

George Minoru Tanimura (1915 – 2016)

It is with sadness that the Tanimura Family announces the loss of their family patriarch and agricultural legend George Tanimura. George passed away peacefully at his home in Salinas, California on April 15, 2016.

George was born in San Juan Bautista on July 2, 1915, to Eijiro Kimoto and Yukino Tanimura. While attending grammar school in Castroville, George thinned iceberg lettuce on his father's small farm. After his mother died, George, the eldest son of his 12 siblings, was compelled to quit school to farm with his father. George quickly learned how to work.

Shortly thereafter, in the midst of the Great Depression Eijiro, George's father, passed away leaving George with the responsibility for the family. George managed the family business while his sister Chisato returned from Japan to care for the children. The family moved into a ranch house in Aromas. As a young patriarch, he was required to guide the family through numerous historical and economic challenges thus developing his stern but loving way.

During World War II, George and members of his family were removed from their farms and placed in internment camps in Poston, Arizona. Although George lost everything during his internment, he managed to find the love of his life, Masaye Yamauchi. They were married in the camp on September 21, 1944, and last year they celebrated their 71st wedding anniversary. Masaye has been by his side every step of their journey and even this week, remained by his side.

Following the War, the Tanimura family began rebuilding their lives performing manual labor in the fields in Gilroy. Through hard work and the strong bonds of respect, love, and cooperation, George and his brothers created a dynamic and successful farming enterprise. The Tanimura family farmed small patches of land, saved the profits, and ultimately purchased their first acre of land. This simple formula began the Tanimura's trek towards the American Dream.

In 1948, the Tanimura Family began a farming relationship with another agricultural legend, Bud Antle. Shortly thereafter, the Tanimuras began to grow exclusively for Bud Antle, Inc. Bud, and his son Bob Antle, began working closely with the Tanimura family for over 34 years. In 1982 this

relationship culminated in the formation of Tanimura & Antle. George along with his brothers, Charlie, Johnny, Tommy and Bobby, and nephews, Gary and Keith formed Tanimura & Antle with Bob Antle and his sons Rick and Mike. This partnership joined the Tanimura growing expertise with the Antle packing, marketing, and shipping expertise. George and Bob Antle became inseparable partners and Co-Chairmen of the Board as they worked together to successfully lead Tanimura & Antle to become the premier agriculture company in the world.

The partnership is marked by years of agricultural industry leadership and serves as an icon in the family farming enterprises of the Salinas Valley. Tanimura & Antle was far more than a business for George; it was his life. Lettuce prices, transplant technology, new hydroponic varieties, and any other farming related topic dominated the discussions with George. His continued commitment will live on because he instilled this drive and passion in everyone around him.

George served in many leadership positions within the Tanimura family companies, the Tanimura & Antle companies, charities, and community organizations. George was also the recipient of several distinctive honors and recognitions. Because they always made him uncomfortable, George downplayed these accomplishments. He avoided any fanfare and attempted to quietly stay in the background.

George personally participated in every farming innovation in the Salinas Valley. When it happened, he was not only involved, but he was an active player. One of his most passionate projects was drip irrigation. He advocated the use of this technology to improve farming practices and reduce water usage long before it was a necessity or government mandate.

Everyone in the family looked to George to lead the discussion, share his wisdom, and ultimately make the family decisions. Family was very important to George, but so was farming. His pride and joy was the Tres Picos Ranch in Huron, CA. He enjoyed visits to Huron at least once a week and during the season multiple times a week even during his hundredth year. Being on the ranch always brought him peace and happiness. If you drove to Tres Picos with George, it would NOT be an early night. Stopping for pickled pig's feet at Woolgrowers in Los Banos was a late night Tuesday tradition.

In July 2014, George celebrated the beginning of his 100th year with a milestone centennial birthday celebration with family, business partners and friends. Over 600 people joined together to honor and respect the highly regarded Salinas family farmer. In July 2015, he quietly celebrated his actual 100th birthday surrounded by his wonderful family eating his favorite Saba sushi.

All who knew George loved him. His presence and influence will be greatly missed.

George is survived by his wife Masaye, son, Glenn (Sheila) Tanimura and daughter Leslie (Ken) Morishita, grandchildren Chris (Becky) Tanimura, Erin, Ryan and Kelly Tanimura, and great grandchildren Makenzie, Jaklyn, and Karter Tanimura. He is also survived by his brother Tommy (Hisako) Tanimura; his sister-in-law, Sachi Tanimura, wife of his late brother Johnny and sister Rose (Mas) Yuki as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

George was predeceased by Chisato Tanimura, Tamae (Masato) Nakano, Charlie (Fumi) Tanimura, Alice (Ben) Sato, Johnny Tanimura, Betty (Kaz) Furusho, Benjamin Tanimura, Hiroko Tanimura, Bobby Tanimura, and Tamotsu Tanimura.

The viewing will be held Saturday April 23, 2016 from 3 to 6 p.m. at the Struve & Laporte Funeral Chapel located at 41 W San Luis Street, Salinas, CA 93901.

The Funeral Service will be held on Sunday April 24, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. at the Buddhist Temple of Salinas located at 14 California Street, Salinas, CA 93901. Additional parking will be at the Salinas Rodeo grounds with transportation provided to the Buddhist Temple of Salinas. The service will also be broadcasted in Spanish at the Tanimura & Antle building #4 located at 121 Spreckels Boulevard. All are invited to attend and pay tribute to George.

The Tanimura Family has asked that anyone wishing to honor George with a donation, please donate to the Tanimura Family Foundation, P.O. Box 4070, Salinas, CA 93912.