

In MEMORIAM

TRIBUTE

TOM IGE



Tsutomu "Tom" Ige was born on Aug. 26, 1930, in Terminal Island, Calif., to Kamaroku and Kama Ige of Okinawa, Japan. He was the third of three boys (Hiro and Ken) and also had a younger sister (Yas).

His father was a fisherman and spent many days out at sea while his mother worked at the cannery.

He remembers that he was used to seeing battleships of the Navy anchored along the breakwater. On Dec. 7, 1941, he went fishing with his brothers and noticed that all the ships were gone. That is how he first learned about the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Being a fisherman, his father was taken away fairly quickly. Soon after, the rest of the family was forced to leave Terminal Island and went to live with some friends in Los Angeles and eventually ended up at Santa Anita Racetrack, where the family of five had a stall to live in. He lived there from around April to September of 1942, when his mom and siblings were sent by train to Rohwer Relocation Camp in Arkansas.

After the war was over, he was reunited with his father, and the family went to Tule Lake, Calif. His father wanted to return to Japan, although his mother did not. But when he left first, she decided to keep the family together and returned to Japan in February of 1946.

As a U.S. citizen, Tom went to work for the Army working in the mess hall stock room. He eventually got a job at the PX (post exchange) as a pricing and editing clerk. This move changed his life. He found his life's work and met Helen, who was to become his wife.

In 1952, he was drafted for the military in the United States, but instead of heading back to the States, he went with some friends and joined the Air Force at the recruiting office in Tokyo. He did basic training there and was assigned to work for the PX and the Air Force clothing store.

He was released from active duty on Nov. 20, 1957. Asking about continuing to work for the PX, he was offered the job of store manager at the PX in Korea. As a civilian, he now was working for AAFES (Army Air Force Exchange Service.) He stayed in Korea for about three years, taking a leave to go back to Japan to get married to Helen on Oct. 10, 1959.

In October 1960, he managed to get transferred to Misawa Air

Base, where Helen was working. He was merchandise manager of the BX. This was the first time the married couple got to live together. Their only child, Natalie, was born on Aug. 16, 1961, and they enjoyed their lives there.

However, he received his first transfer to the United States in 1965 to Fort Monmouth, N.J., with a promotion to retail operations manager. Additional promotions moved the family to Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri and Fort Ord in Monterey, Calif. With lots of family in Los Angeles, this was an ideal posting, but after a few years, he was on the move again. This time with a promotion to general manager of the Puerto Rico Exchange, which was headquartered at Ramey AFB. Two years were spent in this beautiful location, until the base was closed and he was transferred to Fort Buchanan in San Juan.

An additional two years was spent here, working hard, golfing and going to occasional concerts, such as Diana Ross and Tom Jones at the high-end hotels in San Juan.

The next promotion and move was a big one, sent to be the general manager of the Blue Ridge Area Exchange and stationed in Fayetteville, N.C. He was offered a transfer after three years to Okinawa Japan, but decided to pass it up so that Natalie could graduate high school with her friends. However, as soon as she graduated, the family was off to Panama for another big assignment. In 1979, Tom received the Extraordinary Achievement Award (the first of three times he received this honor) and was requested to go to Panama. The Panama Canal treaty was going into effect in October 1979, and there were some big projects that had to be completed prior to that international event. All of the Panama Canal Zone facilities had to be returned to Panama, and new facilities set up for the Americans stationed there. Tom was known

to his superiors as a calm, smart and effective manager who could deal fairly and rationally with complicated situations. So, he was the perfect one to oversee this huge transition.

All went well, and he made the last move of his AAFES career to Norton AFB in San Bernardino, Calif., in 1982. This brought him back to his home state, and he retired there in 1985 with a rank of GS-15.

After retirement, Tom enjoyed golfing and traveling and spending time with friends and family. He also became quietly involved in the Nisei community, contributing to many institutions that meant a lot to him, such as the Japanese American National Museum, *Pacific Citizen* newspaper, the JACL and the Okinawa Association of America.

Interviewed once by the *P.C.*, Tom stated, "To me, the *Pacific Citizen* is the 'eyes and ears' of the Nikkei community and other readers. It gives our community what it needs in terms of informing us what is important in our daily lives and also the many contributors that express interesting personal opinions and experiences that have a bearing in the lives of us all. I implore you to consider supporting the Japanese American Citizens League and the *Pacific Citizen* as part of your legacy."

Supporting these and other organizations, supporting his family and friends was really what Tom was all about. After losing his beautiful wife, Helen, in 2012, he traveled with his daughter Natalie and her husband, Ray, to Las Vegas, Hawaii and Japan. In 2017, he moved into Nikkei Senior Gardens assisted living in Arleta, Calif., where he continued to make friends and affect lives.

He was incredibly kind and very generous and will be remembered and mourned by many. He requests that in lieu of flowers, any donations be made to Nikkei Senior Gardens.

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.

CONTACT:

Editorial@pacificcitizen.org or call (213) 620-1767 ext. 104



Owen, Eiko, 93, Louisville, KY, Dec. 13, 2023; she is survived by her siblings, Taeko Yokomizo and Yasuhisa Kariya; several cousins.

Tawa, Yukiko (Kik) Mori, 96, St. George, UT, Jan. 31; member, Mount Olympus JACL Chapter; activities included working on the Miss Teen Sansei pageant; she was predeceased by her siblings, Miyeko Kiriya, Shigeru Mori and Nobuo Mori; she is survived by her daughters, Keiko Tawa and Michiko Ann Otello; siblings, Tom Mori (Betty), Selma Yagi (Junior, deceased), Floyd Mori (Irene) and Steve Mori (Nancy); gc: 4; ggc: 2.



Watanabe, Mike, 77, Los Angeles, CA, Nov. 3, 2023; veteran, Army; B.A., California State University Northridge (sociology); M.A., UCLA, (social work); honorary doctor of humane letters, CSUN; during his 46-year-long association with Asian American Drug Abuse Program, he served as its served as CEO and president; other activities: Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council (president) and Los Angeles County Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Commission, California Dept. of Alcohol and Drug Programs, National Asian Pacific Families Against Substance Abuse; Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council (past president); and Asian and Pacific Islander Constituent Committee; he is survived by his wife, Suzie.

Aratani, Sakaye, 104, Los Angeles, CA, March 18; during WWII, her family and she were incarcerated at the Poston WRA Center in AZ; a philanthropist, her activities included the Japan America Society, Nisei Women's Golf Club; Japanese American Montebello Women's Club; Japanese Women's Society of Southern California; City View Hospital (board member); Nisei Week grand marshal (1980); Asia America Symphony Assn.; Sumitomo Bank of California (board member); the PTA; Women's Welfare Service; Girl Scouts; Los Angeles-Nagoya Sister City Alliance; Nichi Bei Fujinkai; Keiro Nursing Home; Aratani Foundation (president); recipient, Order of the Sacred Treasure, Fourth Order from the Japanese government; she was predeceased by her husband, George Aratani; she is survived by her daughters, Donna Kwee (Kwee Liong Tek) and Linda Aratani; gc: 7; ggc: 10.

Marumoto, Toyoko, 93, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA, Nov. 30, 2023; she was predeceased by her husband, Noriyuki Marumoto; she is survived by her children, Roger (Kathleen), Marumoto, Patricia (Gary) Lehto, Todd (Joni) Marumoto and Kimberly (David) Barbis; sister, May Kaneshiro; gc: 7; ggc: 2.

TRIBUTE

RICHARD SHIMAMOTO



Richard (Dick) Shimamoto, 82 of St. Louis, Mo., March 15, 2024. Preceded in death by his wife, Vicky, in 2020, he was father to Sherry (Herman) Leilt and Cindy Shimamoto, dear grandfather of Seth (Abby) Pratt and Wesley Pratt; and Mickey, Kiera and Cody Hosack. Dear brother to David (Joyce) Shimamoto, Ed (Diane Broughton) Shimamoto, Lois Adams of Bella Vista, Ark., and Lynn (Don Brubeck) Shimamoto of Seattle. He left many cousins, nieces and nephews.

Dick was born to Naokichi "George" and Kimi Shimamoto. His family was relocated to a WRA camp in Rohwer, Ark. After the war, his family moved to St. Louis, Mo.

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T 213-749-1449
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Gerald Fukui
President