



Paul "Pop" Soroken

March 16, 1943 - May 19, 2023

Paul "Pop" Soroken—beloved husband, father, and friend—passed away on May 19th at the wee age of 80.

Born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts in 1943, his lifelong, boundless curiosity eventually led him to Tokyo, Japan where, at a youth hostel, he met his future wife and love chicken, Chiyo Masaki. The happy pair returned to New England and, with at least a foot of snow falling around them, were married on the college campus in Brattleboro, VT. After receiving MAT-degrees for teaching English as a second language, they returned to Tokyo to work as ESL textbook writers for Time-Life Japan. In their free time they explored the country's different regions, cities and towns accruing experiences and influences that would shape the rest of their lives.

Paul and Chiyo relocated to Lenox, Massachusetts, where Paul opened his first business—a contemporary art gallery focused on the Japanese pottery they both loved. It was here the couple's journey as parents of three children—Maana, Eva and Alexander—began.

A shopkeeper at heart, Paul, with Chiyo always alongside him, continued opening a diverse range of retail stores throughout the Berkshires. Each of their three shops—Yamato House, Present Perfect and 925iSilver—sold products that reflected their experiences as world travelers. Mr. Personality, as

Paul was often referred, possessed a rare mix of keen intelligence, enthusiasm for everything and an absolutely unparalleled sense of humor. Pop was widely known for his optimistic, loveable nature and his ability to lift the spirits of seemingly anyone who walked into one of his shops. In later years, you could catch Pop cruising Pittsfield, never without his “hat”, always bidding farewell to everyone he met with a cheery, “have a shitty day.”

Pop leaves behind a family that vows to carry on his colorful journey full of rich, worldly experiences. As Helen Keller once said, “What we once enjoyed and deeply loved we can never lose, for all that we love deeply becomes a part of us.”

Funeral Notice:

Funeral services for Paul “Pop” Soroken will be private.

Tribute Wall

H6

“ Eagerly he traveled so far.
East or west
He did his best
For eternity at peace he rests.

howard prestwich Lenox 61 - May 30, 2023 at 07:32 AM

PK

“ Taking it from a true individual it was easy to find another human that fit the same mold to a tee. That individual was Paul Soroken, a one of a kind human being that enjoyed the ups and downs of daily life. His smile, bad and sometimes good jokes and local gossip made Paul a very likable character. His loss will be felt by all that knew him and will certainly affect his wonderful loving family.
Philip S. Kampe

philip kampe - May 29, 2023 at 03:48 PM

JH

“ I worked with Paul and Chiyo in 1979/1980 at their Yamato House shop in Lenox. I got to know a lot about pottery and ceramic styles. Paul always seemed to have a smile on his face, and freely shared his enthusiasm and knowledge of the fine art of ceramics. I really enjoyed working for and with him at Yamato House. Lots of laughter as well. My condolences to Chiyo and family. Blessings.

John Hanson

John Hanson - May 27, 2023 at 08:53 PM

SG

“ I became acquainted with Paul when he and Chiyo operated Yamato House in Lenox. Working at the post office at the time, I had many delightful encounters with Paul. He was a truly unique individual who knew how to combine his keen intelligence with a sense of humor. My sincere condolences to his family.

Stephen Giroux - May 27, 2023 at 10:46 AM

FS

“ Dear Chiyo and family members,

I was deeply saddened to learn of Paul's passing. I still wear the hat (labelled "hat") he gave me, but I will now retire it as a keepsake. I will miss his sunny personality and his laugh. You are in my prayers. God bless.

Always,

Fran Spina

Francis Spina - May 27, 2023 at 09:57 AM