers out of state and was the first to enclose his building and install air-conditioning. In the 1960s he built a pagoda-style tower so tourists could climb to the top and view the surrounding flower fields. He married in 1960 and he and his late wife, Tatsuko (Tats), ran every aspect of the business from farming to flower design. After a devastating fire in the 1990s Nick and Tats rebuilt the business with help from neighbors and friends. Today it is the last remaining flower shop on Baseline Road. Until this Thanksgiving, Nick was there every day and enjoyed visiting with customers and friends who would stop in at the shop.

In recent years, Nick was honored by the Arizona State Florists Association, which gave him its Crystal Crescent Award in 2017; spoke to college students and community members about the history of the Japanese flower farms; and recorded stories with KJZZ and the South Mountain Community College Oral History Project. Those who were fortunate to know Nick appreciated his sense of fairness, hard work, perseverance and kindness.

Nick was loved by many, especially his children and grandchildren. He was a wonderful friend, father and grandpa who was fond of sports, occasional casino gambling, following the stock market and solving sudoku puzzles (which he did daily). He is survived by his children Mark, Kathy (Tim Eigo) and Naomi (Keith Taylor); grandchildren Willa and Thea Eigo; as well as siblings, cousins, and many nieces and nephews.

Services will be held at a later date. Donations in his name may be made to the Japanese American Citizens League-AZ Hiroshi and Tatsuko Nakagawa Scholarship Fund or the Arizona Buddhist Temple. Condolences for the family may be left at the Resthaven/Carr-Tenney Mortuary and Memorials Gardens website at: <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/phenix-az/nick-nakagawa-9980304>.

Akiyama, Robin, 63, Los Angeles, CA, June 2, 2020; she is survived by her husband, Hideo; children, Christopher and Stacy; mother, Gloria Hess; sisters, Julie and Lesly; gc: 1.

Goya, Mitsuko, 94, Gardena, CA, Aug. 24, 2020; she was predeceased by her husband, Hideo; she is survived by her children, Yoshihide (Irene), Doris (Bill) Yamanoha, Nora and Wayne (Wendy); sister, Hideko (Kenzo) Oshiro; gc: 6; ggc: 2.

Hamachi, Michael, 63, Torrance, CA, May 18, 2020; he is survived by his wife, Diane Tasaka; daughters, Lauren (Angelo) Espiritu, April and Lynsey; siblings, Dale (Kari), Candace (Pat), Allison and Ann; mother, Naomi Ishibashi Hamachi; gc: 2.

Iba, Nobuko, 101, Los Angeles, CA, May 19, 2020; she was predeceased by her husband, Harry; she is survived by her children, Joan (Kay) Kobayashi, Larry (Phyllis) Iba and Dennis (Laurie) Iba; gc: 5; ggc: 6. ■

PLACE A TRIBUTE
 'In Memoriam' is a free listing that appears on a limited, space-available basis. Tributes honor your loved ones with text and photos and appear in a timely manner at the rate of \$20/ column inch.
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