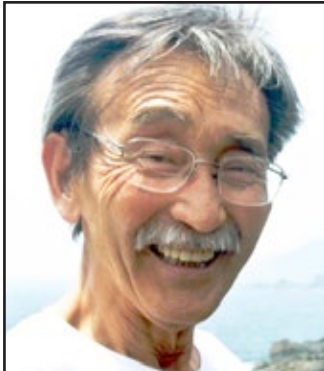


In MEMORIAM

TRIBUTE

ISAO FUJIMOTO



Dr. Isao Fujimoto, Ph.D., professor and community organizer, died peacefully at his home in Davis, Calif., on Feb. 25. He was 88 years old.

Isao joined the University of California, Davis, in 1967 as a founding member of the Community Development program. Throughout his career, he served as primary instructor for more than 50 courses and later founded the Asian American Studies Department before retiring in 1994. His retirement, however, was in name only. He continued teaching both locally and abroad — spending summers in Kyoto, Japan, where he taught his beloved UC Study Abroad course. He also held leadership positions in several grassroots organizations like the Rural Development Leadership Network and the Central Valley Partnership for Citizenship for nearly two decades thereafter.

Despite a distinguished academic career and countless accolades, Isao was perhaps best known for his insatiable curiosity and unparalleled commitment to education, social justice and the empowerment of marginalized communities. Understanding that knowledge equals power, he developed an unconventional approach to teaching and scholarship that centered justice and collaboration, challenging the hierarchy and culture of traditional academia. In fact, his home in West Davis served as the incubator and original headquarters for cherished Davis landmarks like the Davis Food Co-Op and the Farmer's Market, both of which were founded by Isao's students.

From an early age, the importance of community was impressed upon Isao. He was born on Sept. 28, 1933, in Wapato, Wash., on the Yakama Indian Reservation to Ayako and Taichi Fujimoto, farmers from southeastern Japan. Isao was the first of 13 children. The family lived in an ethnic enclave on the reservation, where they worked as tenant farmers. Along with 125 other Japanese immigrant families, they circumvented the racist and restrictive Alien Land Law that otherwise prohibited those of Asian descent from owning or leasing land by instead renting from the Yakama, whose land was not subject to such legislation.

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941, Isao's father was immediately arrested and imprisoned at Fort Missoula, Mo. As with many Japanese Americans at the time, a period of unimaginable injustice and adversity began. Despite 8-year-old Isao's best efforts, including writing letters to President Roosevelt at his mother's urging, his father would not be reunited with the family for almost two years.

In 1942, along with his mother and younger siblings, Isao was incarcerated in Heart Mountain, Wyo., where his father would later be transferred. After being reunited, the family was sent to Tule Lake, the infamous maximum-security internment camp, where they remained until the end of World War II. It was at Tule Lake that Isao was given a stamp collection book by his father, a gift that would change his life. As he pored over images of foreign people and places, his mind was liberated, his imagination flew "over the barbed wire" and a lifelong quest to learn and appreciate global diversity began.

Upon their release from Tule Lake, the family resettled in California, first in Pleasanton, and then in Morgan Hill, where they worked as sharecroppers and later, as independent strawberry farmers. Although they were forced to rebuild their lives during a time of postwar hostility and threats of deportation, the perseverance of his parents was unshakeable, setting a powerful example for Isao that would serve as his ultimate guide.

Isao would go on to lead an adventure-filled life that was often as unpredictable as it was impressive, despite numerous challenges along the way. After receiving his undergraduate degree from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1955, where he participated in the Cal Indo project, a collaborative exchange program with student leaders in Indonesia, Isao was drafted and sent to South Korea as a U.S. Army correspondent. Upon returning home, Isao reconsidered his original plan of becoming a physician, working briefly as a probation officer and then as a high school chemistry teacher at San Jose High School. It was at San Jose High School that his talent as an educator became impossible to ignore, and he subsequently earned a master's in Education from Stanford in 1960. With a career in medicine in the rear view, Isao began to carve a path that was uniquely his own, attending institutes for higher education at the historically Black Howard University in Washington, D.C., and Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y.

At Cornell, Isao decided to pursue a Ph.D. in rural sociology. He was conducting field research in the Philippines when three of his siblings were tragically killed by a drunk driver back home in California. In the wake of his family's grief, Isao put his dissertation on hold. Soon, UC Davis came calling and, in the years that followed, Isao dove headfirst into his new role, eager and excited to lead in movements for change. But he refused to give up on the work he began almost 50 years before and in 2010, at the age of 76, he finished and successfully defended his dissertation at Cornell, proudly leading his graduating class in the ceremony's procession.

Isao was the proud father of three children, to whom he gave the gifts of curiosity and a healthy appetite for learning. He was generous in his love and wisdom and ensured that his children had every opportunity to explore and engage with those around them. As he did with his siblings, Isao took his children on adventures across the country and around the world. He was always teaching; he couldn't help it.

More difficult than summarizing Isao's rich life is attempting to convey all that will be missed in his absence. In addition to his many accomplishments, there is no doubt Isao will also be remembered for his seemingly limitless energy and enthusiasm, his infectious laugh and the unbelievable love and loyalty he offered to family, friends and strangers alike.

Isao was preceded in death by his parents, Taichi and Ayako Fujimoto; his sisters, Toyoko, Keiko and Shoko; and his brother, Donald. He is survived by his wife of 34 years, Christine Fry, and their daughter, Esumi; sons, Caedmon and Basho, and their mother, Linda Wilson; grandchildren, Bela Buson, Kodo and Ruby Umiko; his brother, Kazuya (Dorothy), and sisters Yoshiko (Tad), Motoko (Masao), Coleen (Ted), Janet (Jack), Annie, Shigeko and Tomiko (Pat), in addition to many nieces, nephews and of course, students, colleagues and friends.

If you feel moved to donate in Isao's memory, contributions may be made to the UC Davis Isao Fujimoto Education and Student Support Fund (<https://give.ucdavis.edu/CLAS/ASIFGFT>).

A public memorial service will be held in Davis on April 21. Kindly RSVP to esumifujimoto@gmail.com for additional details. Masks and social distancing will be required.

TRIBUTE

PEGGY SHIMKO



Peggy Shimko, beloved wife and mother, passed away in her home on Feb. 12 at the age of 61.

Peggy was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, to parents James and Ruth Takeuchi. She received a Bachelor of Science in economics from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania; a Master of Science in instructional design for online learning from Capella University; and a certificate in nonprofit management from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She married Jim Shimko in 1992.

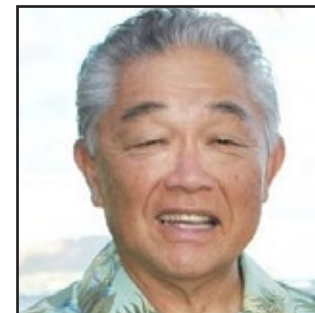
Peggy worked as a computer programmer before becoming a full-time homemaker and artist. She passed on a passion for technology to her children by playing video games with them, and some of her favorites were "King's Quest VI" and "Nancy Drew."

A multitasking artist, Peggy crocheted, sewed, danced, played piano, harp and taiko drums, and did numerous visual arts. She was most known for her intricate, geometric paper sculptures that blended her interest in math, Buddhist beliefs and environmental themes. She also handcrafted gifts for family and friends every holiday season, giving scarves, aprons, papercrafts and adorable amigurumi cats. As a Japanese American, Peggy was keen to learn about, preserve and pass on Japanese art forms, and she was one of the founding members of the Cincinnati-Dayton Taiko Group when it formed in 1999.

Peggy was a practicing Buddhist and approached everyone she met with generosity and care. If you were a guest in her house, she meticulously planned what meals to serve and always remembered people's favorite foods and dietary restrictions. If you called her with a problem, she'd listen attentively and then cut to the heart of the matter with her insightful — and often refreshingly blunt — advice. And if you ever mentioned a friend, she always remembered their name and inquired after them, even if she had never met them. Her compassionate spirit lives on in those she cared for.

Peggy was preceded in death by her parents, James and Ruth. She is survived by her husband, Jim; her daughter, Miyoko, and her son-in-law, Stephen; her son, Hiroshi; her brothers, Stephen (Rick) and Ken; and many cousins, nieces and nephews.

A private memorial will be held in April.



Kobayashi, Takashi, 101, Hilo, HI, Nov. 21, 2021; he was predeceased by his wife, Shigeko, and son-in-law, Glen Plantz; he is survived by his children, Clyde (Helen), Roy (Claudia) and Merlyne Plantz; sister, Nobuko Goto; sister-in-law, Emiko Kobayashi; gc: 7; ggc: 10.

Fujii, Calvin, 78, Los Gatos, CA, Feb. 26; a veteran (National Guard); he was predeceased by his siblings, Stella and Arnold; he is survived by his wife, Pamela; children, Cheryl (Brett), Caela, Chara Fujii and Christopher (Mirna); brothers, Stephen Fujii (Sylvia) and Roger Fujii (Amy); gc: 3.

Higa, Shigeru, 104, Kaneohe, HI, Jan. 6.

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Gerald Fukui
President

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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