

Celebration of Life



Daniel H. Watanabe

08/06/29 - 12/28/14

Held on January 24, 2015
Asia Society of Texas

Daniel Hiroshi Watanabe

Was born on August 6, 1929 in Los Angeles, California, USA. The eldest son of the late Mr. Takeo and Mrs. Tai Watanabe, he excelled at academia and loved making new friends throughout his lifetime.

He moved to Japan during elementary school through high school and immediately after graduating, he joined the U.S. Army where he served as an Allied Translator & Interpreter under General Douglas MacArthur's Far East Command, then one year in the Korean War when he was honorably discharged with campaign ribbons (Occupation of Japan and the Korean War).

Upon his return stateside, he received his B.S. from Penn State, his Masters from U.C. Berkeley, and his doctorate from Upstate Medical University – SUNY, Syracuse.

Assistant Professor

- ❖ New York Medical College (White Plains, NY)
- ❖ Baylor College of Medicine (Houston, TX)

Adjunct Faculty

- ❖ University of Houston (Houston, TX)
- ❖ Houston Community College (Houston, TX)

Daniel not only spoke fluently in both Japanese and English languages with no accent, but also knew how to read and write both languages, too. With his outstanding bilingual proficiency and serving as an interpreter, he was sought after to teach Japanese language lessons at both the Japan

America Society and the Taiwanese Heritage Society on a year-round basis.

Being US-born, but raised in Japan, put Daniel in a unique position because of his intimate knowledge of both cultures, customs, languages, and laws. He had lived in both places, knew the differences, and therefore was distinctly qualified to bring a greater understanding between the East and the West.

Daniel was honored to receive the rare and prestigious: Order of the Sacred Treasure, Golden Rays Rosette medal, from his Majesty – The Emperor and the Japanese government for his many years' contributions towards Japanese cultural education.

He spent untold hours of his personal time and effort advocating, leading and volunteering for annual events including the Japan Fest, Asian American Festival, and Houston-Chiba Sister Cities Project. In addition to these annual events, he served as past president for both the Japanese American Citizens' League (JACL), the Japan America Society (JASH), and Committee Chairman of the Asian American Festival. He was not only called upon to be the master of ceremonies, but then manned the Japanese event booths which included: setup/breakdown, fielding questions, performing calligraphy, and of course cleanup.

Dan received a Proclamation from Houston City Mayor Jim McConn as recognition for

being one of the Founders of Houston's Asian American Festival Day.

Besides his great love for encouraging cultural awareness and bridging the gap between his equally beloved countries: the U.S. and Japan; another equal and true passion was that of *teaching*. Among being listed in: "Who's Who in the World", "Who's Who in the South and Southwest," he was most touched being named in "Who's Who Among America's Teachers."

And finally, as a father of a son-Fujio and daughter-Midori, and married for 50+ years to Akiko, he provided comfortably for his family of four and never fully 'retired' from working – only cut back from full-time employment, so he and Akiko could travel more, in the U.S., Europe, and of course annual trips to Japan. He was a caregiver for his wife (breast cancer-survivor), performing all duties that included cooking, cleaning, taking care of medical appointments, and still managing the household by planning activities and dining out frequently. He and Akiko remained committed to going to their Senior Fitness Sessions three times a week at their local community center. Dan kept up with local periodicals and medical journals, frequently clipping out articles of interest for his children (though grown adults). He continually enjoyed keeping in touch with them to plan for family get-togethers, birthdays, and holidays.

Community Service

- = Member Japanese American Citizens League (JACL). 1953~2014
- = President, JACL-Houston chapter. 1982~1984
- = Founder & First President, Japan American Cultural Exchange Society of Syracuse, NY. 1972-73
- = First Chairman, Asian American Festival of Houston. 1980
- = President, Asian American Festival Association, Houston, TX. 1980~2007
- = Member, Board of Directors, Japan America Society of Houston. 1980~2007
- = Annual Judge for the International Science & Engineering Fair in Houston. 1981~2000
- = Executive Board member and president, Council of Asian American Organizations, Houston. 1983~1999
- = President of the Japan America Society of Houston. 1987~1988 and again 1998~2000
- = Board member, Asia Society of Houston. 1988~1990
- = Member of Host Committee, the 1990 Economic Summit of Industrial Nations, Houston. 1990
- = Grand Review panelist, Cultural Arts Council of Houston & Harris County (CACHH). 1990~1991 and 1998:
- = Board Member, Harris County Heritage Society. 1990~1993
- = Member, Police Advisory Committee under Chief Lee Brown, Houston City Police Department. 1991~1993
- = Coordinator, Stage program for Japan in the Houston Club International Festival (representing Japan American Society). 1991
- = Coordinator for the United Way fund-raising in the Japanese community. 1994~1995
- = Chairman of Program Committee, Japan Festival for the Japan America Society. Recently, primarily chairman for the Opening = Ceremony. 1995, 1996, 1998 and yearly since 2000 -2015
- = Board Member, Japanese Garden Society of Houston. 1996~2000
- = Vice-president, Membership, JACL-Houston. 2000~2012
- = Original member of the founders; member of various committees of the Japanese Association of Greater Houston; Board Member. 2003~2014
- = Board member, Japanese Teachers Assn. of Texas. 2010~2014
- = Board of Governors Member, Japanese American National Museum

Professional Memberships

- = American Society for Microbiology, since 1957. 50-year membership recognition award received in 2007.
- = Assn. for the Advancement of Science, since 1959.
- = American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, since 1986.
- = American Chemical Society, since 1990
- = Japanese Teachers Assn. of Texas, since 1998.

Awards/Recognition/Honors

- = Certificate of Merit, presented by the Mayor, City of Houston. 1981
- = Who's Who in the South and Southwest. 1982
- = Who's Who in the World, 1984
- = Gold Award, United Way of Houston/Gulf Coast Chapter. 1995
- = Who's Who Among America's Teachers. 1996, 1997, 1998, 2007, 2008, 2009:
- = Asian American of the Year, Asian American Heritage Society of Houston, TX, 1999
- = Awarded *the Order of the Scared Treasure, Gold Rays Rosette Medal*, Japanese Government. [*Kun-4-to Zuihou-sho*], 2000

Dr. Watanabe lived his life *enriching the lives of countless others*, therefore, we memorialize him by this *Celebration of his Life . . .*