

Ayako Annie Sakai Girard, 1923 - 1993

September 11, 1923, Ayako Sakai was born in Seattle, Washington. She added her middle name when she was married and Annie is how she was known from then on. Her parents were Fusakichi and Tsuyano (Aoyama) Sakai. They were tailors. Her father had a son from his first wife, who passed away. With his second wife, Tsuyano, they had three children: Annie, followed by two sons.

The first half of Annie's childhood was in Seattle, Washington. In 1935 the family moved back to Japan, she was 11 years old. It was difficult for her, she wasn't accepted by Japanese children as she was born in the USA. And the students at the American school she attended did not accept her as she was full-blooded Japanese. WWII broke out when she lived in Japan and they moved into the mountains in a small village.

Following the war, and during the American Occupation of Japan, Ayako worked for the US Government as a clerk/typist for the Commanding Officer on the Kobe Base. During this time she met her future husband, an American soldier. Once he was back in the States, she followed him. They were married in Wisconsin, moved to Minnesota, and began their family. They had three boys.

She worked for Young-Quinlan, altering clothing. Later she worked at home doing secretarial work for a small company. But she is remembered most, by those who knew her, as a quiet, loving woman, with an infectious smile, who played the harmonica, and whose boys were her world. Her sons' friends loved her wonderful cooking and often 'just happened by' at supper time! And there was always green tea, ready to be served, to those who would stop by for a visit. Annie died at the young age of 69 in St Louis Park, Minnesota, on March 24, 1993.

Though Annie did not have the opportunity to further her own education, she stressed the importance to her boys. Her boys had to work their way through college as their parents were unable to help financially. It is because of Annie's strong belief in education that this scholarship has been created in her name, so she can live on helping others move toward their dreams through education.