



# Irene Tsai

JUN 9, 1933 - JAN 28, 2022



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## Irene Tsai

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Irene Tsai was born in Tianjin, China, on June 9, 1933, and passed away in San Jose, California, on January 28, 2022. She spent her formative years in Tianjin and Shanghai, surrounded by extended family, and she reminisced with her cousins, nephews and nieces about those idyllic days. She attended middle and high school at McTyeire in Shanghai, and stayed in touch with her McTyeire friends in the U.S. She lived through the Japanese occupation of Tianjin and Shanghai during WWII. After the war, she accompanied her father, mother and brother Robert when they relocated to Hong Kong.

Irene came to the U.S. in the late 1950's to pursue her higher education. She earned a Bachelor's degree at Hunter College and a Masters in Chemistry at the City College of New York (CCNY).

She spent her professional career as a research scientist at several pharmaceutical firms with labs in the greater New York City metropolitan area, including Burroughs Wellcome and Hoffman LaRoche. During her 35+ years residency in New York, she spent much of her free time with her sister Edith Tsai Koo and Edith's family. When her mother relocated to the U.S. from Hong Kong in the second half of the 1970's, Irene was ecstatic and, together with Edith, took excellent care of her and reveled in her company. After her mother suffered a debilitating stroke in the 1980's, Irene and Edith showed themselves to be models of filial piety every single day until their mother passed. Additional evidence of her selfless devotion to family can be found when, without hesitation, Irene provided instrumental assistance to her nephews and niece in the late 1970's and early 1980's when they came to New York to pursue their education.

After decades of hard work, harsh winters and grueling commutes, in the mid-1990's Irene sought to retire in the more temperate climes of the South Bay where many Tsai family members resided. Her sister Edith, who lived in New York, was a frequent visitor and stayed with Irene for many months at a time. During her early retirement years, Irene also enjoyed travelling with Edith and Edith's family.



## Obituary

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Irene's passions included Peking opera (she played cymbals in a non-professional Peking opera troupe in New York), classical opera, classical music and science fiction. She also had an affinity for animals, particularly dogs and horses.

Irene was predeceased by her parents Tsai Kuo Pao and Chun Kwa Lan and by her siblings Edith Tsai Koo, Robert Tsai and Clarence Tsai. She is survived by nieces Virginia Tsai, Roberta Tsai and Edwina Tsai; nephews Richard Koo, Brian Tsai, Benjamin Tsai, Donald Tsai, Winston Tsai and Kenneth Tsai; cousins William and Pat Tsai and Elizabeth Lowe; and dear friend and caretaker Ping Yee Tse De Hung.

To share a memory of Irene or leave the family an online condolence, please visit <https://www.skylawnmemorialpark.com/obituaries/Irene-Tsai/#!/TributeWall>

Irene's remains will be inurned at the Skylawn Mausoleum. At her specific request made several years ago, her urn will share a niche with the urn of her sister Edith Tsai Koo.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in honor of Irene to either of the following animal shelters serving the South Bay area: Humane Society Silicon Valley – San Jose ([www.hssv.org](http://www.hssv.org)); or Angel's Furry Friends ([www.angelsfurryfriends.org](http://www.angelsfurryfriends.org)).



## Tribute Wall

**Irene Tsai**

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**Julia Tsai & Family** sent a Dreams From the Heart Bouquet to the Tsai family.

February 14 at 9:03 AM



**Anonymous** sent a Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum to the Tsai family.

February 9 at 12:50 PM



**Anonymous** sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Tsai family.

February 9 at 8:42 AM



**Donald Tsai** posted:

Auntie Irene was my most respected elder & I can't thank her enough for all the things she had done for me. Although she had no children herself, her assistance & guidance to all the family younger generation was selfless and instrumental - I'm sure all my cousins can attest to that. Her kind devotion to the family was impeccable & irreplaceable - an example that I will surely follow myself. Auntie Irene will remain in my heart forever & I will miss her dearly. Her loss will be felt by many, for a long time to come. Donald

February 9 at 7:50 AM



**Ying-Ying Yuan** February 9 at 12:39 PM

I knew Auntie Irene when she first came to NYC and when she lived in New York. She was always young and caring and that is the vision I still have in my mind. May she now rest in peace. My sincere condolences to the Tsai family. Ying-Ying Tsien Yuan



## **Memories only last if you share them**

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



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