



## Rose Sio-Chen

February 24, 1921 - March 30, 2021

After living 100 years and 2 months, Rose Chin Swan Sio Chen went peacefully to heaven on March 30, 2021 in Millbrae, CA.

Rose was born and raised in Burma and immigrated to the United States in 1971, ultimately settling in California to live close to her children. Rose attended Chinese Women's High School in Rangoon where she was an avid basketball varsity player and a member of a 20-member women's band, playing the trumpet and later the saxophone.

At age 19, she lost her parents during the WWII Japanese invasion of Burma, which left her to care for her 9 younger siblings (ages 17 years to 5 months old). Refusing to put them in an orphanage, she raised all of her siblings with her husband with courage and determination.

She lived a comfortable and happy life in Burma with her husband, Y.C. Chen (married in 1942). Their marriage was one to admire as they were very devoted to each other. However, their blissful life was cut short when her husband suddenly died in 1958 at the age of 41. The loss was devastating for her who is now widowed at the age of 36. But, she stayed strong to care for her four young children, ages 14 to 9, and their thriving business. Enlisting the help of her younger and favorite brother, George, she turned the business into a more successful one. Since Rose was like a mother to him because he was only three during WWII, George was devoted to his sister and decided to quit medical school to help her and the business until they both relocated to the United States to escape the crumbling government and to be with her children who had left for college.

Rose had an infectious zest for life, devoted to her family, and never stopped learning. As an example, when she was in her 90s, she told her children that she wanted to live many more years to be with her children. She was very generous of her time and committed to helping others all her life, telling her children that one must give back as much as possible. For many years and well into her eighties, she enjoyed charitable fundraising for her civic

community and causes for the elderly.

Rose had many passions and interests from the arts to sports and cooking. Her passion and dedication for Chinese watercolor painting resulted in an award-winning hobby. She started painting in her 50s and didn't stop for decades. Her paintings became a major part of her life and morning ritual, when at that time of the day, she found the light to be most conducive for painting. She became very prolific, painting well over hundreds of paintings.

Her paintings won many awards, locally and abroad. She had 2 solo exhibit shows in San Francisco and the Bay Area. Her paintings were selected, among hundreds of submissions, by the San Francisco Art Association for many years and for art exchange exhibits with 3 Asian countries.

In addition to painting, her artistic nature shined with her love of music. She played the violin, trumpet, saxophone, and the harmonica which she would play for her grandchildren. Her devotion to caring for other and music intersected when her high school all-women band re-banded after WWII to play and raise money for her Alma Mater.

Sports also played a significant role in her life. She was a Burma National Doubles champion in badminton with her sister, Shirley, for 6 consecutive years. She continued playing badminton in San Francisco, into her early 80's until she could no longer drive. Her husband also loved Badminton and encouraged her by building an indoor court and forming a club, The Sun Club, to play interclub tournaments.

She was a remarkable cook who could make a delicious meal based on what was on hand. Rose learned to make many different dishes from many cultures, which is another example of the many ways she was gifted. She was also wise because she knew the best way to a man's heart is through his stomach. To this end, she perfected dishes from her husband's region in China so he had a piece of hometown while in Burma.

Her love for travel was also another passion. Whether going for a drive or traveling around the world, she was ready ahead of time – packing her bag one month ahead. With her highly organized nature, traveling with her was a breeze plus she was ready first thing in the morning. Rose traveled to many countries in Asia and Europe and enjoyed the foods of these countries.

In late 1988, she suffered another big loss, her favorite brother, George, again, suddenly. His death had a big impact on Rose, who, by now, had experienced so many unexpected losses of her loved ones. Rose had always been a very strong, determined, courageous

and “can-do” woman.

Despite these deep-hurting losses, Rose maintained her love of life and family and loved to share her knowledge with friends. She stepped up her volunteering - teaching tai chi, martial art sword and fan dances at the Senior Center in San Mateo for 25+ years until age 91. And in her mid-80s, learned Hawaiian dancing to help with fundraising for a statewide charitable organization called Self Help For the Elderly until her early 90s. She was acknowledged publicly by then San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, currently the Governor of California, for raising \$50,000 for one dance with her fellow octogenarians.

Rose possessed a pioneering spirit and excelled in whatever she needed to do to reach her goals:

First woman driver in Burma after WWII, late 1940s

First woman to win National Champion in Badminton post 2nd World War

With her brother, George, started a Methodist Church in San Francisco in the early 1980s with the pastor from their church in Burma

First artist in her late 60s to exhibit as a solo artist in the Bay Area

Mastered the practice of Tai Chi in her early 60s

People often asked her what is the secret to her longevity. She would laugh and say “I don’t know.” But we do. It is her ability to rise up to life’s challenges, always ready to learn new things no matter at what age, and simply love life and people. She never showed anger but with her signature composure she was always accepting of the situation. And, for anyone who’s lived a long life, she found ways to have fun and laugh.

Rose is survived by her four children, William Chen (Lily Siu), Lin Lin (Frank Herbert), Lily Chen, and Ted Chen (Elaine Toy); six grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren. She was also survived by her sister, Shirley Sio and niece, Dr. Catherine Chiu.

In lieu of flowers, please send your donation to the Burmese Christian Community Church of Silicon Valley. Here are the ways you can send your donations.

Zelle: Burmese Christian Community Church 408 370 8449

Or by check, mail to: Burmese Christian Community Church of Silicon Valley

C/O BCCC Treasurer, James Myint

3091 Mills Dr, Brentwood, CA 94513

Funeral service is scheduled on April 16, 2021 at 10:30am at the Skylawn Memorial Park - Skyline Blvd Hwy 92. San Mateo, CA 94402 · (650) 227-3142 · <http://www.skylawnmemorialpark.com>

Zoom participation will be available on the Skylawn website. Please check this website or write to anyone of us if you wish to attend via Zoom or in person.

To ensure the health and safety of our community, we are following all guidelines set by local, state and CDC officials. If you are planning on attending a service, please contact the funeral home in advance, so that we can plan accordingly.

# Cemetery

---

# Events

---

**Skylawn Memorial Park**

Hwy 92 at Skyline Blvd.

San Mateo, CA, 94402

**APR**

**16**

**Visitation**

11:00AM - 11:30AM

---

Skylawn Funeral Home

Hwy 92 at Skyline Blvd., San Mateo, CA, US, 94402

**APR**

**16**

**Funeral Service**

11:30AM - 12:30PM

---

Skylawn Funeral Home

Hwy 92 at Skyline Blvd., San Mateo, CA, US, 94402

**APR**

**16**

**Burial Service**

01:00PM

---

Skylawn Memorial Park

Hwy 92 at Skyline Blvd., San Mateo, CA, US, 94402

# Comments

---



“ Rose was a remarkable Lady with many talents who lived a full life seeing her children become very successful and being able to share her wisdom with her grand children. She also was able to welcome her great grandchildren into the world. My condolences to the family as Rose is now at peace and eternal happiness in Heaven. She will always be with you in memories , photos and spirit. Joe Herbert

**Joe Herbert** - April 16 at 03:21 PM

---



“ 1 file added to the album Rose's Happy Days With Ted And Family



**Ted Chen** - April 16 at 03:27 AM

---



“ RICHARD AND LINDA AUNG purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Rose Sio-Chen.



**RICHARD AND LINDA AUNG** - April 15 at 03:12 PM