



Mrs. Kazuko Katayama Richards

September 15, 1932 - May 15, 2023

Mrs. Kazuko Katayama Richards, age 90, of Arab, Alabama (formerly Japan) passed away peacefully at her home on Monday, May 15, 2023. Mrs. Richards was born on September 15, 1932 in Seoul, Korea. Her parents were Hiroshi Katayama and Tsuneko Kamigaki Katayama. She met her lifelong husband, Okey J. Richards, while he was stationed with the US Army serving in the Korean War. They married in May of 1956. When Okey returned home to the US he brought his bride with him. She promptly started preparing for the oral and written citizenship test and proudly became a United States citizen on April 19, 1960. Kazuko has lived in the US for over 67 years and has called Arab, Alabama home for the last 25 years (since 1998.) Kazuko was baptized in the Methodist faith. She enjoyed sewing, photography, needlepoint and other creative activities. But most of all she enjoyed her music. She loved playing her organ and/or piano and thoroughly enjoyed ballroom dancing. Kazuko loved and supported her family. Although there were many years and many miles between them, Kazuko and her Japanese relatives remained close and shared many childhood memories. Her extended Japanese family extends their deepest sympathies.

Family members left behind to cherish their memories include: daughter, Virginia Lee (Billy), sons, Mark Richards (Kendall) and John Richards (Becky); sisters, Sakiko Shimakawa and Yasuko Vanooyen; grandchildren, Elaina Franks (Danny), Miranda Gerhard (Cody) and Summer Miller; great grandchildren, Asher Franks, Matthias Franks, Luke Gerhard, and Sky Lynn

Miller; and a host of nieces and nephews located both in the United States and in Japan.

Preceding Kazuko in death include her husband, Okey J. Richards; parents Hiroshi and Tsuneko Katayama; brothers, Hitoshi Katayama and Akira Katayama; and sister, Hiroko Kitagawa.

A visitation with the family will be from 10:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. on Monday, May 22, 2023 at Arab Heritage Memorial Chapel in Arab, Alabama. The funeral service will immediately follow at 11:00. Interment will be in the Lawrence Cove Cemetery.

Pallbearers will be Billy Lee, Daniel Franks, Mark Richards and John Richards. Honorary pallbearer will be Asher Franks.

Arrangements entrusted to Arab Heritage Memorial Chapel

Cemetery Details

Lawrence Cove Cemetery

142 Pine Burr Road
Eva, AL

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 22. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Arab Heritage Memorial Chapel
1340 North Main Street
Arab, AL 35016
(256) 586-4100

Funeral Service

MAY 22. 11:00 AM (CT)

Arab Heritage Memorial Chapel
1340 North Main Street
Arab, AL 35016
(256) 586-4100

Tribute Wall



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Mrs. Kazuko Katayama Richards.*



May 19, 2023 at 02:10 PM



“ *YASUKO SIMAKAWA purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Mrs. Kazuko Katayama Richards.*



YASUKO SIMAKAWA - May 19, 2023 at 05:54 AM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Mrs. Kazuko Katayama Richards.*



May 18, 2023 at 04:39 PM



“ *[Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was purchased for the family of Mrs. Kazuko Katayama Richards.*

May 18, 2023 at 02:28 PM



“ [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was purchased for the family of Mrs. Kazuko Katayama Richards.

May 18, 2023 at 10:46 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of Mrs. Kazuko Katayama Richards.



May 18, 2023 at 10:46 AM



“ From Hoss, Rika, Junior, Sue and Euka purchased the [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) for the family of Mrs. Kazuko Katayama Richards.

From Hoss, Rika, Junior, Sue and Euka - May 18, 2023 at 05:14 AM



“ From Hoss, Rika, Junior, Sue and Euka purchased the *Beautiful Dreams* for the family of Mrs. Kazuko Katayama Richards.



From Hoss, Rika, Junior, Sue and Euka - May 18, 2023 at 05:14 AM

MC

“*Kazuko, also known as Kitty, was such a big part of my childhood. Our families lived next door to one another for many years. Kitty introduced me to Japanese cuisine. She would make my favorite white sticky rice, introduced me to rice crackers from Japan and many other dishes.*

I fondly remember when visiting, hearing her play her organ. She was always kind and I remember her giggle. I'm sorry for your loss Ginny, Mark and John and hope your many years of happy memories bring you peace. Fondly, Michelle Shively Carpenter.

Michelle Shively Carpenter - May 17, 2023 at 11:50 PM