



## Kenji-Bernard Tachibana

April 12, 1943 - March 5, 2019

Kenji-Bernard Tachibana was born 12 April 1943 in Tokyo, Japan. His mother Alice Fumiko Tachibana Kawabata, a third-generation American, was travelling overseas with her husband Tahei Tamura when World War II cut them off from home in Los Angeles. A war child, Kenji survived the bombings of Tokyo, and was 80 miles from the Hiroshima bomb that ended the war. Kenji, and his father before him, both succumbed to the devastation of brain cancer.

In 1952 Kenji was able to rejoin his family in the States. After graduating from L.A. High he joined the U.S. Air Force, serving as an air policeman in both South Korea and Kyushu, Japan. Back in the States in the early 1960s, he graduated from Art Center in Pasadena with honors in fine arts. He established commercial photography studios in L.A. with Jim Woods and Stan Tropp. He and first wife Bobbi Siminosky had a son, Eric. By 1981 Kenji had moved to Seattle, Washington where he established Okumo Studio, and later Tidemark Communications with Marlin Greene, extending beyond photography into glass art and graphic design services. In 'retirement', for nearly a decade Kenji taught digital photography storytelling at North, Central, and South Seattle Community Colleges.

Kenji served on the boards of the Japanese Language School PTA, Seattle Betsuin Dharma School, and the C.G. Jung Society of Seattle. He developed

White Lotus Media and the EcoSangha with reverend Rinban Don Castro. He also shared his enjoyment of Yang style tai chi, pickleball, enhanced fitness, and bocce with friendship groups in Seattle and Bellingham.

Kenji was cared for in the past two years by the Peace Health Cancer Center, Eden Home and Health Care, and Whatcom Hospice, supplementing the devoted care of Debra, his wife of 37 years, and loving daughter Sarah. They held hands throughout the final days and hours of his life. He had a close view of snow falling in their Japanese garden, the sounds of a crackling fireplace and environmental music, and the delicious tastes of traditional foods.

Kenji-Bernard Tachibana is survived by his wife Debra-Laurent Tachibana; daughter Sarah-Yukiye Tachibana and son Eric Kenji Tachibana (Li Hsien Lim) with three Tachibana grandchildren, Jennifer Shu Ning, Lauryn Shu Lin, and Mark Tien Ming; brothers Geoffery Taichi Tachibana (Jessica) with their children Christopher and Gillian Fumiko (Luis de Llull), and William Carter (Karen Raynor); Tachibana cousins Kiyofumi Robert (Charleen) with their children Nathan and Michael, and Noriyoshi Douglas (Miyako) with their children Jonathan, Taizo, and Miwa; brothers-in-law Richard Killmer (Nancy) with their daughter Katrina Tholen (Kyle Tholen), and Ronald Killmer with his daughter Jennifer Leaf (Greg Matter); as well as Killmer nieces and nephew, Kellene Rae, Corrien Erin (Jeff Wiley), Candace Globa (Andy Globa), Sunnie Jo Stauff (Paul Stauff), and Jamison Carl; and cats Li Po and Kiyeko.

Kenji died at home on 5 March 2019 after two years of treatment for anaplastic oligodendroglioma. He was preceded in death by his mother Annett Fumiko Carter and father Tahei Tamura; mother-in-law Virginia Massie Killmer and father-in-law Marion Earl Killmer; uncle Kiyoshi Harry Tachibana and aunt Aiko Janice Tachibana; sister-in-law Penny Killmer and brother-in-law Bruce Arthur Killmer; and nephew Andrew Warren Killmer.

Kenji was not afraid. He accepted the increasing frailty and disability of his body and, although dying was difficult, he rarely complained. He was a kind, appreciative, and precious man who loved to see through the lens of his ever present camera what others did not, and to share with us his love of light and beauty.

Gassho.

Namo Amida Butsu.

# Tribute Wall

WC

“ Kenji was brother whom I loved very much. We spent alot of time together as a young adult. He gave me alot of guidance in a major time in my life! I was young and we would talk about LifeLessons alot. Iam forever grateful for him in my life,and miss him. We had many fun times together! I love you Kenji  
Your younger brother....Willy

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**William cart** - March 05, 2019 at 12:00 AM

MU

“ Kenji and Debra visited Eugene Oregon for BCA minister’s retreat with the late Taitetsu Unno, my father-in-law, and my husband Mark Unno in June of 2013. Kenji kindly took beautiful photos during the event and shared them with us. It was nice to get to know him. He even sent condolences for our feline boy Taata who passed shortly after the event.It so happened that I have just found out that he has passed. I am very sorry for your loss. My deepest condolences to you and your family. Gassho.

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**Megumi Unno** - March 05, 2019 at 12:00 AM

SK

“ Such a wonderful gentle kind man. He will be missed. Seeing his and debras devotion to one another is an example we hope to imiatate. Much love and our deepest condolences to his family and friends

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**Samantha and Roy Knaak** - March 05, 2019 at 12:00 AM

LM

“ *To be around Kenji was to be in the presence of a calming healing and generous soul. I enjoyed our brief time together. You will always be in my thoughts.*

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**Lynne MacDonald** - March 05, 2019 at 12:00 AM