



## Robert Yih Li

January 1, 1932 - September 29, 2020

Robert Y. Li was born on January 1, 1932 in Ningdu, Jiangxi Province in China and died on September 29, 2020 in Houston at the age of 88. His funeral service will be held at Wildwood Chapel in Restland Funeral Home and Cemetery on October 17, 2020 at 10 am.

Robert Li's parents, father Li Yao and mother Li Tian Guanfu, were married in 1927. His father was an engineer in a chemical company. Robert Li was raised by his grandmother in Ningdu, since his mother died young when he was seven years old. His father also worked and lived in another city, Tianjin, and would send them money every month. Li also lived with his brother, who was two years older, and a sister seven years younger than him.

Li grew up in the 1930s and 1940s in China during war and a time of great turbulence. From 1937 to 1945 the Japanese invaded China, so his elder brother when he was old enough went away to fight the Japanese. Because of the wartime conditions his father also was rarely able to communicate with the family. It was only once in high school that he saw his father again after almost 10 years. Soon after the defeat of the Japanese, from 1945 to 1949 the country was then embroiled in civil war between the Communists and Nationalists, which finally ended in the Communist Revolution. Despite the complicated social and political background of his childhood, Li was able to attend school and graduated high school. When the Communists were nearing his hometown in Jiangxi Province, in 1948 Li with friends walked and hitched rides to Guangdong to board a ship to Taiwan. Once in Taiwan, he reunited with his father, who had already immigrated to Taiwan. Li received a bachelor's degree at the National Defense University Chung Cheng Institute of Technology majoring in chemical engineering. On a government scholarship in 1964 he attended the University of Texas at Austin and then Michigan Tech to study nuclear engineering. He received his masters from Michigan Tech in 1967 and moved to New York. Li held various jobs in New York City, from engineering draftsman to taxi cab driver and stationery store owner. He married Grace Ten-Mei Li in 1972. They lived in Flushing, Queens and they had a son, Tony, in 1974. Robert Li became a US citizen in

1975. He accepted an engineering job at the Naval Air Station at Puget Sound, Washington from 1978 to 1984, during which they had a second child, Vivian, in 1981. He worked for a couple of years at GE in San Jose, then moved the family to Sacramento while he looked for a job. While there they found out Grace had cancer. They had already learned in New York that Tony had diabetes. Li was able to secure a steady job in Texas, relocating the family in 1986 to Grand Prairie, Texas, where he worked for the Naval Air Station Dallas (today the Grand Prairie Armed Forces Reserve Complex) and then the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth as an engineer for about 15 years until he retired.

Shortly after Li retired in 1999, Grace Li passed away that same year from cancer that had returned. He soon after met Lisa Xia, who he married in 2000 and they lived happily together for the rest of his life in Dallas and then later Houston. They both loved to travel, so in his retirement they traveled around the world together, to places like Egypt, Thailand, New Zealand, and France. They also often danced and sang together, and he also enjoyed in his free time playing the erhu (Chinese violin), painting, and writing calligraphy and poetry.

During his retirement, Li was active as the president of the Dallas Chinese Senior Citizen Association and was founding president of the DFW Chinese Calligraphy and Painting Society. He organized cultural activities and art exhibitions in Richardson and various other places in the DFW area to support and showcase the artistic and literary talents of the local Chinese community.

Robert Li is survived by his wife, Lisa Xia, his two children, Tony Li and Vivian Li, and his son-in-law Vivek Rajan.

# Events

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**OCT** **Funeral Service**

10:00AM

**17**

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The Wildwood Chapel at Restland Funeral Home

13005 Greenville Avenue at Restland Road, Dallas, TX, US, 75243

# Comments

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“ The first time I met Robert and his family was at Vivian and Vivek’s wedding. He was dancing with his wife and he was savoring and celebrating every moment of that occasion. As I got to know him more, I realized that this quality of savoring and celebrating life was just a part of who he was as a person and how he lived his life. Looking back at his legacy, he had an amazing life and a beautiful family, which would make anyone proud.

He treated me with kindness and warmth when he invited me over to his home for countless dinners in the past 10 years. He made me feel like I belonged to the family and never an outsider. He made sure I had enough to eat as a vegetarian and we often sang karaoke after the meal. A sweet person and a kind soul, Robert will be dearly missed by family and friends. May his soul rest in peace. God Bless.

Prayers for strength and solace to Vivian and the family in this difficult and very sad loss.

Aurva



**Aurva Kapoor** - October 13, 2020 at 11:58 PM