



## George Itsuo Nakamura

November 13, 1923 - January 24, 2014

George Itsuo Nakamura passed away peacefully on Friday, January 24, 2014 at his home in Pearland, TX at the age of 90. George was born November 13, 1923, in Arroyo Grande, CA, the fourth of six children to Ippei and Suyu Nakamura, Japanese immigrants. George was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and uncle. He lived an amazing life: one that was truly worthy of the Greatest Generation.

Although he planned to be a farmer and run the family farm in Central California, WWII radically altered his plans. He was 18 in the spring of 1942, when all persons of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast were forcibly removed from their homes, and the Nakamura family was sent to the Gila River Relocation Center located in the desolate Arizona desert, taking only what they could carry. George, his mother, brother, and four sisters were placed in one room measuring just 25 by 35 feet.

Determined to prove his loyalty to the country of his birth, George was one of the first 32 Japanese Americans to volunteer from the Gila River camp when the U.S. Army first sought volunteers from the "internment camps" for the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) in November 1942. During WWII, George was assigned to a top-secret U.S. military mission, the "Dixie Mission," which required his unit to live in the foothills of Yen-an, China, at Mao Tse-tung's headquarters. George's duties included deciphering Japanese transmissions, interrogating Japanese POW's and going on covert missions to gather intelligence. He was awarded the Bronze Star for going on a solo covert

mission behind enemy lines to rescue a downed U.S. Army Air Corp pilot, and also received a battlefield commission to 2nd Lieutenant for his exemplary work with the Dixie Mission. Among George's favorite stories about his time in China was the honor of dancing with Madame Mao Tse-tung during the birthday party the group threw for George's 21st birthday.

After the war, he served as a U.S. Army Counter Intelligence Corps officer with the U.S. Occupation Forces in Japan at General MacArthur's Tokyo headquarters for four years. He returned to the U.S. in 1949 to rejoin his family and attended Columbia University in New York City. He graduated in 1954 with a Master's Degree in International Affairs and East Asian Studies, and returned to Tokyo with the Rayovac Corporation, eventually managing all of Rayovac's operations in Asia, including Japan. During his nearly four decades of working in Japan, George made a great contribution towards the improvement of U.S.-Japan relations, especially by his passionate promotion of friendship and mutual understanding between Americans and the Japanese people.

He married Atsuko Shimizu in 1964, and they lived in Tokyo for 35 years before retiring in Hawaii. They relocated to Houston in 1999 in anticipation of the birth of their first grandchild.

In October 2010, President Obama signed into law, the bill approved by the 111th U.S. Congress, which granted the Congressional Gold Medal to George and the other Japanese American veterans who served valiantly during WWII with the MIS, the 100th Infantry Battalion, and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. As President Truman said upon welcoming the Japanese American soldiers' return in 1946: "You fought not only the enemy, but you fought prejudice. And you won."

Most recently, in honor of George's 90th birthday and to recognize his lifetime of remarkable contributions to his country, Mayor Annise Parker proclaimed November 13, 2013, as "George Itsuo Nakamura Day" in the City of Houston. George was very active in the community, and served on the boards of the VFW Pearland Post, the MIS Hawaii Club, the Tokyo American Club, the

American Chamber of Commerce of Japan, and the Columbia University Alumni Association of Japan, among other organizations. He was a longtime and very active member of the Japanese American Citizens League Houston Chapter.

George had a great passion for life, and will be fondly remembered for his ever-ready dimpled smile, his loving-kindness, and his unceasing generosity. He was loved by all who knew him, and was strong to the very end. He is survived by his wife, Atsuko; daughter Aileen of Atlanta; son Gary of Pearland; son-in-law Russ Abney, and grand-daughters Saya and Mika; brother James Nakamura and his wife Tetsuko of Silver Springs, MD; sister Yoshie Noji of Long Island, NY; and six nieces and seven nephews. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to one of two organizations: The Japanese American Citizens League Houston Chapter or the Alzheimer's Disease and Memory Disorders Center at Baylor College of Medicine.

The Nakamura family will be present to receive friends Monday, January 27, 2014 from 6:00 PM until 7:00 PM at Dettling Funeral Home, 14094 Memorial Dr., Houston, TX 77079. A Memorial Service celebrating George's life will be held that same evening at 7:00 PM in Dettling Chapel.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JAN 27. 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Dettling Funeral Home  
14094 Memorial Drive  
Houston, TX 77079  
(281) 497-2121  
david@dettlingfuneral.com

## Memorial Service

JAN 27. 7:00 PM (CT)

Dettling Funeral Home  
14094 Memorial Drive  
Houston, TX 77079  
(281) 497-2121  
david@dettlingfuneral.com

# Tribute Wall



“ *George Itsuo Nakamura*

October 08, 2023 at 10:52 AM



“ *George Itsuo Nakamura*

October 06, 2023 at 01:12 AM



“ *George Itsuo Nakamura*

October 05, 2023 at 09:45 AM



“ *George Itsuo Nakamura*

October 05, 2023 at 01:54 AM



“ *My grandfather, John Colling, and George were good friends. They met in China, serving in the Dixie Mission together. I had a chance to meet George a few times, the last time was in Tokyo-1992. I am sorry to hear of his passing.*

*Carol Lavin*

Carol lavin - July 25, 2014 at 09:46 PM



“ *What a brilliant tribute to your dad, Aileen! I remember your dad very fondly, always smiling and so inviting to all of us. My deepest condolences at this time of grief. May your many loving memories of your dad help you through this tough time. Love you.*

*Susan Alexander.*

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**Susan Alexander** - January 31, 2014 at 11:14 PM

YD

“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with the Nakamura family. The Japan-America Society of Georgia extends its heartfelt sympathy and deepest condolences, and wish them the very best during this difficult time.*

*Yoshi Domoto*

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**Yoshi Domoto** - January 31, 2014 at 10:31 AM

CS

“ *We are keeping your family in our thoughts & prayers.*

*Love, your Casa family*

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**Casa Montessori School** - January 30, 2014 at 03:03 PM

PH

“ *Wish peace forever in East China Sea.*

*Friend from Houston Taipei Society.*

*Peter Hwang*



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**Peter Hwang** - January 29, 2014 at 08:46 AM

BH

“ *what a beautiful write-up. what a full and totally phenomenal life he lived. thank you for sharing a brief story of his life, which will serve as an inspiration to many! hugs to you all. take care!*

*bhavani, suresh and janani*

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**bhavani** - January 28, 2014 at 08:33 PM

JD

“ *Beautiful story Aileen! We are sending you, Russ, Mika and Saya lots of love and hugs :)*

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**Julie Duffy** - January 28, 2014 at 02:52 PM

KM

“ *Kayoko M. purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of George Itsuo Nakamura.*



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**Kayoko M.** - January 28, 2014 at 08:36 AM

SH

“ *Russ, bless you and your family as you honor your father in law. What a lovely obituary and reflected life. Love and hugs. Shelly*

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**shelly** - January 28, 2014 at 07:49 AM

RS

“ Aileen, Russ, Saya and Mika,  
What a truly memorable life Mr. Nakamura had! You have so much to be proud of. Please accept our deepest condolences for the loss of such a great man and may you smile brightly, remembering him, through the tears that will undoubtedly come at times when you least expect them.

Arunas & Rasa Siulte  
Palm Coast, FL

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Rasa Siulte - January 28, 2014 at 07:22 AM

EH

“ Aileen, Russ, and family,  
I am so sorry to hear about the loss of your Dad. Words bring little comfort at a time like this but I do want you to know that my heart is with you. I know your pain is deep and I will be praying for God to bring you comfort in this time of grief. I know your Father was a great man and will be missed by all who knew him. Please keep your memories of him close to your heart and let them bring you joy in the coming weeks.

Love you guys,

Etta Hinesley

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Etta Hinesley - January 27, 2014 at 11:13 PM

CH

“ Aileen, sending you and your family our love and thoughts. Chris & Josie

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Chris - January 27, 2014 at 09:36 PM

HK

“ May God bless Mr. Nakamura, and give comfort to his family. It was an honor to have met this great American.

*Henry Kaim and the Kaim family  
St. George Orthodox Church*

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**henry kaim** - January 27, 2014 at 04:31 PM

GJ

“ I am so sorry to hear from his passing, May the Lord comfort the family during this time.

*Grace Jackson*

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**Grace Jackson** - January 27, 2014 at 04:04 PM

SB

“ Mr. Nakamura was a truly "GREAT American" in every sense of the words!

*Steve Braun, Sister Cities of Houston*

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**Steve Braun** - January 27, 2014 at 01:16 PM

DS

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. What a remarkable man he was! Lots of love. David & Donna Sparks

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**Donna Sparks** - January 26, 2014 at 10:24 AM

HC

“ A true soldier in all ways, I pray for St George to be with him and all his loved ones. May his memory be eternal  
- Hilary Chala

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**hilary chala** - January 25, 2014 at 11:36 PM