

# In MEMORIAM

**Aoyama, Elana Leash, 51**, San Francisco, CA, Jan. 26; she is survived by her daughter, Reyna Aoyama; ex-husband, Frank Aoyama; mother, Judy; she is also survived by many other relatives.

**Bringentoff, Mariko, 86**, Palmdale, CA, Dec. 5, 2022; she is survived by her husband, Heinrich; 4 children; gc: 10; ggc: 16.

**Enomoto, Sandra, 72**, Sunnyvale, CA; she is survived by her husband, Martin; children, James (Sharon) and Allison (Keith); sister, Gail (Tom) Osaki.



**Fujii, Brian David, 60**, Las Vegas, NV, Jan. 16; he is survived by his parents, Frances and Tosh Fujii; sisters, Julie (Mike Solheim), Karen (Ron Turner) and Kim (Steve Kumpf); she is also survived by 2 nieces.

**Fukunaga, Carolyn, 90**, Santa Ana, CA, Oct. 30, 2022; she is survived by her children, John (Sandy), Steve (Roann) and Carol Fukunaga; she is also survived by nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 5; ggc: 10.

**Futa, Walter Sunao, 89**, Los Angeles, CA, Dec. 24, 2022; he is survived by his children, Baryn Futa, Mark Futa, Catherine (George) Garties and Pamela (Robert) Campbell; brother, Roy (Kathleen) Futa; gc: 5.



**Gracey, Robert, 94**, Bishop, CA, Jan. 16; he was the 2016 recipient of the Manzanar Committee's Sue Kunitomi Embrey Legacy Award for his work in establishing the Manzanar National Historic Site; he was predeceased by his wife, Lorna Gracey.

**Hiranaka, Bernice Claire, 90**, Lihue, Kauai, HI, Aug. 31, 2022.



**Iki, Jane, 89**, Palo Alto, CA, Oct. 3, 2022; during WWII, her family and she were incarcerated at the Topaz WRA Center in UT; she was active in Peninsula Bonsai Club, Kusamura Bonsai Club; she was predeceased by her husband, Sam; she is survived by her children, Darrell (Donna), Gordon (Theresa), Naomi (Bonnie) and George (Sarah); siblings, Flo Omori, Dorothy Miyahara (Don) and John Nakata (Charlene Fischer), gc: 4; ggc: 1.

**Ishii, George, 86**, Gardena, CA, Aug. 12, 2022; he is survived by his wife, Kay; children, Keri-Jean Ishii, George (Lory) Ishii Jr. and Brent Ishii; he is also survived by nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 2.

**Iwata-Uyeki, Aki, 50**, Culver City, CA, Nov. 24, 2022; B.A., UC Irvine; she is survived by her husband, Dr. Mike Uyeki; sons, Nicholas and Noah; and her parents.



**Kasamatsu, Kenneth Shigeru, 75**, West Covina, CA, July 31, 2022; B.A., USC; he was active in Asian American Drug Abuse Program (board chair, 2003-16) Keiro Nursing Home; Japanese American Cultural and Community Center; Little Tokyo Service Center; BSA; Nisei Week Foundation; LEAP (board of directors); founder, Pacific Commerce Bank; founding member USC Asian Pacific American Support Group (now the USC APA Alumni Association); he is survived by his wife, Bonnie; daughters, Tami (Michael) Bailey and Tricia Kasamatsu; mother, Tamiye Kasamatsu; sister, Jayne (Gideon) Young.

**Kawase, Jim, 96**, El Monte, CA, Aug. 23, 2022; he is survived by his sons, Clifford and Eric Kawase; he is also survived by many other relatives; gc: 1.



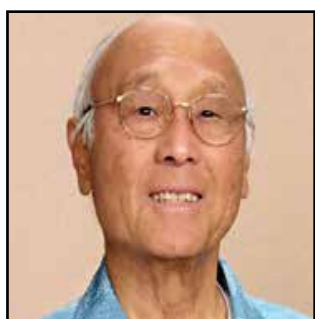
**Kiriya, Miyeko Meg Mori, 102**, Salt Lake City, UT, March 20; member, Mount Olympus JACL chapter; she was predeceased by her siblings, Shigeru Mori and Nobuo Mori; she is survived by her children, Karen (Danny) Setjo, Lane (Arlette) Kiriya and Glenn (Emily) Kiriya; siblings, Tom Mori, Yukiko Kik Mori Tawa, Selma Mori Yagi, Floyd Mori and Steve Mori; ggc: 3.



**Masuda, Scott, 59**, Culver City, CA, Oct. 6, 2022; he was predeceased by his wife, Amir; he is survived by his son, Shaun, and other relatives.

**Ryono, Chika, 86**, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA, Nov. 19, 2022; she is survived by her daughter, Pamela; siblings, Hitoshi, Mitsue and Reiko; she is also survived by many other cousins and relatives.

**Shimizu, Fumio 'Steve,' 102**, Laguna Woods, CA, Nov. 24, 2022; WWII veteran, Army (442nd RCT); recipient of Purple Heart, Bronze Star, French Legion of Honor, EAME and Congressional Gold Medal of Honor medals; he is survived by his wife, Dorothy; and children, Craig, Stephanie, Kerry and Cheryl; gc: 2.



**Tsuyuki, Alfred Yoshihisa, 81**, Los Angeles, CA, Nov. 21, 2022; he is survived by his daughters, Alyne and Cheryl (Nate Sovatha) Tsuyuki; siblings, Makoto Tsuyuki, Christine Megumi Nagashima and Hitomi Tsuyuki; gc: 2.

## Fujima Kansuma Dies at 104

Renowned sensei of kabuki dance had an illustrious career.

By P.C. Staff



Fujima Kansuma

PHOTO: PACIFIC CITIZEN DIGITALARCHIVE

Born Sumako Hamaguchi in San Francisco on May 9, 1918, Fujima Kansuma, who dedicated her life to teaching classical Japanese dance to several generations of students, died Feb. 22 of congestive heart failure at 104. Her decades of activity included serving in 2018 as the choreographer at age 100 for the Nisei Week Parade in Little Tokyo.

"She was the embodiment of beauty, grace and genuine love and kindness to all," wrote June Aochi Berk — one of Kansuma's myriad students — in an email to the *Pacific Citizen*. "I am filled with heartfelt gratitude to have been her student from the age of 5, and to this day, at 90, I feel so fortunate to have watched her dance onstage and known her grace and kindness and love through all my life."

Hamaguchi's pursuit of learning classical Japanese dance continued when the family moved to Los Angeles and, after graduating from high school, Japan, where her kabuki dance teachers were Onoe Kikugoro VI and Fujima Kanjuro VI, who would later give Hamaguchi her *natori* or professional name, Kansuma.

After returning to the United States in 1940, Kansuma opened her first dance studio in Los Angeles and would later add more classes in other municipalities in L.A. County.

When the United States and Japan went to war, Kansuma's family and she would be held at the Rohwer WRA Center in Arkansas. According to a *Smithsonian Magazine* article by writer Yuka Murakami, however, Kansuma's wartime incarceration experience was unique.

"Her camp experience was unlike any other, with consistent interest from her students to continue their practice and from people across the different camps who wanted to see her perform. For this she was granted special permission from camp authorities to return to Los Angeles under armed guard to retrieve costumes and phonograph records."

Kansuma was then allowed to visit different camps to perform. "The military and the WRA authorities gave her permission to travel to the many other WRA incarceration camps to spread hope and beauty during a bleak and hopeless time," Berk told the *Pacific Citizen*. Noting that she was a "rock star" before there was such a thing, she added, "Madame Kansuma also made it her mission in camp (Rohwer) to bring joy and beauty to give hope to the elder Issei by creating beautiful dances for all to enjoy. As one of her students in Rohwer, we also traveled to Jerome to perform Japanese dance there."

Kansuma was recognized with the Order of the Precious Crown, Apricot, by the Japanese government in 1985 and the National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1987.

"She was an angel of kindness to all," Berk added. "May she continue to live on in our hearts and beautiful memories of her endless dancing. She would always say to us, her students: 'To be a better dancer, you first need to be a better person.'"

She is survived by her daughter, Miyako Tachibana, son-in-law Noriyoshi Tachibana, and grandchildren Jonathan Tachibana, Taizo Tachibana and Miwa Tachibana. ■

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