



Geraldine Ann Okada

June 18, 1948 - August 28, 2026

Tacoma, Washington

Geraldine Ann Okada died in Tacoma on August 28, 2026. She was seventy-eight. Born there on June 18, 1948, to parents who had come back from a war the country later preferred to discuss at a distance, she grew up in a valley that still had canneries at the edges and machine shops in the middle. She learned English at school and a second set of manners at the table. She never treated either language as a costume.

She packed fish as a young woman, then spent twenty-two years as a clinic receptionist in a building that did not look like the brochures. She was the adult who could sit with a form without making a production of it. She kept extra tissues in a drawer for the person whose morning had already been too long. When the clinic sent a new form, she translated it twice: once into English a tired parent could use, and once into the quiet that says you are not in trouble for needing help.

She married Daniel Okada in 1971. They bought a bungalow in a neighborhood that later became expensive around them. They stayed. A son and a daughter went through public schools she trusted more than she trusted real-estate talk. After Daniel died in 2016 she kept the garden of bitter greens and the habit of walking a neighbor's child to the bus when a shift ran late.

Neighbors remember a woman who swept her sidewalk and yours if the wind had been unfair, who kept a coffee can of buttons labeled in two languages, and who could sit through a graduation without making it about herself. She liked the water early, before the heat, when the tideflats still looked like a place a person could walk. She died in Tacoma, the only city she had ever needed. The extra tissues are still in the drawer. That would have pleased her more than a eulogy.

Services

A memorial in Tacoma with tea afterward. In lieu of flowers, a gift to a clinic sliding-scale fund or adult English class is welcome.

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