



2015

# National Association of Medical Examiners

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### NAME Foundation Announces Hisako Noguchi Memorial Fund

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Hisako Noguchi, wife of Tom Noguchi. As you will read below, in the tribute authored by Tom, the NAME Foundation would not be in existence had it not been for the foresight and philanthropic spirit of Hisako. As a token of our appreciation, the NAME Foundation has established the “Hisako Noguchi Memorial Fund,” as an ongoing remembrance to honor her dedication to her husband, the scientific community in general, and the NAME family in particular. Please consider donating to this fund and honoring Hisako. The fund is restricted, meaning that the funds may only be utilized for the stated purposes of the NAME Foundation (the promotion of education, research and preservation of history within forensic pathology/death investigation).



Hisako Noguchi, 1922-2014

### Hisako Noguchi Remembered – By Tom Noguchi

Hisako Nishihara Noguchi passed away on August 27, 2014. She was born in the San Pedro district of Los Angeles, California, on November 11, 1922, to Mr. Moriso and Asako Nishihara of

Hiroshima Prefecture, Japan, and was the eldest of three daughters. She is survived by one of her two sisters, Toshiko (married to Dr. Richard Morita). Her other sister, Mutsuko, passed away in 1985. Hisako’s maternal grandfather was the second son of a ruling Samurai family, but the

family fortune changed by the end of Shogun era in 1868, when all Samurais lost their jobs as a new government was established. In 1890, in order to support a large family, her grandfather traveled to America and began to send money back to Japan to save the starving family. Hisako’s

father (Moriso), at the age of 16, realized that his father had been away for a very long time, and that his younger brother and sister had not seen and hardly knew their father, so Moriso decided to come to America and send his father back to Japan to take care his family.

Hisako was very responsible and acted as caretaker for her two young sisters, while her father worked in a fish cannery and later within the fruit and vegetable industry in Los Angeles, and her mother worked in a garment factory. After finishing junior high, Hisako specifically chose Los Angeles High School because it had a scholastic achievement program that was highly regarded by many universities. In school, Hisako excelled in chemistry and math, and wanted to pursue a career in medicine. She studied hard, but continued to be responsible for looking after her sisters. Her parents were excluded from becoming US citizens, and therefore were not allowed to own a house, so Hisako, as a U.S. citizen, bought a house.

After high school, Hisako began to attend

her first year of college at UCLA; however, in December 1941, World War II began, and the entire population of 110,000 Japanese Americans who resided on the Pacific coast was forcefully moved to 10 relocation camps in the most remote areas of the US. She and her family were among the people who were taken to the Southern California Assembly Center in the Santa Anita Race Track facility in May 1942. Hisako's family members were sent to Amachi Relocation Camp, which was complete with barbwire and watch towers. Despite the terrible situation, Japanese American internees were very innovative, and by the next summer, the residents had created a beautiful vegetable farm, and built schools and hospitals. By the second year, flower and vegetable gardens were everywhere within the camp. There were 10,000 internees in Amachi, Colorado.

Hisako learned that a Quaker group was working with internees, helping them to attend college. This group assisted Hisako and arranged a scholarship so that she was able to leave the camp by

1943, resuming her undergraduate studies at Boston University. She worked as a live-in student taking care of a household while attending school in Boston. Later, her father secured a job at the New Jersey Birds Eye frozen food plant. Although she enjoyed her studies in Boston, Hisako said that Boston winters were very cold, so she returned to UCLA and finished the premed curriculum, graduating with a BS degree in 1947. She then completed her Masters degree in Biochemistry in 1949, while conducting research at the Barlow Sanatorium, Chavez-Revine, Los Angeles. She continued her studies and earned her Ph.D. in Biochemistry in 1953, all the while working at the Pathology Laboratory of the Barlow Sanatorium. Hisako and I met in the Barlow Sanatorium while I was a patient in the outer cottage facility; I had worked very hard during my internship at the Orange County General Hospital and had contracted tuberculosis. As my condition improved, I was soon busy preparing for obtaining my medical license and starting my Pathology residency. I completed my residency in 1960, the same year

in which Hisako and I were married. Without excessive funds, we drove to Las Vegas and were married on New Year's Eve, December 31, at the Small White Chapel. Upon returning home, Hisako's mother convinced her daughter to have a reception in Los Angeles where her parents could attend, so we had a reception at home, where she cooked. Although we had a reception, we never had a traditional honeymoon, because we were too busy, and I was appointed as Deputy Medical Examiner in Los Angeles, starting July 10.

After we were married, Hisako continued to work professionally, usually leaving home as early as 5 AM, so that she could return early to take care of her other duties, which included apartment management, caring for her elderly mother, and performing other household duties, such as buying groceries and cooking for her mother and me. Later, Hisako also took care of her younger sister, when she was dying from breast cancer; she passed away in May 1985. 1985 was a difficult year, as her mother contracted lymphoma and passed away the same year.

During her career, Hisako taught at UCLA and USC and conducted research in microbiology and biochemistry, when grants were often sporadic. She also taught at California State University at Los Angeles and West Los Angeles Community College. Throughout her academic career, she maintained her maiden name at work; many publications bear her maiden name as senior author. In addition, she has a few articles together with me, specifically related to Scanning Microscope in Forensic Investigation. In 1985, because of her younger sister, Mutsuko's, grave illness, Hisako decided to retire from a long research and teaching career. Hisako regrets having to tell her mother about her sister's death, as she knew that the news would cause her mother to give-up: "if she is gone, she does not want to live." After her mother and sister passed away, Hisako spent considerable time with her hobbies, including hook rag making, cardigan knitting, writing her life story, and the history of her Nishihara ancestry.

There were many turning points in our lives together. She guided me continually, always

turning me toward my best course.

1. Hisako had determination and a strong sense of justice. When I was very depressed with all of the political attacks directed against me at one point in my career, Hisako was incensed and became involved in writing letters to the general population, politicians, and newspapers editors. She also organized the Japanese American community to rise-up and support me. As a result, I was ultimately appointed as the Los Angeles CME-Coroner, the first Asian American to be appointed in to a key county government position.

2. In the 1970s, Hisako was conducting her research regarding the use of electron microscopy on microbiology at the UCLA. I was busy planning to build the new Medical Examiner's Facility and Forensic Science Center, when she strongly advised me to include an electron microscope in the newly constructed Forensic Science Center of the Medical Examiner's Office. Because of this foresight, LA was the first Medical Examiner's Office to have such an instrument for investigation of forensic cases.

3. Hisako was very skillful in money management, and during her lifetime was instrumental in endowing funds to support the Art Museum, the Japanese American National Museum and the Japanese Culture and Community Center in Los Angeles. She was also the person who advised me to start an endowment program which later became the NAME Foundation. We are very grateful for the NAME leadership in supporting me in this endeavor.

After her retirement, Hisako also had more time available so that she could accompany me to the meetings that I attend. Eventually, Hisako came with me to every meeting that I attended, as she said she did not want to be alone at home.

As the years progressed, due to advancing age, Hisako began to experience the inevitable effects of various natural diseases. She developed osteoporosis and fractured her hip and wrists. She suffered a heart attack and required a pace maker. Later, Hisako suffered Parkinson's disease, which caused considerable weakening in walking ability,

requiring subsequent use of a cane, a walker and a wheelchair. As she was at risk for easily falling, I bought her a pink bicycle helmet that she would happily wear at home. In fact, when she passed away, she was wearing that helmet. I brought her to many NAME meetings, but for the last two years, she had to wear her favorite pink helmet. Finally she became weaker and weaker, and was unable to eat well. She passed away peacefully on August 27, 2014, with me by her side. I now miss her very much, but I am very happy and proud that her memory lives-on through the NAME Foundation, which would not be in existence had it not been for the idea given to me by my wife, Hisako. I am extremely grateful for establishment of the Hisako Noguchi Memorial Fund within the auspices of the NAME Foundation.

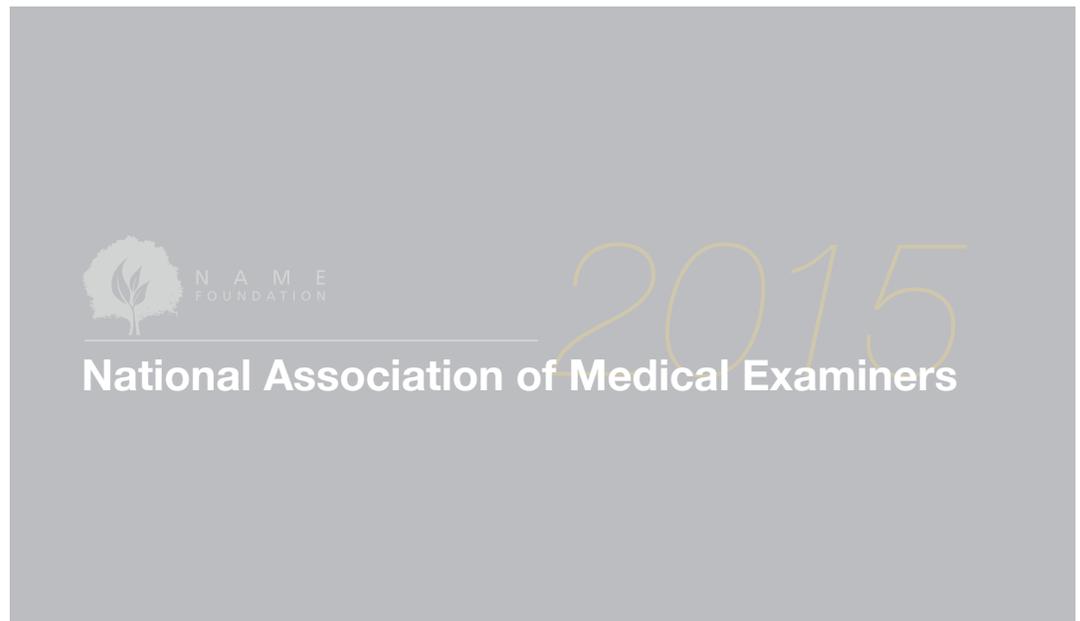
### **NAME Foundation Board of Trustees**

The NAME Foundation increased the total number of Board of Trustee members at the annual meeting last fall. Please see the list below for current members. The BoT continues to meet by conference call on

a monthly basis. As activities and ideas expand within the organization, a decision has been made this year to assign specific tasks/goals to various committees, with the intent that the smaller committees will be where a bulk of the work will occur. A list of the committees and committee chairs is provided below. Any NAME Foundation member (not just BoT members) is able to serve on these committees. If you are interested, please contact Dee McNally or the appropriate committee chair. As always, we on the BoT welcome ideas and input from all NAME Foundation members.

## NAME Foundation Committees

Membership and Nominating Committee – John Butts, chair  
 Bylaws/Policy & Procedures Committee – Greg Schmunk, chair  
 Finance/Investment Committee – Michael Graham, chair  
 Fundraising Committee – Peggy Greenwald, chair  
 Advocacy Committee – Michael Rieders, chair  
 Newsletter Committee – Joe Prahlow, chair  
 Silent Auction Committee – Amy Martin, chair  
 Education Committee – Mary Case, chair  
 Research Committee – Joe Felo, chair  
 History Committee – Greg Schmunk, chair



# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

## NAME Foundation Board of Trustees

**Chair** – Joseph A. Prahlow, MD

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**Trustees:** John D. Butts, MD, Mary E.S. Case, MD, Joseph A. Felo, MD, Marcella F. Fierro, MD, Jan C. Garavaglia, MD, Mary E. Goolsby, MD, Randy L. Hanzlick, MD, Amy Martin, MD, Yvonne I. Milewski, MD, Christopher M. Milroy, MD, Michael F. Rieders, PhD, Joel S. Sexton, MD

**Ex-Officio:** Marcus B. Nashelsky, MD, David R. Fowler, MD, Gregory G. Davis, MD

## NAME Foundation Membership Criteria

The NAME Foundation is proud to offer membership to any member of the National Association of Medical Examiners who makes an annual contribution to the NAME Foundation. The following minimal annual contribution qualifies membership in the NAME Foundation:

**NAME Members:** \$50.00

**NAME Affiliates:** \$20.00