

John Akira (Dimpy) Takekawa
1923 – 2021

John Takekawa Memorial Scholarship

John Akira Takekawa was born on August 28, 1923 to Kaneji Kakegawa and Yasuhei Takekawa in Seattle, Washington. His parents were from Nagano, Japan. John died on November 5, 2021 at the age of 98.

Most of his Japanese friends called him Dimpy because he had such big dimples. Even his nieces and nephews didn't know his name was John until later in life.

John had two siblings, an older brother, Dutch, and a younger brother, Tom. His father passed away when John was 11, so he and his older brother helped take care of their younger brother, who was 10 years younger than John.

When the war started, the three boys and their mother were evacuated to Puyallup, WA at the Washington Fair Grounds. After 4 months, they were moved to Minidoka Relocation Camp in Idaho. While there John helped harvest sugar beets in a nearby farm. In June 1943 he left camp for Cincinnati, Ohio, and then moved to Boston where he worked his way through Boston University. He lived there for only one year because in July 1944 he entered the Army and enrolled in the Military Intelligence Service Language School at Fort Snelling. John went to Manila, Philippines to participate in the Major War Crimes Trial. When he was discharged in 1946, he returned to Minneapolis, MN to join his mother and younger brother.

John started work as a federal employee with the Veterans Administration, but later transferred to the Internal Revenue Service.

In 1948 John married Phyllis Matsushita, meeting her on a blind date set up by friends Juni and Mit Kawamura. Together they raised four children, Joyce, Carol, Scott, and Susan and had 7 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren. They lived in the Twin Cities area. John and Phyllis were married for over 70 years. John continued his war interrupted studies in accounting at the University of Minnesota evening extension division and received his degree in 1957, after 11 years of night school. John worked for the IRS for 33 years before he retired.

John continued to volunteer in Richfield during tax season helping people with their taxes. He also coached his son's baseball teams.

He enjoyed playing golf, always carrying his clubs until his late 80's. He was in a work bowling league and softball league at church. He even took up jogging to keep healthy. Church was important to him. John joined First Christian Church after Phyllis in about 1947. He held numerous positions such as deacon, elder, board member etc. They were members for over 70 years.

Since his wife Phyllis helped start the Day Out Program for the Nikkei Project in the 1970's, he was involved as much too. The program continued even when all the Issei had passed. His job would be to call the bingo numbers at each meeting.

He spent his last 5 years at Friendship Village Assisted Living Center with his wife until she passed and 3 years by himself. He loved when the staff set up the putting green so he could try to get a hole in one.