

Masako Yamada Kenley

November 10, 1967 ~ July 2, 2021

Masako Yamada Kenley, age 53, passed away on Friday, July 2, 2021.

Masako was born in Yokohama, Japan on November 10, 1967. She attended an all-girls Buddhist high school and, in 1977, met missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She made the decision to be baptized, which would impact every aspect of her life to follow.

After graduating from an English university, Masako served a faithful mission for the Church in Osaka, Japan. Upon completing her service, Masako moved to Utah in January of 1991. She attended LDS Business College, graduating in 1994. On October 29, 1994, Masako married her eternal companion, Bill Kenley, in the Salt Lake City temple. Their forever family grew with the addition of four beautiful children and, more recently, that of a fantastic daughter-in-law.

Masako was proud to be Japanese, never losing her love for her homeland, its language, and culture. The strength of her relationship with her family was undeterred by miles, and, together, they created an enduring bond between her home in Utah and her roots in Japan. Her Utah family has wonderful memories of time spent with Masako's family from Japan, and their love for one another will continue.

Masako loved her extended family and never missed family gatherings. She was an accomplished cook and, despite her small frame, loved to eat. She was often found circling the table after meals, seeing what was left uneaten to finish things up. Her command of English was excellent, and, on the rare occasion that it wasn't, she laughed along with everyone else at the results. She was exceptionally supportive of her nieces and nephews, not only attending every event, but cheering more loudly than anyone and snapping pictures of just about everything.

Masako valued relationships and was interested in everyone she met. She could work a room in a way that made every interaction intimate and sincere, paying special attention to those who appeared alone or uncomfortable. There were few adventures she wasn't up to. She shopped for anyone, especially relishing the chance to shop for her larger-than-average brothers-in-law. She was well known for being a confidant and listening ear; when you talked to her, you knew she cared. She leaves behind countless best friends, all of whom know for a fact that they were her favorite.

Masako was a loyal employee of the United States Postal Service for over 20 years. She cherished the friendships she developed and the skills she learned through her job. Most recently, she could be found driving a forklift and wearing a hard-hat.

Masako found a wonderful home with neighbors in both her Kearns and Sandy communities, and thrived through the support and fellowship they shared. She was faithful in her ward and in her church callings, working in Primary, Young Women's, Relief Society as well as many years in the Nursery. While she enjoyed each calling, she especially loved her Young Women.

Masako’s greatest joy was in being a wife and mother. To that end she nurtured an unshakable testimony of the Gospel and instilled this faith in each of her amazing children. She encouraged their growth and was their most vocal cheerleader. They will never doubt her love for them, or its never-ending nature.

Masako is survived by her husband Bill; children Micah (Chelsea), Julia, Sean, and Paige; her parents, Yukinobu and Sachie Yamada; her brother, Yukito (Yurika) Yamada; her sister, Harumi (Shito) Yamada Sato; and her Utah family: parents-in-law Lynn and Jean Kenley; sisters-and-brothers-in-law Kristen (Scott) Bakker, David (Wendi) Kenley, Eric Kenley, Elizabeth (Mikkel) Storm, Paul (Carolyn) Kenley; as well as many nieces and nephews.

Masako’s family would like the thank her many friends, coworkers, neighbors, her local ward and stake, her bishop and other Church leadership, and even complete strangers for the outpouring of support they have offered during this time.

Funeral services will be at noon on Monday, July 12th at the church on 11626 South 300 East. There will be visitations at Larkin Sunset Gardens (1950 East Dimple Dell Rd. - 10600 South) on Sunday, July 11th from 5:00PM-8:00PM, and at the church beginning Monday at 10:30AM.

Masako leaves behind ample love and strength to help us manage through the darkest of times. She will be deeply missed until that unimaginably joyful day when we’re together again.