

Kiyoko Nagai Smith

Kiyoko Nagai Smith died in the Royal Jubilee hospital on December 12, 2012 at the age of 88 after suffering a massive stroke. She and her husband Lewis A. Smith had lived in their home near the University of Victoria for over 20 years. Her death was preceded by the death of her husband earlier this year.

Kiyoko was born in Fukuoka Japan on October 17, 1924 where she spent her early childhood. Later her family moved to Yamaguchi, a city 80 miles to the west of Hiroshima where she was living when the United States dropped the atomic bomb. Immediately after this devastating demonstration of the inhumanity of war, Kiyoko went to Hiroshima to find and help care for members of her family including her older sister Aiko who was badly injured by the blast.

Although few Japanese moved to the US so soon after the war, she decided to pursue a college degree in the US. After a number of months of tutoring in English by a British woman born in London, and having extraordinary determination and a spirit of exploration, she bravely left Japan to travel on her own to enroll in a small college in "the Old South" portion of America. Soon after her arrival at the school, and finding the "proper" English she had learned in Japan did not serve her well in conversation at this Southern (and predominantly Afro-American) school, she requested intensive tutoring in "American" English. Dr. Lewis Smith, a former officer in the US Navy and Harvard graduate and member of the History and American Literature departments, was asked by the Dean to tutor this energetic and charming student. This was a memorable teaching assignment for both the Professor and his student culminating in a marriage which lasted until the death of Lewis more than 50 years later.

Kiyoko pursued a Masters degree in child psychology from

Adelphi University in New York and later joined a research team at the University of Texas studying child behavior. After a trip to Hiroshima to visit Kiyoko's ailing mother, and after her husband said he fell in love with Japan, Kiyoko and her husband decided to live and teach in Hiroshima where they stayed for the next 18 years.

They returned to the West in the early 90s initially living in Ontario, Canada before deciding to retire in Victoria, described by Lewis as the warmest and most beautiful city in Canada. They enjoyed for many years the continued pursuit of their intellectual interests including taking courses at the University of Victoria.

Friends and family of Kiyoko are invited to share in the celebration of the life of this remarkable woman by contributing to Kiyoko's memorial website at <http://memorialwebsites.legacy.com/KiyokoSmith/Homepage.aspx>. A date and location for a memorial gathering in Victoria to celebrate the lives of both Kiyoko and her husband Lewis will be posted on her memorial web site.

She is survived by a younger brother Tadao Nagai, nephews Hiroshi Ishimatsu and Hajime Nagai of Hiroshima, Japan, and a niece Yuriko Matsuda. Closely related survivors in the family of her husband Lewis Smith include nephews Clint Taylor of Glendora California and David Hart of Los Angeles and his niece Sara Jane Olson of Bloomfield, New Jersey. In lieu of flowers, donations to can be made to The Victoria Foundation, #109 – 645 Fort Street, Victoria, BC, V8W 1G2 in memory of Kiyoko N. Smith. These funds will be directed to long-standing charitable interests of Kiyoko and her husband Lewis Smith which primarily focused on education and world peace. Condolences to the family may be offered below.

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