



Florence Kazuko Tsunoda

October 11, 1927 - April 29, 2016

Florence was born in Modesto, California where her father owned a large general store. Florence started working at the store at the age of 10. As the oldest of four children with a Japanese father who spoke better Spanish than English, she was often called upon to be his interface to the outside world. Florence began shouldering responsibility at an early age. Along with many Japanese Americans, Florence and her family were sent to an internment camp after the start of WWII. She was 14. Her family spent 15 months at the Amache Relocation Center in Colorado. They subsequently moved to Denver, where Florence went to high school. After the war, Florence was determined to move back to California and graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in business administration. In 1951, Florence married Tom Tsunoda and moved to Santa Barbara. Her son, Stan, was born the following year. Florence spent many years taking care of Tom's father and mother. Her daughter, Shirley, was born about a year after Tom's mother passed away. In the early 80s Florence worked as a teacher's aide at La Cumbre Junior High School and later as a librarian assistant at Santa Barbara High School. Florence was very active in the community. At the Buddhist church, she was a Sunday school teacher, an advisor to the Young Buddhists Association and an active member of the Fujinkai, the women's group at the Buddhist church. She was also active in Stan's and Shirley's school, and in their scouting and other activities. She and Tom traveled extensively, and she had a wide range of interests, including making dresses for her granddaughters, reading with her book group, hiking,

ikebana (Japanese flower arrangement), sumi-e (Japanese brush painting), and watercolor painting. Her generous and welcoming spirit were apparent to all who knew her. In Dec 2001, Florence suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and became severely disabled. Although such a brain injury can sometimes change one's personality, this did not seem to happen in her case. Throughout this difficult period, Florence remained calm, strong, and happy, always greeting her many visitors with smiles and handshakes. Surviving Florence are her husband of 64 years, Tom; her brothers George and Frank (sister Ruby pre-deceased her); her son Stan, her daughter Shirley, and her daughter in law, Henri. Florence is also survived by her four grandchildren, Kate, Laura, Brandon, and Jason. The family wishes to thank the Visiting Nurse and Hospice Association of Santa Barbara and the many caregivers who have taken care of Florence over the past 14 years. There will be a memorial service for Florence at the Santa Barbara Buddhist Church on 1015 E. Montecito St at 2:00 pm on Saturday, May 14.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAY 14. 2:00 PM (PT)

Santa Barbara Buddhist Temple
1015 E. Montecito St.
Santa Barbara, CA 93103