



June Haruko Takata

January 22, 1944 - August 29, 2026

Hilo, Hawaii

June Haruko Takata died in Hilo on August 29, 2026. She was eighty-two. Born there on January 22, 1944, she grew up between rain and the smell of cane, in a house where Japanese was for the kitchen and English was for the store. She learned to pack a lunch that could survive humidity and a long bus ride. She never treated either language as a costume.

She spent thirty-three years in a public-school cafeteria, first washing trays, later running the line that had to feed children who arrived hungry and left with a carton of milk they had not asked for twice. She treated a government commodity as a problem of seasoning. When a volcanic haze closed the playground she still opened the kitchen, because weather is not an excuse to skip a meal. After she retired she made lei for graduations, funerals, and the ordinary Tuesdays when a neighbor needed something beautiful that would not last.

She married Kenji Takata in 1966. He worked the harbor and died in 2008. They raised a daughter and a son who still argue about who got the last slice of butter mochi. June kept the garden of ti and ginger, and the habit of leaving a plate on a porch without a speech. She sat through rain the way other people sit through television.

Grandchildren remember a woman who corrected their manners more than their homework, who kept a biscuit tin of thread, and who could name every auntie at the farmers' market by the fruit she preferred. She died in Hilo, in the wet city she had always said was kinder than a dry one. The kitchen steam is someone else's now. The patience she practiced there is harder to replace than a recipe.

Services

A service in Hilo, then food in the hall. Lei welcome if you pick them with care. A gift to a school meal

program or community garden suits her.

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