

**In Memoriam:  
Caroline Atsuko Matano Yang  
(1936 – 2023)**

It is with profound sadness that Fulbright Japan shares news of the passing of former Executive Director Mrs. Caroline Atsuko Matano Yang on December 13th in Taipei, Taiwan, where she had been residing for many years. She was age 87.

Mrs. Yang was the longest serving Executive Director of the Fulbright Commission in Japan, from 1973 to 1993. Her life story is an amazing journey of trailblazing and selfless service in cultivating societal leaders of Japan and the United States through bilateral educational exchange, and subsequently overseeing the development of Fulbrighters on a global scale.



Born in Hawaii in 1936 to parents who had emigrated from Japan, she graduated from Smith College (BA) and Michigan State University (MA), and then worked at the United Nations in New York for 9 years. She later accompanied her husband to Taiwan where he was an American Fulbright Scholar 1967-1968. When her husband's career moved them to Tokyo in 1971, Mrs. Yang started working as an unpaid volunteer at the Fulbright Japan office, was soon hired as program officer in 1972, and then promoted to Executive Director in 1973.



Her historic 20-year tenure as Executive Director encompassed the transition to new binational governance and funding, as the United States Education Commission in Japan (USEC-J) became the Japan-United States Educational Commission (JUSEC) in 1979. Not only did she positively influence the lives of the thousands of Japanese and American Fulbrighters who received grants during this period, she touched thousands more through her outreach and personal collaboration with alumni of prior decades.

After JUSEC, Mrs. Yang moved back to her home state of Hawaii, at which point she was appointed by President Clinton to the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board 1994-2002 (including serving as Board Chair 2000-2002), where she steered policies for the worldwide Fulbright enterprise. In 2009 the Government of Japan conferred on Mrs. Yang the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon, for her distinguished contribution to the promotion of educational exchange between Japan and the United States.



Since 2009 she had lived in Taiwan with her late husband, who preceded her in passing.

This week the Fulbright Japan community lost a towering figure of visionary accomplishments and unsurpassed devotion to mutual understanding between two peoples across the Pacific. Although we feel the void of Mrs. Yang's departure, her flame of inspiration will burn brightly within us for the sake of the future generations whom we are privileged to guide.