



# Thanh Nguyen

FEB 9, 2023



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# Thanh Nguyen

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**D**iamond Head Mortuary and Williams Funeral Services is saddened to announce the passing of Thanh Nguyen. We are honored to be serving the Nguyen family.

Dr. Thanh The Nguyen (MD, PhD), 81, passed away on February 9, 2023, in the comfort of his home in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Thanh was born on October 26, 1941 in Hanh Thien village in the northern part of Vietnam, and spent most of his youth in Sai Gon, in the south. As the baby and only son of the family, he undoubtedly grew up spoiled - a jealousy surely felt by his three sisters who, nevertheless, continued to dote on him into adulthood.

After receiving a medical degree at the University of Sai Gon, Thanh performed his military service as a physician with the Vietnamese army. He then returned to the University as an assistant professor at the Faculty of Medicine, inhabiting the tradition of education and scholarship carried by his family for generations.

Thanh first arrived in the United States in 1970 on a fellowship from the US Agency for International Development to study at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. He eventually earned a Master in Public Health, then a PhD in the study of statistics and epidemiology. He had the goal of serving as one of the first American-trained medical cadres at the University of Sai Gon. The impending end of the war in Vietnam changed his life trajectory, as well as that of the family he had started in Sai Gon.

His wife Quynh and his infant daughter Cathy eventually joined him in Palolo in 1975 - but not after he had a good run of the bachelor student life in Waikiki of the early 70s.

The 80s brought on many life-changing events for Thanh. He became an American citizen, and espoused literally until his dying days an enduring appreciation for the federal agency, USAID,



that brought him to Hawaii, and an unshakeable belief that the US was the best country, Hawaii the best place to live. His son Michael was born, adding to what he did not realize would be a familial cohort that would harangue him for the next 40 years. It was also in the 80s that he started his 30+ year career as a doctor for the Department of Health, specializing in tuberculosis control and treatment.

Thanh's life could be marked by a quartet of self-esteem: proud American, proud Hawaii resident, proud State employee, proud Punahou parent.

His life could also be marked by an ability to nap in any environment. He had an incorrigible penchant for McDonald's fries that he ate. One. By. One. His inquisitive habit led to lots of travel - 22 US States and 27 countries - and, consequently, lots of souvenir baseball caps. Then there were the hours upon hours of Spider Solitaire, which beat out bowling, golf, gardening, swimming and Tứ Sắc (Four Colors) as Thanh's most durable pastime.

Thanh was predeceased by his parents, and his sister Diep Dang. In addition to his wife and children, Thanh leaves behind two sisters, Kim Lockard and Nguyet Ton, his son-in-law Bassam Hage, his daughter-in-law Carrie Wu, two grandchildren Ilyas and Sylvie Hage, plus countless said hats, and a healthy number of wide-width velcro sneakers and crossbody man-bags.

A memorial for Thanh will take place on Friday, March 10, 2023 at 6:00PM at Diamond Head Mortuary. The family requests no flowers. In lieu, donations may be made to Tzu-Chi Foundation or the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's.



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Thanh by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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