

JOHN M. YEE – Remembrance

1927 to 2021



John M. Yee, beloved father, grandfather, and great-grandfather unexpectedly passed away at age 93 on January 18, 2021. John Yee had devoted much of his life as an active participant and leader in the Phoenix Chinese Community, and developed such a reputation and acclaim that he was later known as “Uncle John”. Uncle John was born in Toisan, Guangdong Province, China on February 4, 1927 and immigrated to the United States in his 20’s to join other relatives in the Phoenix area. His wife, Hong Yow Yee (who passed away in 2010) and their first son came to the Phoenix area in 1953 and together, they worked tirelessly at the corner grocery store to make the American dream a reality. Later on, two other sons were born. Like many of his peers and generation at that time, hard and unrelenting work was very common. That was the foundation upon which Uncle John and Hong provided the opportunities for their children and future generations to achieve successful careers in various professional fields. All of that was due to one common vision and aspiration.

There is an adage that reads: “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” Uncle John unselfishly gave of himself. He never asked anyone to do what he would not do himself. He never asked for donations for different causes in which he himself did not contribute. Although his life was dominated by his passion and commitment to the betterment of his community in general, it was his help and assistance to individual people that brought out the most satisfaction. He was a willing participant and helper to people who needed to see a doctor; resolve a financial matter; help on an immigration issue; and even to buying a refrigerator. He had a booming voice and a great sense of humor and was sought by many to be Master of Ceremonies at weddings and other functions.

Uncle John’s Phoenix community efforts included, among others, the Chinese United Association, the Chinese Welfare Council, establishment of the Chinese Memorial Garden at Greenwood Memorial Lawn; and led the fundraising efforts for the Hong Lok House for low income seniors. His other monetary donations went to local, national, and international programs and buildings.

Uncle John’s main energy and efforts were focused on the Yee Fung Toy Family Association at the local, national and international levels. (He was Western Grand President---USA Yee Fung Toy

Association) There was serious business conducted at the Yee Fung Toy ranging from offering scholarships to students, conducting charitable events such as water and food drives, improving the lives of senior citizens, and providing bonding opportunities for all Yees. Uncle John rose to leadership positions at all these levels. His involvement involved traveling to various parts of the country and world for the various conventions. It was at these venues that he and Hong met and made lifelong friendships with other 'cousins' of Yee heritage, which were invaluable memories.

There is another adage that reads: "No one is more cherished in this world than someone who lightens the burdens of another." Uncle John was a willing person who cared to soften the burdens of others. That is his main and lasting legacy.

As Uncle John approached the last two years of his life in his 90's, Father Time was unrelenting and unforgiving. Although his health declined, he still voraciously read all the Chinese newspapers and magazines that came to the house. He kept up with the news of the day both in the United States and abroad. He even tried to continue cooking which his sons discouraged for the sake of safety. In his younger days, he did like to cook certain dishes although he never reached the star status of his wife, Hong. Although he loved to cook, he didn't want to wash the dishes.

During this unprecedented pandemic of Covid-19, the family kept him sheltered-at-home to try to protect him from this unrelenting virus. And although he did not leave the house, he became one of the over 400,000 casualties of it in this country. He leaves behind three sons, grandchildren, great-grandchild, and numerous nieces and nephews:

- Dean (Carine) and grandchildren Julianne (Dr. Chris Chen & Grace Chen-great granddaughter) and Brandon
- Fred (Ellen) and grandchildren Nathan and Elizabeth
- Paul (Cindy) and grandchildren Aaron and Allison.

Uncle John had a very special nephew in James (Ruby) Kwan whose compassion and kindness were of such solace and help over the years.

Due to the concerns of this pandemic over the health and safety of all, the Family regrets that it cannot hold a traditional service and funeral that befits Uncle John. The Family understands the overwhelming number of family and friends who want to pay their respects to him, but Uncle John would insist on: Be Safe, Be Well, and Stay Healthy. Services will be private. The Family will consider a future Celebration of Life when it is safe for all.

A final adage is: "He who wishes to secure the good of others has already secured his own". Uncle John is blessed to have so many family and friends and is secured in his own goodness. The Family requests no donations or flowers. For those who want to do so, the Family suggests donations to the Yee Fung Toy Family Associations at the various local/state, national, and international levels; to the local agencies fighting the pandemic; or to the organizations, churches or charities of their own choice. Even in the afterlife, Uncle John would rather you help others.

紀念余文勁先生

1927-2021



親愛的父親，祖父和曾祖父余文勁於 2021 年 1 月 18 日去世，享年 93 歲。余文勁先生作為鳳凰城華人社區的積極參與者和領導人，獻出了畢生的生命為社團服務，享有聲譽，並稱為“約翰叔叔”。約翰叔叔於 1927 年 2 月 4 日出生於中國廣東省台山市，他二十多歲時移民到美國，與鳳凰地地區的其他親戚在一起。他的妻子朱杏瑤（於 2010 年去世）和他們的第一個兒子於 1953 年來鳳凰城，他們在一起孜孜不倦地在一家雜貨店工作，使美國夢成為現實。後來，另外兩個兒子也在當地出生。像當時的其他的許多同齡人和一代人一樣，艱苦不懈的工作非常普遍。這就是約翰叔叔和朱杏瑤為他們的孩子和後代提供在各種專業領域取得成功職業的機會基礎。所有這些都是由於一種共同的願景和願望。

有句格言寫著：“我們靠所得來謀生，但是我們靠給予來為人。”約翰叔叔無私地給予了自己。他從未要求任何人做他自己不會做的事情。他從未要求他人捐款而自己沒有捐款的事宜。儘管他的一生主要由他對改善整個社區的熱情和承諾所主導，但最能使他感到滿意的是他對個人的幫助。他是一個積極參與者和幫助者。他幫他人去看醫生，幫解決財務問題；幫助解決移民問題；甚至買冰箱。他嗓音高昂，很有幽默感，不少人聘他在婚禮和其他活動上為司儀。

約翰叔叔的鳳凰城社區活動包括：大鳳凰城華人僑團聯合總會，斐匿華人福利會，在格林伍德紀念草坪上建立中國紀念花園；並領導了一所為低收入老年人住所的康樂大廈的籌款活動。他慷慨捐贈幫助當地，美國與及國際上不同的節目和建設。

約翰叔叔的主要精力集中在當地的，國家的和國際上的余風采堂事宜。斐匿余風采堂開展不少著實的業務，從向學生提供獎學金，開展慈善活動（例如飲水和食物義贈活動，改善老年人的生活，以及為余氏親友提供聯誼機會等）。約翰叔叔在所有這事上都擔任領導職務。他的參與涉及前往全國和世界各地參加各種會議。正是在這些場所，他和妻子朱杏瑤相識並與余氏的其他“表兄弟”建立了終生的友誼，這是寶貴的回憶。

還有另一句格言：“在這個世界上，沒有人比減輕別人負擔的人更珍惜。”約翰叔叔是一個願意減輕別人負擔的人。那是他的主要和持久的人生座右銘。

約翰叔叔活到高齡 90 之後，在過去人生的最後兩年時，不竟光陰對這父親時代毫不留情和寬容。儘管他的健康狀況有所下降，但他仍然狂熱地閱讀所有來到該家的中文報紙和雜誌。在美國國內外，他都時刻關注著這一消息。他甚至試圖繼續為自己做飯，出於安全考慮，他的兒子不鼓勵這樣做。在他的年輕時代，他確實喜歡做某些菜，儘管他從未達到妻子朱杏瑤的星級廚藝。儘管他喜歡做飯，但他不想洗碗。

在冠狀病毒病 19 這場空前的大流行疫中，家人要求他在家中躲避，以保護他免受這種無情的病毒的侵害。儘管他沒有離開家，但他卻成為這個國家超過 40 萬傷亡者之一。他留下了三個兒子，孫子，曾孫子以及眾多侄女和侄子：

長子余國器，大媳婦黃少雯，長孫女余秀穎，長孫女婿陳駿文，曾孫女陳玉瑤，孫兒余振威

次子余國仁，二媳婦胡麗珍，孫兒余振俊，孫女余秀慧

三子余國康，三媳婦吳翠君，孫兒余振升，孫女余秀欣

約翰叔叔有一個非常特殊的侄子 **James (Ruby) Kwan**，多年來他給予他人和藹及仁慈是如此的慰藉和幫助。

由於擔心這種大流病毒會危害所有人的健康和 safety，全家感到遺憾的是，該家庭無法舉行適合約翰叔叔的傳統葬禮。家庭了解到想向他表示敬意的家庭和 friend 數量之多，但約翰叔叔堅持：要安全，和保持健康。葬禮將只限直接親人。當到病疫過後，家庭將考慮舉辦一個為約翰叔叔的生命慶祝會。

最後一句格言是：“希望確保他人利益的人已經確保了自己的權利”。

約翰叔叔很幸運有這麼多的家人和 friend，心感以確保了自己的利益。家庭不要求任何捐贈或鮮花。對於那些願意這樣做的人，家庭會建議向各個地區/州，國家和國際各級的余風采堂捐款；或給予對付大流病毒的機構；或自己選擇的組織，教堂或慈善機構。即使在人生過後，約翰叔叔還是希望您能幫助別人。