John Yukio Yamagata

May 12, 1917 ~ October 1, 2013

Born May 12, 1917 in Rexburg, ID to Chiyo (Minowa) and Sannosuke Yamagata and passed away on October 1, 2013 in Salt Lake City, at the age of 96.

John spent his entire life caring for his families. He lost his father when he was 13 years old and quickly became the "man of the house." As a young teenager, he worked to provide for his mother and siblings, often leaving Idaho for temporary employment. He held various jobs including journeying to California to pick beets, and Price, Utah to work in the coal mines. As he explained, "I went wherever I could find work." He graduated from Madison High School while continuing to support his mother, five brothers and two sisters until he met and married the love of his life, Donna Fumiye Matsuura, on May 9, 1944. He dedicated the rest of his life to Donna and their children.

During WWII, John and Donna relocated to Camp Savage, Minneapolis, Minnesota, where John attended Language School for the Military Intelligence Service (MIS). He served in the US Army and as a member of the elite MIS, was a linguist and interpreter under General Douglas MacArthur in the Pacific theater. John was trained in the social, economic, and political conditions in Japan, and as a member of an officer group, was deployed to Hiroshima immediately after the atomic bomb was dropped in 1945. Decades later he could still describe the horror and devastating effects of a nuclear weapon. John was honorably discharged from the US Army as a Second Lieutenant. He was awarded the Asiatic Pacific Ribbon (with battle star), Liberation Ribbon, Good Conduct Ribbon, and most recently, the Congressional Gold Medal for his membership in the Military Intelligence Service.

After WWII, John and Donna lived in Teton, Idaho. With their children , all born in Idaho , the family resided in Rexburg, Blackfoot, and later in Pocatello. John farmed in southeastern Idaho for nearly 40 years. Prior to his retirement, he was the first person to farm on Wheatgrass Bench - a 2600+ acre parcel of land located on the Bannock Shoshone Indian Reservation. During that 15 year tenure, John was made an honorary member of, and served on the Indian Council. He also owned and operated American Falls Produce , a potato packing and distribution company. Following his retirement, John and Donna moved to Sandy, Utah.

From 2004-2009, John and Donna lived in Washington, D.C. with their son Ben. It was during this time that John honed an interest in politics, one of his favorite topics of discussion. John was an avid and eclectic reader , everything from Harry Potter to the Washington Post and New York Times. He enjoyed fishing , especially trips with Donna to Alaska where he joined his youngest brother Fred and wife Joyce, catching salmon and halibut on the Kenai Peninsula. Gardening was a favorite pastime; he could fix anything and was a jigsaw puzzle aficionado. He loved being outdoors; he savored a walk around the yard, pruning his fruits and vegetables, and playing "fetch" with the dogs. John always took an interest in Donna's hobbies as well. He designed leatherworks, fired her porcelain, and for more than 40 years, they produced incredible hand-dipped chocolates. You could often spot the two of

them, signs and noisemakers in hand, at a Utah Jazz game.

John leaves behind his children Gordon (Judie), Ben, Blaine, Brenda, Debbie (Gary), and John; grandchildren Isaac (Tricia), Mat, Rachael, Benjamin, and Allison; great grandchildren, Lana, Tanner, Peyton, Addison, and Benjamin-Michael, and siblings Lucile Miyasaki, Haruo, Jack, Torao, Fred, and Lillian Kusaka. John was preceded in death by his daughter Ann, brother Michio, and wife Donna.

A private service was held on Saturday, Oct. 5, 2013. In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to The Humane Society of Utah. Donations can be made via phone at (801) 261-2919, ext 208, or by visiting the website at www.uthahumane.org. Online condolences: www.larkincares.com