

My remembrance talk on Do Thi Tuyet Minh at Memorial Services 31-July-2011, San Jose

by Tuyet Jiang

We started out together 31 years ago at Contra Costa College at the time of the big Vietnamese refugee influx into this country. It was a group of Vietnamese immigrants that showed up at Contra Costa College, with a wide range of age of 18-75 years old; all wanting to learn the language, to be able to survive here, to adopt this second country as our own country now.

We went through classes together at Contra Costa College. We were poor but we were happy. We were working on our future to make a living here. We were serious about our educational goals, as we knew this was the way to survive and do well in the new country. We studied well at the college, and we impressed all our professors and other American students. We organized the Vietnamese Student Union so we could support each other in college and have a social life with other Vietnamese students that were at the college. We organized luncheons and Vietnamese music concerts in order to introduce our culture to the American people. As we were getting to know our American friends in their culture, we wanted them to know our Vietnamese culture. In those days Vietnamese people and culture was still a new thing to most Americans.

And then there was this beautiful young girl, tall, with very lovely long hair, skinny. So attractive, not just for her good looks but she attracted everybody with her quick wit and sunny personality. Almost everybody in college cannot look away because of her good looks. She also spoke English very well then, even though she came to this country not long before. When we had Vietnamese concerts, she sang and danced, all very wonderfully done.

We were all taking hard courses like math, physics, and chemistry to prepare for engineering lower division as we took classes for our engineering degrees. From classmates and teachers they never forget her smart brain plus her beautiful looks. She helped older Vietnamese students to learn English or help them fill out applications, and other paperwork for taking classes. She was a music coordinator in Vietnamese Student Union. She always enjoyed singing and dancing then. She was very good at these things and enjoyed doing it throughout her life.

After Contra Costa College she transferred to UC Berkeley to study mechanical engineering. She stayed on to also get a Masters Degree and graduated with honor. After college, later she went on to work for Lockheed Martin and several companies in Sunnyvale, California. She also became CEO of her own company. She traveled to many countries in her job, including to her own country where she was born, working there for a couple of years.

She always enjoyed singing. Up to her last moments of life she sang at concerts and clubs, always loving to perform for everybody everywhere she went. She loved the challenge of her engineering and business career, but I think her first love was singing.

Her life ended too soon. She felt still had many things in her life to finish before her life was complete. We could probably all say this about ourselves. But with all her capabilities and wishes, she really had not finished her life yet. She could work hard, was successful in so many ways, and could control so many things in her career, but could not control her health. In the end, it is our health that matters most.

She achieved so many things in her life. The things that were not yet achieved because she ran out of time are not so important anymore. Yes, she had many things to yet achieve in her life but we all must look at the full life she had while here. I think she could look back and be proud of it. I was lucky to be part of her life.