



Rebecca Lum

October 19, 1930 - November 23, 2020

Rebecca “Becky” Lum, 90, passed away peacefully on November 23, 2020, in Vacaville, California. Becky was born October 19, 1930, to Harry and Lillie Lum in San Francisco, California, where she lived from childhood through college. Driven and industrious from the earliest age, she recalled earning her “candy money” when she was 7 years old by working at a sweatshop for Levi Strauss where she folded and stacked Levi’s jeans for 7 cents a dozen. She attended Francisco Junior High School and Polytechnic High School. Already stronger than she looked, she loudly played the large and clumsy bass drum in the Chinatown Drum and Bugle Corps. She was naturally athletic and enjoyed badminton, ping-pong, and tennis, even earning medals in city championships when competing on a Chinese girls’ basketball team.

Becky majored in science at the City College of San Francisco and later San Francisco State College, with aspirations to become a science teacher despite counselors discouraging an Asian-American woman from such ambitions. She bravely faced discrimination when she began her teaching career in 1956, when after a difficult job search she was hired to teach both algebra and physical education at CarlMont High School in Belmont but could not find a place to live nearby because of her ethnicity. She persevered, living in the back of a plumbing supply office in San Carlos, until she was offered a position to teach math at Armijo High School in 1958. Although she was the first Chinese teacher at the school, she felt at home amidst the “cultural gumbo” of students and “never had a bad day at Armijo,” where she spent 33 years teaching analytical geometry, trigonometry, and calculus as well as coaching tennis, basketball, and badminton. Her stellar reputation preceded her when she joined the faculty at Solano Community College in 1988, and there she taught math and badminton for 30 years, retiring shortly before her 89th birthday. Having “too much fun” teaching to truly retire, she was especially proud of the intermediate algebra classes she taught to inmates at California State Prison Solano in the last few years of her career as an educator. Although Becky (Miss Lum to her students) humbly described herself as being “the lucky one” to have taught rising lawyers, doctors, and Ph.D.s, the Armijo Alumni Association honored her stalwart dedication as a leader and educator with induction into the Armijo Alumni

Association Hall of Fame in 2015.

A self-described “softie” with a loud voice, her generosity and fiery passion manifested outside of her career as well. In the last two decades, badminton was the nucleus of her energy and social life. She taught badminton for the Vacaville Community Services Department, and held “open court” at Solano Community College where all members of the public were welcome. Under her watch, badminton at Georgie Duke Recreation Center became the longest-running sports program at over 20 consecutive years. Each day, she watched over the badminton court like a “mother hen” tending her brood, ensuring everyone had a chance to play and providing individualized coaching advice. The group expanded with time as Becky spread the word about the joys of badminton to everyone who crossed her path, from former students to grocery-store cashiers. Newcomers were welcomed with a lesson from Becky herself. Although not a digital native, she learned to manage an email list of hundreds of people to ensure that last-minute schedule changes would not cause inconvenience. Throughout these years she not only volunteered countless hours of her time, but also personally donated equipment to ensure the sport was accessible to anyone who had an interest in learning. Truly beloved to the badminton community, dozens of people gathered each year to celebrate her birthday.

In life, Becky saw herself as a “salmon swimming upstream,” with the odds stacked against her. Although a perhaps unintended analogy coming from Becky’s love of fishing, when her first job required that she teach swimming — and she did not know how to swim — she boldly cold-called an Olympic swim coach and persuaded him to not only teach her how to swim, but teach her how to teach swimming. For eight months, she took weekly lessons from him and practiced every day until she was proficient enough to perform her teaching duties with confidence. Like the metaphorical salmon, Becky approached her life with a ferocity of effort, guided by a strong moral compass. Even in the last month of her life, her energy was palpable when she described returning to the badminton court to teach: “There’s still at least 10% of my knowledge that I haven’t shared with you!” she would exclaim. Perpetually the teacher, Becky felt that she was never done giving — and indeed the lessons she has taught us in courage, integrity, determination, and resilience will not end with her passing.

Becky is survived by her sister, Rowena Jang (Joseph, predeceased); brother, Walton Lum (Faith); niece, Jaye Van Kirk (Timothy); nephews, Michael Lum (Lee Ann), Rodney Lum (Kim) and Scott Lum; grand-nieces, Audrey Jang and Emily Lum; and her grand-nephews, Gregory Lum, Garrett Lum, Ryan Jang and Jonathan Lum. She was preceded in death by her parents, Harry and Lillie Lum; brother, Arnold Lum (Grace, predeceased);

and her nephew, Jeffery Jang (Maria).

Drive-thru funeral services will be held from 10:00 AM - 12 noon on Tuesday, December 15, 2020, at Bryan-Braker Funeral Home in Fairfield. Interment will be in Fairmont Memorial Park in Fairfield, CA.

Cemetery

Fairmont Memorial Park

1901 Union Ave.

Fairfield, CA, 94533

Events

DEC **Modified Visitation** 10:00AM - 12:00PM

15

Bryan-Braker Funeral Home

1850 W. Texas St., Fairfield, CA, US, 94533

Comments



“ Liza Gjura-Thomford lit a candle in memory of Rebecca Lum



Liza Gjura-Thomford - December 24, 2020 at 05:27 PM



“ I was the class of 1976. With wonderful thoughts; Ms. Lum has taught me to never give up. She was a caring person to everyone she was in contact with. She went to our class reunions and I will miss seeing her at my next reunion. RIP and I will see you when my time is up. God Bless you and your family.

Liza Gjura-Thomford - December 24, 2020 at 05:34 PM



“ I was part of Ms. Lum's last, lucky class of trig and calculus students at Armijo ('88), and one of her many students to get a PhD. I remain so grateful for her mix of toughness and warmth, which I try to channel as a professor. She was an amazing example of how to seize life with gusto, overcome obstacles with grace, do great things, and have a great time along the way. It was so delightful to see her in 2008 at our 20 year reunion, when she was still a force of nature!

My heart says Rest In Peace, except I can't picture Ms. Lum "resting"! Her beautiful energy will keep resonating forever.

--Denise (Ohnstad) Costanzo

Denise Costanzo - December 20, 2020 at 03:15 PM



“ Ms. Lum was my teacher at Armijo (class of 60) and later my daughter's teacher (class of 83). When she first realized that Veronica was my daughter, she laughed and said "Oh, my God! Maybe it's time for me to retire!" No way, Ms. Lum! Its a good thing she didn't as she still had a lot of good years in her as we can see by the testimonials she has received. She was an inspiration to me as she was to a lot of women in the 50;s and 60's. She showed us that if she could achieve what she had, not just as a woman, but a woman of a different ethnic culture, we had a chance to realize our dreams as well. Thanks to her I knew to continue my education and ultimately achieved a Masters Degree as did my daughter in following my lead. Thanks to your example, "Ms. Lum". I can't believe that even though I'm an old woman now, I still have to refer to her as "Ms. Lum." I guess that's because I honor and respect this woman for all the blessings that she gave to people during her "tenure" in this world. May you rest in peace, Ms. Lum, you've earned it!.
Juanita (Rodriguez) Shoopman

JUANITA SHOOPMAN - December 16, 2020 at 10:11 PM



“ Ms. Lum was my badminton coach at Armijo and my Algebra teacher. (Class of '83). She was also my mom's teacher when she went to Armijo (Class of '60). She always had a smile and was always looking for a challenge. My doubles partner and I would challenge her and Ms. Linville to badminton matches. One time we bet a steak dinner for the winners and I am happy to say we won otherwise we wouldn't have been able to go because we had no money(poor high school students). Her ability to teach was exceptional as I was not the best in math, but the way she taught algebra was incredible and I got an A. Ms. Lum also video tapped my wedding years later when i got married in '97. I have always had fond memories of her and she definitely left an imprint on my life and the special moments that I continue to remember. Rest in Peace Ms. Lum!
Love, Veronica (Shoopman) Manz

Veronica Manz - December 16, 2020 at 08:49 PM



“ I played badminton in high school, and was ok. There was really no leagues so we had to travel to schools such as Vallejo and Santa Rosa to compete. My cousins were on the Vallejo team and we played against them. After many years of not playing, my cousin was the coach of Vallejo and I ended up starting to play again. Through this shared interest, we took Ms. Lum’s class at Solano and that’s where I learned the proper fundamentals and footwork. She was a willing stand-in for a doubles partner and always looked out for helping beginners not get too frustrated and quit. She also threw in some math concepts;) Because of her patience and passion of the sport and keeping it consistent over many years, I met so many great people through playing and there was always a healthy badminton presence in NorCal and solano county. Through her example, my cousins and others helped Vallejo and the leagues’ other teams became pretty competitive and fun. We always spread the word to all the players from all the schools of an accessible, inexpensive place to play and hang, in Vacaville at Duke and some of the after badminton food runs. Although I am sad to hear of your passing, I am happy and blessed to have known you and have had your influence. May the rest of us who knew you be able to continue your legacy in badminton and in life. Deepest condolences to her family and close friends. Till we see each other again, Rest In Peace Ms. Lum.



darryl melodias - December 15, 2020 at 11:39 AM



“ Ms Lum was one-of-a-kind. She cared about everyone and touched SO many over her lifetime. She was my coach, my math teacher, my mentor. She always pushed us to do better, make the most of our lives. Her generosity and compassion is an inspiration to me and is part of the life lessons I will take from the gift of her life. She was a champion for women, bringing her passion to raise up everyone to their highest potential. I will miss her wonderful spirit and our insightful conversations.

Janet Khamashta - December 15, 2020 at 11:13 AM



“ Auntie Becky... thank you for your vivacious spirit and tender care to me and my family. You showed me your way of taking life full speed ahead— never taking no for an answer, always imparting knowledge, thoughts, advice... embracing the moment to connect and teach me about whatever it was in front of me with math sprinkled in. As I teach elementary school now, I love teaching 5th grade math and think of you each day.

From the abalone trips you and my dad/your cousin Wilbur took with us kids in tow (and you dropped me while crossing the water on accident), to you and Auntie Rowena researching and giving my children and their cousins their Chinese names in our family's tradition, to our most recent talks this past year... I am so grateful for you in my life. Your love for life and teaching and always giving to others has been incredible.

May we all be inspired by your zeal for life. You have shown us all how to life a full, long, enriched life. May we be so fortunate. I miss you and am so grateful for you.

Love, Caroline Chinn Gonsalves

Caroline Chinn Gonsalves - December 15, 2020 at 12:29 AM



“ Ms Lum was my badminton partner in many tournaments. So was a kind and generous person. She was a friend to many. You will be missed.

Steven Ramirez - December 14, 2020 at 08:33 PM



“ From the first day I meet with Becky I knew we were going to have a special friendship. With so much in common in regard to our San Francisco living and culture. I had the opportunity to many phone conversations prior to her passing allowing us to get to know one another, Many times she mentioned that our meeting "She was the lucky One". No dear Becky "I was the Lucky One".

Love Dawn

Dawn T Guillory - December 14, 2020 at 04:20 PM



“ George & Dawn Guillory purchased the Rose Remembrance for the family of Rebecca Lum.



George & Dawn Guillory - December 14, 2020 at 03:59 PM



“ Dear Miss Lum...You were such an inspiration to me during my years at Armijo High School class of 1970. You always exhibited the values of fair play, striving for excellence, love for learning, and hard work. I was a senior TA for your department along with several of my very good friends. We loved every minute of it. I knew that I wanted to teach and you were my primary reason for becoming a physical educator. I could hear your "encouraging voice" in my head when I was out with my students in the field, on the court or in the classroom. Your spirit stayed with me during my 40 year career...I know... very short according to your standards!! Such joy! My fellow colleagues and I would accept challenges from our students during badminton units just as you and your colleagues would challenge us at Armijo. I actually earned the title of "badminton queen" at my high school thanks to your early tutelage and passion for play.

I am blessed for having known you. I wish you the everlasting peace that you so richly deserve. I will keep your family in my prayers.

Much love,

Kathy Harris

Kathy Harris - December 14, 2020 at 03:55 PM



“ Solano Community College will miss your spirit and commitment to our students.

Celia Esposito-Noy - December 13, 2020 at 10:27 AM



“ Stan and Diane Hales purchased the Pretty Please for the family of Rebecca Lum.



Stan and Diane Hales - December 13, 2020 at 12:40 AM



“ I am so grateful to meet you and to learn from you -- your strength, passion and interest in life have affected me and others.

Thank you for your love, support and interest in my artwork and poetry. And I made this "Just For You" art piece while I was still in shock after learning the news that you left this life portal. You now extended to another dimension and unknown world. I completely can not imagine what that is like. Again, you are way ahead of us. But I think you are still here with us. Perhaps, we will meet you again. Tata for now!

Have a beautiful sleep, Becky!

Joline



TL - December 13, 2020 at 12:25 AM



“ Lovely artwork. A tribute Symbol of love and respect with more than 90 names from her extended badminton circle of friends.

Thong L - December 13, 2020 at 12:23 PM



“ Becky was a legendary force at Solano College! She was very supportive of the Adjunct Union's work at Solano College. An "atta-girl" from her meant a lot and helped keep us going.

Pam Muick - December 14, 2020 at 05:29 PM



“ Diane and I send our deep sympathies to Becky's family. Growing up as a SoCal badminton player starting in the 1950's, I only knew of Becky through friends in NorCal for many years, until we moved to Dixon in 2017 having been burned out in the Tubbs Fire in Santa Rosa. Introduction to the Georgie Duke Center badminton group quickly led to getting to know Becky personally and to appreciating all that she meant to badminton here. May we all do our best to promote the game as energetically as she did for decades.

Stan Hales

Stan Hales - December 12, 2020 at 08:17 PM



“ Well, Miss Lum. . .the world will never be the same! Your life's challenges molded you into the honest, fiercely loyal and uncompromisingly fair human being that we're all going to miss. As I read these shared memories, I can only begin to see the extent of your remarkable influence. As the news of your passing has spread, many of us have been sharing our grief as we recall the cherished memories of the times we've been able to spend in your company. It was always “head scratching” to me that you could recall the names of so many students along with the year each one of them graduated from Armijo. Who has a data bank like THAT???? I bet there are many people who have listed Becky Lum as their answer to the security question, “Who was your favorite teacher in high school?”

I was very lucky to become more than just another high school PE student of Miss Lum. As students, we never pried into the private lives of our teachers and Miss Lum was not aware of my Chinese heritage because of my Korean surname. There had never been any reason to think about any kind of SF Chinatown connection between us. In November of 2007, I had a small gathering of former Armijo employees and students at my house. It was after that gathering that I found out that Miss Lum and my mother both grew up in SF Chinatown and Miss Lum remembered the two of them were in the same junior high school class. She also recalled my mom's older sister, “You know, there can't be more than one Babette growing up in Chinatown!” Around the same time, I also found out that Miss Lum and my Aunt Jean were both in the St. Mary's Chinatown Drum and Bugle Corps together. From then on, we would meet yearly to eat dim sum in Pinole and then come back to my house and play Chinese 13 (a cut-throat version of rummy). Miss Lum furnished us with laminated “cheat sheets” so we could learn to keep score and not mess up her “winning” hand. We'd play long into the night and Miss Lum would always have more stamina than us youngsters! It was always a rule she had to call us when she got back home after leaving my house after midnight.

As we grow older, these kinds of extraordinary connections in our lives never cease to amaze me, but it also gives me great comfort to know that I will always have a deep connection with Miss Lum.

Patty Kang, Armijo class of 1966



Patricia Kang - December 12, 2020 at 08:00 PM



“ I only met Becky once at Patty Kang’s house and I was in awe of her spirit, tenacity, sense of humor, and her warm welcome.



Akiko Ogura - December 12, 2020 at 07:11 PM



“ Remembering you.

- I remember a party at your house where we shared delicious potluck, fun conversations and laughter.
- remember how hard you petitioned and fought for getting the badminton courts painted when I played.
- remember when Joline joined you on a fun fishing trip, and afterward I had fish for dinner for many weeks.
- remember a life story you shared about love during a ride to SF, about how A loves B, but B loves C instead.
- remember your motto to "keep on smashing" whenever encouragement, support and perseverance are called for.
- remember you showed up at my front door one day unannounced just to drop off gifts.

Your guidance, friendship and these memories are priceless.

Remembering you, missing you, So Long, Becky!

Tom Lam



Thong L - December 12, 2020 at 01:22 PM



“ I like to share this haiku poem I composed to commemorate our most beloved, extraordinary, and remarkable Ms. Lum!!
Warm golden autumn
Tenacious yet tender grace
Exquisite rare jewel

Choi Richardson - December 12, 2020 at 12:13 PM



“ Rebecca was one of the sweetest people to ever walk the face of this earth. She will be dearly missed and not a day goes by that she is not in my thoughts, I will truly miss Ms Lum.



Jin Ying Shaw - December 11, 2020 at 07:56 PM



“ Ms. Lum will truly be missed and will be in my heart!! She was the most generous person I have ever known with her time, caring, and sharing!! I am hooked on badminton sport all because of Ms. Lum; had never played before until I joined my now grown kids in Ms. Lum's class at Solano College. Ms Lum, may you rest in eternal warmth and peace!!

Choi Richardson - December 11, 2020 at 01:38 PM



“ Ms. Lum was my PE and Trigonometry teacher. I loved her. Such is a beautiful person and wonderful teacher. She touched my heart and many other Armijo HS students. I graduated in 1982. She has left a lasting impression in my heart. Rest in peace. I thank God for knowing you Miss Lum. You have blessed me to have been your student.

Claire Cepeda Kelley - December 12, 2020 at 07:06 AM



“ As an avid badminton player, who has played in many different parts of the country, I have encountered certain people who I have dubbed "Heroes of the Game". People who I have met who tirelessly and unselfishly donate countless hours of their free time and energy to promote and facilitate the game in their local area. Ms. Lum was certainly one of these. Without her efforts I doubt badminton would be where it is currently, in terms of ability to play and amount of players, in Solano County. I deeply appreciate and honor her for her sacrifices, although I could tell she loved the game and the fellowship so much that for her it was a joy to do. Every sport needs ambassadors like her. God Bless you in heaven Ms. Lum. Sincerely, Scott Ellis

Scott Ellis - December 11, 2020 at 12:22 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Rebecca Lum.



December 11, 2020 at 08:57 AM



“ I was very sorry to hear of Becky's passing, however, she definitely squeezed out the best she could with the opportunities she had in life. I met her when playing badminton in Solano and loved talking with her about her history and experiences. She was definitely the general in charge, however, her intent was to ensure all had fun and learned how to play badminton. She was an amazing person and so active throughout her life. I told her many times that I wanted to be as active as she was at her age - she is and was a mentor to me in that aspect of her life.

My condolences to her family - I miss her and know she will be sorely missed by many.

RIP, Becky - the pearly gates are wide open for you for sure!

Bridget Moorman

Bridget Moorman - December 11, 2020 at 05:55 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Rebecca Lum.



December 11, 2020 at 12:02 AM



“ 4 files added to the album Memories Album



Christina Eng - December 10, 2020 at 11:56 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Rebecca Lum.



December 10, 2020 at 11:04 PM



“ RIP Ms.Lum. You will me miss by so many. Thank you for the great memories

Ty vu - December 10, 2020 at 10:54 PM



“ A badminton expert, a basketball coach, a math tutor, a friend, and a mentor for life. These are only a few roles Ms. Lum have played in my life and guided me along the way. You are forever selfless, and you will be missed in our hearts. Rest in peace!

Eric Hu - December 10, 2020 at 10:06 PM



“ I was in the Class of 1971 at Armijo.. It was a honor to have her as a teacher.

JackieTaylor - December 10, 2020 at 02:26 PM



“ Ms. Lum ~ Thank you for your encouragement and your belief: for teaching me Trigonometry in 3rd period so that I could apply those concepts, two hours later, to Calculus in fifth period, because you believed in me and wanted me to reach my potential. I've never forgotten that lesson and your mentorship. I'm proud to be a part of your legacy, one of so many lives that you touched and changed forever. I can't imagine you resting, even now, so I'll just say, "Enjoy the next adventure!" Until we meet again. Suzy Sutter

Suzy Sutter - December 10, 2020 at 02:09 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Rebecca Lum.



December 10, 2020 at 01:36 PM



“ You're simply amazing, and touched a lot of lives. You had my mom, then me and my sister. Thank you for caring as much as you did for everyone. You truly made such a difference in so many lives.

Sheila Christman - December 10, 2020 at 12:50 PM



“ I was struggling with my tennis game and you mentored me with such patience, even throwing in a bit of geometry into the mix. Thank you.
Mostly what I appreciate is that you never really retired. You contributed your skills and knowledge “all” of your life and what a wonderful legacy you left. Kim
Dombrowsky

Kim Dombrowsky - December 10, 2020 at 12:33 PM



“ I will always remember ms. Lum. She was my favorite PE teacher in the 60's. Rest In Peace. My condolences to her family.

jane manning - December 10, 2020 at 12:10 PM



“ What an awesome legacy you leave here, Ms. Lum. Generations of students owe so much to you--not just in academics, but in life lessons exemplified by your own--a life well lived. Rest in Peace.
Tony Wade



Tony Wade - December 10, 2020 at 11:39 AM



“ Ms Lum will be greatly missed. I had her as a math teach and PE teacher. She was great and a good listener. May you rest in peace.

Michelle M - December 10, 2020 at 04:44 PM



“ She was a great teacher, motivator and confident. She made PE fun and was full of energy, especially first thing in the morning PE when it was cold outside and she said that after we run around for a bit we would warm up. Thank you Miss Lum for you generosity and kindness. Rest in Peace, it's your time now!

Pamela Lyons - December 11, 2020 at 06:49 PM