



Dr. Alan I. Sugawara

September 29, 1939 - July 22, 2015

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Alan Iwao Sugawara died Wednesday, July 22 at home in Corvallis. He was 75. The eldest of four children, Alan was born in Waimea, Kauai, Hawaii, to Takeo and Yasuko Sugawara. He graduated from Waimea High School in 1956 and then graduated from the University of Hawaii. Alan later obtained a Master's of Divinity from the Chicago Theological Seminary; he then earned a master's degree at Michigan State University and a doctorate at Oregon State University, both in early childhood development. He remained at Oregon State as a professor until his retirement in 2000.

Alan was a gentle, kind, giving, loving, unassuming, and principled man. His philosophy of life was to make a positive difference in the world. Without a doubt, he accomplished that goal. Led by the doctrines of Jesus, Buddha, and Martin Luther King, Jr, Alan lived a life of service in his personal and professional lives. After graduating from seminary, he spent a year ministering to the afflicted people in the leper's colony on Molokai, Hawaii. This experience motivated Alan to better understand children's development in the context of the family. He returned to graduate school to further his knowledge of child development. As a teacher and researcher at Oregon State University, Alan addressed such issues as non-sexist education in early childhood, sex-role stereotypes in children, teacher competence in early childhood education, prosocial behavior in children, cross-cultural child development, and many other topics. Alan leaves a wonderful legacy through the many graduate students he mentored at OSU. These students claim that "Alan changed my life."

Alan's dedication to service extended to his personal life. He was devoted to promoting a world that valued love, equality and justice for all. He was an avid and constant supporter of the Old Mill Center for Children and Families in Corvallis, both as a benefactor and volunteer. Many other charitable organizations benefitted from his financial support. Alan was always up for new experiences and enjoyed traveling, quilting, exercising, seeing Broadway musicals, and even camping and fly-fishing (as long as a bottle of wine was included). He exemplified pure joy in all he did. His song was "HAPPY," always displaying

a smile on his face.

The impact of Alan's life can best be seen through his relationships with a wide network of friends and family. Alan was a single man all of his life, but he had many "families." Of course, he first cherished his biological family in Hawaii. On the other hand, for his many years in Oregon he became a "brother/uncle" to many families. He loved these families greatly and he was loved similarly in return. His reach extended to many intersecting circles including academia, benefactor, neighborhood friends, workout partners and quilting buddies. There is a great sadness in these circles at Alan's passing, but there is solace in that we carry him and his grace in our memories, hearts, and lives.

Alan is preceded in death by his parents, brother and sister; he is survived by his sister and her husband, Lyndel and Dale Erdmann of Kauai, Hawaii; and numerous nieces, nephews, grandnieces, grandnephews and cousins, and of course, many, many friends.

A celebration of Alan's life will take place Saturday, August 29 at Old Mill Center for Children and Families, with a brief commemoration at noon, followed by a festive, Hawaiian-style lunch. As Alan himself said, "When I die, just throw a party." And we will! Hawaiian attire is suggested.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made in Alan's name to Old Mill Center for Children and Families, 1650 SW 45th Place, Corvallis.

Arrangements were made with DeMoss-Durdan Funeral Home and Crematory, www.demosssdurdan.com.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

AUG **29**. 12:00 PM (PT)

Old Mill Center for Children
: 1650 SW 45th St
Corvallis, OR 97333

Tribute Wall

SK

“ Alan was a true inspiration to me and to everyone whose lives he touched. He was a magnificent friend, mentor, scholar, benefactor, and caring individual. Alan’s curiosity, generosity, and spirit of adventure were contagious. I was so fortunate to have him as dissertation chair, colleague and friend, and appreciative of the opportunities he gave me to collaborate on his educational research. Alan’s lifelong concern for child well-being, ethical leadership, and extraordinary commitment to students and community service have had a major impact on my life and career.

I have so many fond memories of Alan....his thoughtful intelligence, kindness, and engaging smile. I remember backyard potlucks, bicycle adventures, and wearing his gift of a gorgeous Hawaiian orchid lei at both my doctoral graduation and wedding. My husband and I rented the house on Johnson before he moved in and purchased it, so we enjoyed hearing about his most recent renovations. One of the absolute best things about attending NCFR conferences was catching up with Alan, and we always looked forward to his wonderful holiday letters.

There is comfort in knowing that Alan had such a rich and rewarding life, surrounded by loving friends and families. Yet he will be deeply missed! He was special and his spirit will continue to grace our lives.

Sally and Chet Koblinsky

Sally Koblinsky - August 09, 2015 at 02:21 PM

BE

“ We knew Alan when Beth was in graduate school at Oregon State. Superlatives are, somehow, insufficient to describe the man who was Alan Sugawara. When it came to being a friend, colleague, educator, mentor, advocate, and role model, just to mention a few, Alan was as good as it gets. In truth, he wasn’t that good a golfer, but he did get a hole-in-one once! There is a quote we received from Alan at the time of his retirement – “The joy is in the journey.” We were lucky enough to travel along with Alan for a while. While we will miss him terribly, we’ll never be able to think of him without smiling. Alan was a wonderful, wonderful human being.

Beth and Chuck Emery - August 08, 2015 at 04:37 PM

TG

“ For me, Alan modeled the spirit of loving-kindness and he did it with just about everyone. He was a member of my graduate committee who stayed with me through all the ups and downs of graduate school, and I will always value that. But more important, I will remember his constant embrace of life and the warmth of his spirit as we talked about so many difficult topics. He was such a good and loving man and there are too few of them, it seems to me, so it makes the loss seem greater when one is no longer among us. But I am clear that somewhere in the world there is another "Buddha" (as his really good friends called him) being born as a cuddly child, who makes the life of their family better, and translates that enrichment to all they meet.

Thomas Guss - August 07, 2015 at 06:36 PM

JP

“ I am so grateful for the joy and happiness you brought to my life. The world has been a better place because of your presence, my friend! You will be missed by many who you have touched with your impeccable loving spirit. RIP, Jim Ponzetti

James Ponzetti - August 05, 2015 at 01:54 PM

CG

“ It has been many years since our paths crossed and I wish I had more opportunities to interact with Alan. I was a master's degree student at Oregon State at the same time Alan was a doctoral student. We were in at least one graduate course together. Some years later, we met again at a National Council on Family Relations conference in San Francisco. Alan tried to encourage me to transfer my doctoral program to Oregon State because he said we needed more people in the field who were focusing on adult development and family relationships in later life. I will always treasure the interest he showed in my work at that time and I'm sad our paths never crossed again with time to visit. Alan's generosity of spirit offers a model that more of us who work in higher education can learn from and I am truly blessed that Alan touched my life and guided my professional development "from a distance". Thank you, Alan!

C. Joanne Grabinski - August 04, 2015 at 05:05 PM



“ *Uncle Alan was a kind generous soul who's boundless knowledge and zest for life will continue to inspire me throughout mine. I'm so grateful for the time I shared with him and all the memories we created together. Together we shared many adventures big and small whether is was combing through the local thrift store for treasures or trekking through the christmas markets in Germany he moved through life with a youthful vibrancy that will never dim even in his passing. Uncle Alan will be greatly missed but has certainly left a lasting impression forever in my heart. Love you Uncle Al!*

Shelly Lyn - August 04, 2015 at 12:25 AM



“ *His laugh brought so much joy. Truly inspirational as he led by example. I'm smiling remembering his smiles.*
Cynthia Spencer



Cynthia Spencer - August 01, 2015 at 02:19 PM

MR

“ *Alan was my mentor and friend. He gave so much to so many and we are all the better for knowing him.*

Good-bye my friend,

Marilyn Read

Marilyn Read - July 31, 2015 at 03:10 PM

JC

“ *Alan was on my doctoral committee. Although that was 30 years ago, we never lost touch, nor was there ever a time when we would meet at a conference or meeting, that he wasn't delighted and delightful. I will always be grateful to him for his influence in my life! Alan, I'm wearing a Hawaiian shirt today in your honor!*

John Conger - July 31, 2015 at 12:31 PM



“ *What a wonderful man! He inspired me as a Board member and volunteer at Old Mill Center and so generously provided quillows to the children of the child care center at Community Outreach which serves homeless children. I always have purchased at least two Alan-made quillows every year at the Old Mill Center Auction. I hope we all can do our best to add to the "smile bank" that is so sadly depleted upon his passing.*
Marilyn Starker

Marilyn Starker - July 30, 2015 at 11:46 PM

CE

“ *Alan made all of the difference in my graduate study, career, and life. I was totally blessed to have him in my life. I have always been and will always be proud to be his first PhD student. He was an extraordinary human being. Thank you Alan.*
Craig Edelbrock cedelbrock@ccs.ua.edu

Craig Edelbrock - July 30, 2015 at 07:16 PM

KH

“ *Alan's kindness and generosity will live on in the people whose lives he touched. He was inspirational to students and faculty at OSU. I especially appreciated his keen intelligence and his humble way of being. He will be missed in our community.*
Karen Hooker

Karen Hooker - July 30, 2015 at 04:51 PM

SB

“ *Susan Burke lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alan I. Sugawara*



Susan Burke - July 30, 2015 at 02:37 PM

BW

“ *The world will not be the same without Alan. He touched so many lives with his love & caring for others.* *Rick & Barb Wilson*

Barbara Wilson - July 30, 2015 at 02:36 PM

SG

“ Alan was a very special individual. Every once in a while you meet someone who simply shines and radiates wisdom, knowledge, and caring beyond normal everyday experience. Alan was one of those people. What set Alan apart even further, however, was the uncommon level of humility with which he moved through the world. I am hard-pressed to think of anyone I have known who gave so much of himself and asked for so little in return. You were an incredible example of how to live a wonderful life, Alan. Words alone cannot express what you meant to all of us who were so lucky to know you. You affected many, many lives, especially those of the children and parents who you humbly served through Old Mill Center and other places. As your extended community family, we will miss you and always hold a place for you as our loving brother and guiding light. Mahalo, dear friend.

Steve Golston
Former Executive Director
Old Mill Center for Children & Families

Steve Golston - July 30, 2015 at 12:30 PM

“ Alan is a real and true genuine person. He is indeed definitely a one of a kind special diamond in the rough, with a huge, huge, kind heart of gold and generosity – always giving, helping and inspiring others. No one can forget his inviting smile and his addictive chuckle type laughter. He touched the hearts of everyone including mine and later my family. I was an undergraduate at OSU and met Alan through a family friend who was a graduate student and he was her advisor. He went home for the summer to Kauai and asked why I never went home like the others? I responded by saying I could not afford it and that I was self-supporting my education. He asked if I could watch his home during the summer and break periods and I accepted. I continued to watch his home up to the time I graduated from OSU. My professional career began in the U.S. Now, I reside with my family in Canada.

Alan became my mentor, advisor and a start to a life-long father and son relationship. My wife, Phoebe and I address Alan as “Dad” and our daughter Chantelle says “Grandpa Alan!” All these years we’ve made it a point to call one another. The last time we spoke was Tuesday, 14 July 2015.

An example of Allan’s huge heart and generosity, I needed to complete one course to graduate. I could not afford to pay for the course plus, I did not have a place to stay. Allan offered to pay for the course and I resided with him.

Alan taught me how to look at nature and all aspects of life in a very different way. There is no written textbook or classroom course that can ever compare to the life lessons, thoughts and/or the points of view Alan provides. He makes you think about your questions and answers. There are times when he can change a negative thought or situation to a positive. He’s a brilliant listener and true to heart no nonsense viewpoint /reason when he disagrees but always in fairness gives his opinions of why he disagrees. You can see the love he exemplifies, the happiness, conviction, generosity and commitment in all that he does from his work, hobbies, activities and most especially for the kids at the Old Mills School, to those of us he touched and beyond. Alan we will all miss you but you will never be forgotten.

Romeo, Phoebe, Chantelle Ouano
Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

Romeo M. Ouano - July 28, 2015 at 09:32 AM

GC

“ Geary "George" Cuniff lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alan I. Sugawara



Geary "George" Cuniff - July 28, 2015 at 12:36 AM

LG

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Leigh Griffith - July 27, 2015 at 06:40 PM

SD

“ 1 file added to the album New Album Name



sue doescher - July 27, 2015 at 02:42 PM

NA

“ Such a great man, huge inspiration to those of us that got to work with him. I loved walking down the hall and hearing that laugh and thinking "Alan's here!" He will be sorely missed and greatly remembered.

Nate - July 27, 2015 at 10:02 AM

JN

“ Alan was one of the gentlest, kindest people I have ever met. Any time that I saw him lately, whether he was waiting for the shuttle on campus or walking through his neighborhood, he always had a warm smile and hello, even though we hadn't really talked in any length in quite a while. He left a legacy on the campus and in this town of providing support for the ones who needed it most and a smile that could light up your entire day. I will miss his smile and the sound of Hawai'i that never left his voice.

Janet Nishihara - July 27, 2015 at 09:49 AM

KE

“ There is a hole in our hearts and in our lives sweet friend Alan. The world is a better place because you were here. I will cherish my handmade quillow & let your kindness & laughter inspire me to be a better, happier, kinder person. I miss you already ❤️ RIP dear friend, Aloha until we meet again.



Kerrie - July 27, 2015 at 09:28 AM

BW

“ In loving memory of our dear Alan: Mentor, friend, and kind soul. I am reminded of words from a Dan Fogelberg song: "His gentle means of sculpting souls took me years to understand." Alan truly was a sculptor of souls, gently nudging us along the path to being better teachers, scholars, friends, and human beings. Until we meet again.

Becky Ward

Becky Ward - July 26, 2015 at 07:10 PM

MM

“ I saw Alan only a few weeks ago at the club. He and I share a common ancestry. His ancestor was from Kumamoto and mine from Saga, both in the island of Kyushu. I'd like to remember him as a wonderful person.

Masakazu Matsumoto

Masakazu Matsumoto - July 26, 2015 at 03:01 PM

PN

“ Alan will ALWAYS be an inspiration...a gentle spirit, a loving soul, a life of giving and sharing all the goodness he was and saw in others. What an example of how to live, how to love, how to be.
Thank you for your friendship, dear Alan.
Pat Newport



Pat Newport - July 26, 2015 at 12:27 PM

RC

“ Alan was like a brother to me and my best friend. We had been friends for 36 years. He was the gentlest and most giving man that I have ever known. Alan lived a life of love and service in both his personal and professional lives. My family and I loved him greatly and we all have big voids in our lives right now. Rest in peace, my friend!

Rod Cate, Pat Cate, and family
Olympia WA

Rod Cate - July 25, 2015 at 10:36 PM

GS

“ Mr. Sugawara was amazing to my family as we worked through the diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome for my daughter. He was friendly, kind, and always helped us out when we were struggling for answers. He encouraged me to volunteer at OSU Bates Hall Child Development Center. I did, and it was the best advice given. I am saddened to hear of his passing. He touched a lot of lives in a such positive way. May his family find peace and comfort during this tragic time.



Gena Sellers - July 25, 2015 at 08:12 PM

RO

“ Dr. Alan Sugawara was a terrific advisor, educator, coauthor, and friend. He truly cared about all people and especially children. He was respectful and generous with his time, and since retirement was also a wonderful artist of a quilter. And he never forgot to send a card over the winter holidays, which was much appreciated!!

Rachel Ozretich - July 25, 2015 at 05:37 PM

RO

“ Rachel Ozretich lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alan I. Sugawara



Rachel Ozretich - July 25, 2015 at 05:26 PM

LE

“ Alan was a wonderful brother and friend. He shared so much of his life with me as the youngest sibling. He was always there when I needed him the most. Visiting me in MN. in the dead of winter, laughing when we got caught in a snow storm on the way to the airport; extending his visit. What a wonderful time we had! I will miss him.

Lyndel (Sugawara) Erdmann

Lyndel S. Erdmann - July 25, 2015 at 04:33 PM

JB

“ Jerry Books lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alan I. Sugawara



Jerry Books - July 25, 2015 at 03:01 PM

CP

“ ALAN WAS AND REMAINS AN INSPIRING SOUL. He told me when I first came to HDFS/OSU " We will hire you if you can correctly pronounce my name." I did it and he laughed and laughed, saying you're hired, now you're in trouble. Over the next years, he continued to laugh, make his spam wonton and great desserts for parties, and share great advice for a newcomer. I miss him already. Clara Pratt

Clara C. Pratt - July 25, 2015 at 02:35 PM

AC

Alan is my first cousin. Our fathers were brothers. My most vivid memory of Alan is walking home after elementary school, through town towards Smoky Valley. As I neared Kamiya's store where we went for piano lessons I would hear Alan, playing the piano, and knowing it was he, even before seeing him. He made the piano sing.

Adele Sugawara Ching - July 27, 2015 at 09:37 PM

SD

“ Our dearest Corvallis friend, Alan Sugawara, passed away unexpectedly last week. Uncle Alan was an inspiration, a person whose role in life was simply to care for others. He followed the teachings of Jesus, Ghandi and Martin Luther King. For 35 years he was family, sharing birthdays, Christmas dinners, camping adventures, Broadway musicals and a spontaneity to do just about anything. For someone who did not drive, he used his feet, bicycle and public transportation to tour the world. His reach extended to many circles including academia, benefactor of Old Mill Center for Children and Families in Corvallis, neighborhood friends, workout partners and quilting buddies. Alan was an integral part of many lives, loved because of his unassuming and gracious demeanor. We feel so fortunate to have had our lives enriched in so many ways by Uncle Alan; he will be sorely missed. A celebration of Alan’s life is pending.

Sue and Paul Doescher - July 25, 2015 at 10:04 AM

MP

“ Alan Sugawara was a great man and good friend to me and everyone in my family. I am so thankful to count him as a role model for my children as to how to live a life filled with laughter, love, scholarship, service, travel, and tolerance. Aloha my friend.

Mike Potter - July 24, 2015 at 06:25 PM

AM

Dear Alan, you made the world a better place. You were kind and gentle, caring and loving. Thanks for all you did and gave to so many.

alice mills morrow - July 27, 2015 at 11:03 AM

MB

Dear Alan, You were one in a million and touched so many. I will miss you my friend.

Marilyn Barlow - July 27, 2015 at 12:39 PM

LG

If angels are among us, Alan was surely one of them. Nothing but love for this beautiful soul. Until we meet again, my friend. We miss you.

Leigh Griffith - July 27, 2015 at 06:39 PM

SC

I worked with Alan for 20 plus years on the Old Mill Fundraising Auction. Sweetest, Happiest person. The placemats and quillows he made for the auction sales are now wonderful keepsakes from a man with the kindest soul. He loved to travel and now I wish him a bon voyage on his eternal trip. Sue Cook

Sue Cook - July 28, 2015 at 09:46 PM

JW

Wherever I happened to see Alan there was always a smile and a happy story. He inspired me in many ways.

Jan Wetherell - July 31, 2015 at 02:45 AM