



## Kenneth Kosuke Higa

November 12, 1935 - November 18, 2020

Kenneth Kosuke Higa, 85, of Orem, Utah passed away on November 18, 2020 surrounded by loved ones at Utah Valley Regional Medical Center in Provo, Utah.

Ken was born in Lanai, Hawaii on November 12, 1935. He lived a measured life of self-discipline and hard work. Though he was from a large family of thirteen children, and worked on a pineapple plantation to assist his widowed mother in their support, Ken excelled in school and graduated from Lanai High School. After High School he joined the Army and sent his paychecks home to support his mother and younger siblings. His insatiable desire to continue to learn and grow led to his enrollment at the Church College of Hawaii (now BYU Hawaii) where he supported himself amidst challenging circumstances and was introduced to the gospel of Jesus Christ for the first time. He wholeheartedly embraced the gospel and thus commenced a lifetime of faithful membership and service in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, including as a full time missionary in the Far East Mission (Japan) where he served for three years, working closely with Gordon B. Hinckley, as a missionary and an interpreter for church construction projects.

After his mission Ken's studies took him to Provo, Utah, where he met his cherished wife, Marcia Thurman and completed his degree in Secondary Education at Brigham Young University. Kenneth and Marcia were married on April 20, 1973 in the Salt Lake City Temple. Their dream to have an eternal family together was realized as they were blessed with 5 children and 11 grandchildren and spent a lifetime side by side making their family a top priority. Kenneth loved the gospel of Jesus Christ and his Savior. He imparted this love to his beloved children and grandchildren.

Ken worked as a school teacher for 35 years at John F. Kennedy Jr. High in West Valley City, Utah. A gifted teacher, he was beloved by thousands of students. Throughout his life, Kenneth exercised patience and self-discipline in karate training, becoming a master of martial arts, studying nationally and internationally, and earning his second degree black belt and other notable distinctions in Shotokan Karate. Consistent with his love of teaching

and lifting others, he taught karate for 50 years- never turning a student away, who could not afford the tuition. Ken founded the Karate training program at Brigham Young University. He was “true blue”- he loved BYU football and rarely missed a home game. He was very pleased that his oldest grandchildren now attend BYU.

His courage and sacrifice to further his education, to embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ and to begin a new life thousands of miles away from home, has blessed his family in immeasurable ways, as they continue on, where he left off, on the solid foundation he built for them.

He will be deeply missed by his friends, family, and all who knew him.

Ken is survived by his wife, Marcia Higa; his children, Stanford Higa, Spencer Higa, Adrienne Howard, Stewart Higa, and Tricia Elsmore

A family viewing and graveside service will take place on Saturday, November 28th. Interment with Military Honors will take place in the Orem City Cemetery.

Funeral Directors: Utah Valley Mortuary.

# Cemetery

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## **Orem City Cemetery**

1520 North 800 East

Orem, UT, 84097

# Comments

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“ Ken was a great teacher. I was in his karate dojo for most of my teenage years. He was kind but firm. It was always so inspiring when he would demonstrate the techniques. He had an unexpected power. He demonstrated and developed moral Character in his students, always taking time on a break from our physical activity to discuss a principle of integrity. I learned so much from him and count him as one of my best mentors in life. LeGrand “piano” Hunsaker

**LeGrand Hunsaker** - November 28, 2020 at 12:07 PM



“ Welcome to hell, pedofile.

**God** - November 30, 2020 at 10:07 PM

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“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



**Glen Clawson** - November 23, 2020 at 04:41 PM

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“ While backpacking in the Sierra Nevada on an incredibly challenging hike, this man just would not give up. Despite having a belly that might have been a bit too big and a pack that was too heavy, Ken would not stop. He made it to the campsite at 10,275 ft elevation a 7-mile distance and 3300 vertical climb. He would not give up. His example in life helped make me into the man I am today. He taught me that I can do hard things and be a better person than I am. Ken, rest in peace knowing the Atonement of Christ is real and makes broken things whole again.

**Glen Clawson** - November 23, 2020 at 04:01 PM

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“ I’m so grateful for Ken! He was incredibly influential in my life. I took karate from him for over ten years. He is a major reason I decided to get my eagle. He also always encouraged missionary service. I still remember receiving a kind note from him and his karate students when I was on my mission. Rest In Peace, Ken!

**Stephen Ashton** - November 23, 2020 at 11:13 AM

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“ Truly a remarkable life of service to youth both in his teaching career and the many years of Karate training. His strict code of ethics instilled in his students a desire to serve missions for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and be deserving of the rank of Eagle Scout in The Boy Scouts of America. He maintained in his group high standards which made all the young men and women desire to achieve not only their rank advancements and the high honor of black belt but to maintain Christ like attitudes and gratitude principles. Our son and many others have considered him one of the reasons for their successes in life and we love and honor him for the significant part he played in assisting to raise Scott to be the priesthood man he is today. Kidney failure and dialysis and aging hasn't been kind to this remarkable man and we are comfortable with his new birth and return home.

**Dave & Jan Peterson** - November 21, 2020 at 07:39 PM



“ Ken was my karate instructor, as he was for my five brothers. His positive influence was so strong that as my sons came of age, they also received instruction from him. His friendship, leadership, strong expectations, and ability to give us leadership and instruction opportunities made him one of the great contributors to my life. Thank you to him and his wonderful family!

Morgan Ashton

**Morgan** - November 23, 2020 at 10:32 AM



“ I took Karate way back in 1972 and 73. Ken guided me and our class to a higher realization of what a person can do. After receiving my black belt I taught for almost 30 years passing on the things he taught me.

**KENNETH LEE PUGH** - June 17, 2021 at 11:30 AM