

LI-CHIANG CHU

1941 - 2017 Obituary Condolences Flowers



Li-Chiang "Li" Chu

July 28, 1941 – January 25, 2017

Li-Chiang "Li" Chu passed away peacefully at home early Wednesday morning after an eight-month battle with stomach cancer. Li touched many people with her generosity of spirit and time. Her legacy continues on in the love she bestowed upon her family and through her philanthropy.

A proud Californian, Li's upbringing brought together a confluence of cultures and languages. Of Chinese and Japanese heritage, Li was born in Shanghai, China, but at age 6 followed her siblings to Woodstock School, an international missionary school in Northern India. In 1954, her parents moved to Tangier, Morocco where Li attended an American school and later a French high school-lycée, passing the rigorous French baccalauréat exam. As her siblings had done before her, she attended UC Berkeley and joined a student co-op. Li studied Biochemistry and received a Master's Degree in Nutrition in 1967.

Li started her career in pharmaceuticals as an analytical chemist at Burroughs Wellcome in Raleigh, North Carolina before returning to the Bay Area in 1973 joining Alza Corporation in its infancy. She held multiple managerial positions including budget director before retiring in 1998. Outside of work, Li dedicated her time to a variety of organizations. She took a special interest in education, and worked to provide opportunities for students at her former schools in India and UC Berkeley. As a proud alumna of Woodstock School, she created the school's alumni and donor database, volunteered as the database administrator, worked on several fundraising campaigns, and would jump in on any project big or small, in India, Washington, or at home. She has made a lasting impact on the school and its students through her financial support and 20+ years of volunteer involvement. Recently she

had been working closely with the Berkeley Student Cooperative (Co-op) on a capital campaign. Additionally, she was a respected member of the UC Berkeley Foundation as an Advisory Trustee for 7 years and a Builder of Berkeley. Li also supported education in her local community, volunteering at the Los Altos library for many years. In November 2016, she was recognized by Learning Ally (formerly Reading for the Blind) for achieving the milestone of 11,000 hours of recorded reading. Not only was Li incredibly generous with her time, earning several global and national recognitions, but she shared her personal resources with those organizations most meaningful to her.

In her spare time, Li enjoyed the arts. She was an avid painter and needlework enthusiast. She was a long-standing patron of the San Francisco Opera and a loyal member of the James Smithsonian Society and the Smithsonian Institution. Li took particular pride in her bountiful vegetable garden and fruit trees, and she was an excellent cook, often hosting large family gatherings at her home. She enjoyed traveling around the world and spoke many languages.

Li is preceded in death by her brother T.Z. Chu. She is survived by her sister Li-Chun and husband Robert Wu of Los Altos, her nieces, great-nieces and great-nephews, and many extended family members. Li played an integral part in raising her great-nieces and great-nephews. She made costumes for their school plays and Halloween, knit sweaters, taught them how to bake, attended their recitals, drove them to and from school, taught them French, took them on trips and much more. A service and burial will be held on Friday, February 10 at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Los Altos followed by a reception nearby. Please contact the family for details. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in memory of Li-Chiang Chu to Compass High School, 2040 Pioneer Court, San Mateo, CA 94404 (www.compasshigh.org), a school co-founded by Li's niece to serve students with learning differences, including her great-niece.

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