



Masako Kawakami Nanto

December 14, 1940 - September 23, 2025

Masako Nanto passed away on September 23, 2025, after a long struggle with autoimmune disorders. She was born on December 14, 1940, in Matsumoto, Japan. As a top high school student there, she set her sights on studying in the United States. Her American odyssey began at Brigham Young University (initially at its Hawaii campus), where she graduated in 1967. There, she met her husband-to-be, Dick Nanto. Several years later, the two returned to BYU in Provo, Utah, where she taught Japanese language classes.

In grade school in Japan, Masako once had to sing a solo of “Carry Me Back to Old Virginny.” Little did she know that from 1980, she would make Northern Virginia her home, first in Fairfax and then in Clifton.

Masako had four great loves in her life: her profession, her church, her garden, and her family and friends. As an instructor of Japanese language and culture, she taught American diplomats for 30 years at the Foreign Service Institute of the U.S. Department of State. While teaching, she earned a master’s degree from George Mason University.

As a teenager in Japan, Masako joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She served in various teaching and leadership positions, including a three-year stint facilitating meetings in the Church’s addiction recovery program. Much like her garden, she nurtured both her faith and the faith of others. Her two-acre garden in Clifton became a gathering place and was always open for visits by friends and family. Many looked forward to her

annual garden parties, where more than 100 busy people stopped to smell the roses, have a snack, and renew acquaintances. She was known as the Flower Lady for the bouquets she took to friends.

Occupying a special place in her heart were her close friends and family. Her mothering moments of joy multiplied as her son grew from toddler to teen to adult. She loved her husband of 58 years and likewise loved her son's family, her siblings, and numerous relatives from both the U.S. and Japan. She especially enjoyed family reunions and weekly visits by the grandkids. Each time they came to visit, they would play the latest piece they had learned on the piano.

Masako was pre-deceased by her parents, Tomiji and Ayako Kawakami, and brother, Kennichi, in Japan. She is survived by her husband, Dick; son, Brian, and his wife, Natalie; grandchildren, Ella, Paul, Luke, and Sam; her sisters, Mihoko Koshihara and Akiko Miyazawa; and a large and growing Nanto clan. A memorial service will be held at the Centreville Virginia Stake Center (14150 Upperridge Dr., Centreville) of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at 11 a.m. on November 1, 2025.

The service will be available remotely via Zoom: Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/97192015490?pwd=C4ZFY5xp0KN6LPuzySpKbV0I6DS1ah.1>

Cemetery Details

Stonewall Memory Gardens

12004 Lee Highway
Manassas, VA 20109
<http://www.stonewallmemorygardens.com>

Previous Events

Memorial Service

NOV 1. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
14150 Upperridge Drive
Centreville, VA 20121

Tribute Wall

JF

“ *Judy Christensen and family purchased the Sweet Tranquility Basket for the family of Masako Kawakami Nanto.*



Judy Christensen and family - October 31, 2025 at 01:48 AM

JB

“ I was so saddened to hear of the passing of Masako Nanto. I first met Nanto Sensei back in 2010 at the Foreign Service Institute outside Washington, D.C., where she was one of the finest Japanese language instructors anyone could hope to learn from. I was incredibly lucky to meet her early in my State Department career. As a new diplomat preparing to serve in Japan, Nanto Sensei taught me so much — not just about the language, but about the subtle cultural nuances that helped me be more effective, thoughtful, and connected in my work.

She was such a wonderful teacher — warm and encouraging, but also firm in the best possible way. She pushed us to do our best and took great pride in helping each of us succeed. I always admired her strength, her kindness, and her genuine curiosity about people. Over time, we developed a friendship that meant a lot to me.

To my great and happy surprise, we discovered we had some unexpected personal connections — we had both studied at BYU, and we both shared a special love for Laie, Hawai'i. It felt like fate that our paths crossed, and I've always been grateful for that.

One of my favorite memories was when she invited me and my family to visit her beautiful gardens in northern Virginia. They are extraordinary — a true reflection of her spirit: vibrant, peaceful, and full of life. She had such a gift for creating beauty wherever she went. I so admired her for this.

Later, I was lucky enough to cross paths with her son David and his family in Tokyo, and it was a wonderful reminder of what an exceptional and caring family she and Dick have built together.

I'll always remember Nanto Sensei with deep affection and gratitude. She made such a lasting impact on my life and on so many others. My heartfelt condolences to her husband Dick and the entire Nanto family. May her memory continue to be a blessing and an inspiration to all who knew her.

Until we meet again, Nanto Sensei.

- Jonathan Beutler

Jonathan Beutler - October 15, 2025 at 02:39 PM

LW

“*Dick, we are sad to hear of the passing of your dear wife. We will always be grateful for our earlier association. It was 53 years ago that you both welcomed the entire Wimmer clan into your home in Tokyo! I still can't believe we did that with five boys ages 1 to 12. Surprisingly, it is still a topic of conversation when they are together now ages 54 to 66! Thank you!*

Our very best to you during a difficult time.

Along with our great respect and admiration.

Larry Wimmer and Five Boys

Larry Wimmer - September 25, 2025 at 12:48 PM