



Robert Shigeru Chinen

MAY 24, 1926 - AUG 31, 2024



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MEMORIAL
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R obert Shigeru Chinen Obituary

Shigeru “Bob” Chinen died at age 98 on August 31, 2024. He is survived by his three children, Margrethe (Tony), Robert, and Fritz (Cora), and three grandchildren, Geoffery, Caryn, and Rory. He is also survived by his brother Hiromu and extended family in Hawaii.

Born on May 24, 1926, in Waipahu, Bob was the fifth of seven surviving children of Itagoro Chinen, a sugar worker, and Nabe Minei, both from Okinawa. Bob had many stories about growing up in a large family on the Ewa Plain during the sugar era, including stories about the bombing of Pearl Harbor and its aftermath.

After attending Waipahu High School, Bob worked as a carpenter. In 1950, he enlisted in the army, and Bob served two years of active duty and four years in the Army reserves. After leaving active duty, Bob worked for the federal government in the Marshall Islands, providing support services to USG staff conducting nuclear testing. He often reminisced about this time, including an eyewitness account of an atomic blast.

After serving in the Marshall Islands, he attended the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) in New Haven, Connecticut, graduating in 1956. While training at the CIA, Bob met his first wife, Asta Nordvig Pederson, and they married in 1956. After graduating from the CIA, they worked at different restaurants on the mainland.

Upon his return to Hawaii, Bob worked as the sous chef at the Hilton Hawaiian Village. He won several awards for his skill in crafting sugar sculptures, including a detailed replica of a Matson Ocean Liner. In 1963, Bob became the executive chef at Kemoo Farms in Wahiawa, a position he held until 1977. From 1977 to 1978, Bob taught at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York. He moved back to Hawaii in 1978 to join the Culinary Arts faculty at Kapiolani Community College. Bob married Chisato Kikuchi in 1990, who was also an extraordinary cook. He taught at KCC for nearly three decades, retiring at age 70.



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Bob was dedicated to the craft of culinary arts. He loved teaching and was proud that many of his students transformed the Hawaii culinary scene into the innovative and dynamic industry it is today. In 2017, the Hawaii Restaurant Association inducted Bob into their Hall of Fame for his contributions to culinary arts in Hawaii.

Memorial service will be held on Tuesday, November 26, 2024 at Mililani Mauka Chapel. Visitation begins at 5:30 pm and service at 6:00 pm.

Inurnment will be held on Monday, January 6, 2025, 10:30 am at National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Punchbowl.

To send flowers
to the family, please visit our floral store.

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Tribute Wall

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TW

Tom Wong posted:

chef nounpersonne qui dirigechief , leader , boss Mentor“Collaborative relationship that proceeds through purposeful stages over time and has the primary goal of helping a mentee to acquire the essential competencies needed for success in a career.”*I am very fortunate to have been taught and mentored by Chef Chinen. Like many who have studied and worked under him, for me he was a beacon of knowledge in all thing's food, hospitality, and appreciation for the sense of place and joy in life.Back in 1983, as a student of Kapiolani Community College-Culinary Arts Program, I met the Chief and he immediately took me under his wing. He mentored me and shared insights of what it takes to be successful in the Culinary World. My success is attributed to his lifelong guidance from KCC to Hyde Park, to the far reaches of West Virginia and beyond.I have accomplished more than I could ever have dreamed of, but what stands out most, was to follow in his footsteps and teach culinary fundamentals at Kapiolani Community College, and now at the Culinary Institute of America - “Knowledge not shared is knowledge wasted.”Chief taught me to appreciate the finer things in life, such as; dinners with family and friends, paying attention to details, like ‘the warm crackers’ served at Yacht Harbor Towers Restaurant, and to never forget where you came from. I've never been prouder to have grown up in Wahiawa.I hope to continue and perpetuate your spirit and to mentor and guide young adults and culinarians, as you have done for me.I will never forget your laughter, smile, and zest for life. Cheers!With love and gratitude.Thomas B.H. WongProfessor – Culinary ArtsThe Culinary Institute of America at GreystoneSt. Helena, CA

November 26 at 9:14 AM

TW

Tom Wong posted:

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November 26 at 9:13 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Robert by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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