



Tsuneo Watanabe

APR 27, 1929 - AUG 10, 2025



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Tsuneo Watanabe

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Tsuneo Watanabe, 96, of Waipahu, Hawaii, peacefully passed away at home on August 10, 2025. He was born on April 27, 1929 in Waipahu.

He is survived by wife of 70 years, Susan; sons, Kyle (Wilma), Lance (Teri); daughters, Diane Sugai (Grant), Debbie Ouchi (Neal); 3 grandchildren (Dori Ann Sugai, Brandon Watanabe & RJ Watanabe); 1 great grandchild (Kane Kealoha). Tsuneo was preceded in death by his parents, Hikokichi and Matsu Watanabe, and his siblings, Kenichi (Miki), Rikio (Lucy), Kazuyuki (Beatrice), Fumie Kitamori (Charles), and Takako Endo (Seichi).

Tsuneo was one of the greatest amateur ball players of his time. In 1990, he was inducted into the OIA Hall of Honor for his 1945 baseball performance at Waipahu High School. On July 4, 1946, he was the Most Outstanding Player for the American Legion League Junior Baseball Series. In August 1947, the Honolulu Star Bulletin selected him to represent Hawaii in the Amateur World Series in Baltimore, Maryland.

The Star Bulletin printed, "Hawaii Boy Shines in Baltimore" as he was recognized for his "stellar performance at shortstop and a fat batting average of .471." Tsuneo graduated from Waipahu High School in 1947 and furthered his education at the University of Hawaii (1948-1951) earning his Bachelor's Degree while also being a dedicated baseball player.

"One of the best keystone combinations seen at the University for a long time were Larry Matsuo and Tsuneo Watanabe. Smoothness and lightning speed highlighted the double play combination." He played in the Hawaii Majors for the Red Sox (champs for 8 years) and enjoyed a 6-week baseball tour in Japan.

The Hawaii Team played in the Global World Series in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in September 1956, where he was voted Most Popular Player. The following year, he won the Outstanding Slugger Award at the same national Global World Series. He played Waipahu AJA baseball and they won the Championship title for 13 years.



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His passion for baseball continued throughout his life; he played and coached for over 50 years, coached his sons, and enjoyed watching his grandson (Brandon) and grand-nephews play. He also enjoyed playing softball and watching his granddaughter (Dori Ann) play softball for the University of Hawaii.

Tsuneo's professional life started at the Waipahu Sugar Plantation followed by a successful career as an insurance agent with Equitable Life Insurance, First Insurance Company, Pyramid Insurance, and finally Noguchi and Associates. In January of 1993, Tsuneo was one of nine honorees recognized at a "Pride in Waipahu" Dinner.

He was regarded as a Hawaii baseball legend, born and raised in one of Waipahu's plantation camps and praised as a member, director or officer of the Waipahu Business and Community Associations, Waipahu Jack Rabbits, and for his vital role in the development of Hawaii's Plantation Village. In his leisure time, Tsuneo enjoyed playing golf, singing karaoke and Vegas.

He was a devout member at the Waipahu Soto Zen Temple, Taiyoji, where he found great peace and community. His life was a testament to his dedication to his family, his community, and his passions, and he will be deeply missed.

Memorial Service to honor Tsuneo's life will be held at Mililani Mortuary Mauka Chapel on Thursday, October 9, 2025. Visitation will begin at 5:00 pm followed by the service at 6:00 pm. The family greatly appreciates all the support & sympathy!



Events

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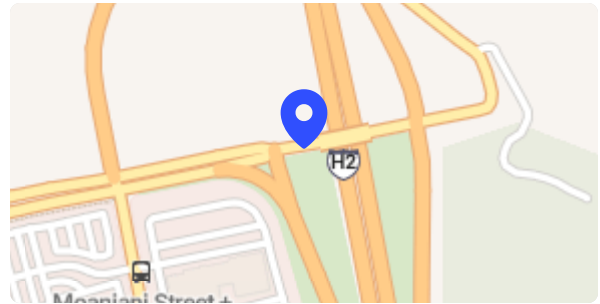
Visitation

Thursday, October 9, 2025

5:00 PM HST

Mililani Memorial Park & Mortuary - Mauka Chapel

Mililani Memorial Park Road at Ka Uka Blvd.,
Waipahu HI 96797



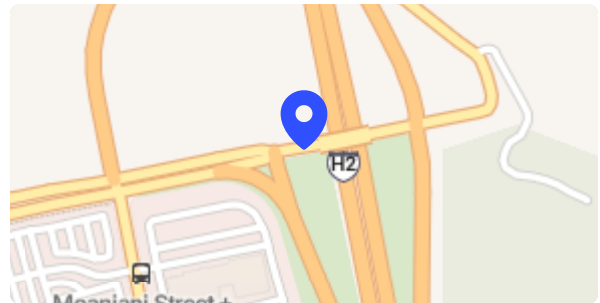
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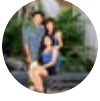
Mililani Memorial Park Road at Ka Uka Blvd.,
Waipahu HI 96797





Tribute Wall

Tsuneo Watanabe
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Diane Sugai shared an album called **Memories of Tsuneo Watanabe**.



October 3 at 7:47 PM



Media

Tsuneo Watanabe
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Diane Sugai shared 11 photos to the **Memories of Tsuneo Watanabe** album. October 3 at 7:47 PM





Media

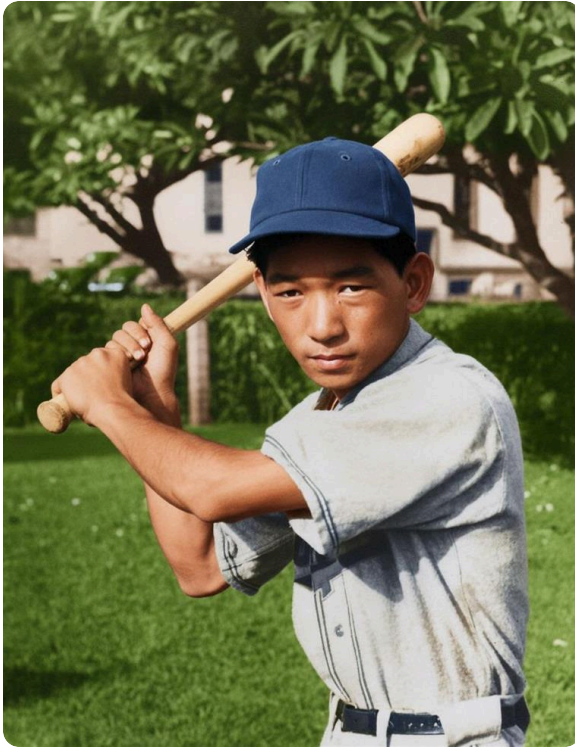
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Media

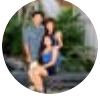
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Media

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Memories only last if you share them

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



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