



# Sammy Wing Chiu

JAN 3, 1944 - OCT 15, 2021



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CHAPEL  
OF THE  
CHIMES  
OAKLAND

Funeral, Cemetery  
& Cremation Services

# Table of Contents

<b>Obituary</b> .....	Page 3
<b>Events</b> .....	Page 5
<b>Tribute Wall</b> .....	Page 6
<b>Media</b> .....	Page 9



# Sammy Wing Chiu

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**S**ammy Wing Chiu was born on January 3, 1944. In his almost 78 years on this earth, he lived a very full life - experiencing many joys and sorrows, many struggles and many achievements too. His is a classic and unique American story - an unforgettable journey across many miles, literally and figuratively.

Sammy's life began in a small village in Canton, China during the Communist Revolution. Sammy's father, a landowner at that time, fled the country to Hong Kong in 1949 to escape persecution and to lay the groundwork for a better life. Left behind, Sammy, his three siblings - Jimmy, Tommy and Mamie - and his mom struggled through constant "interrogations" and abuses (that led to his grandmother's death), poverty and hunger. At only 7 years old, Sammy took on protecting and caring for his family through scrounging for food, fetching clean water and daily cooking.

In 1957, Sammy, his mom and little brother Tommy managed to escape to Hong Kong. It would be almost a decade before the entire family would be fully reunited in the United States, where his father and other family members were able to secure passage and sponsor visas. In Hong Kong, as a growing teenager, Sammy forged strong, lifelong bonds with friends, including Kay Tang and Kai Yin Tam. These friendships would prove to be critically important and last his lifetime.

On February 3, 1963, Sammy's plane touched down at JFK, NY, forever changing the course of his life. Sammy attended school and waited on tables, ate his first pizza and fell in love with professional baseball. His parents had their fifth child, Amy, and despite a 20+ year age gap, Sammy would love and cherish her dearly. With the Vietnam War ongoing, Sammy accomplished an Associate's Degree at the Queens College of Aeronautics and went to work at Sikorsky in the suburbs of Connecticut, engineering helicopters for the Department of Defense. He met and married Agatha Wong in 1968, an aspiring nurse who also emigrated to the States with her family from Hong Kong. In 1969, they had their first child - Elaine - and eventually moved back to NYC into a small, 6-unit apartment building recently purchased by Sammy's parents. Sammy's other siblings' families also lived there at the time, and the main stair and hallways were full of the happy noise of babies and playdates, and the warm aromas of shared food.

The instinct to care for his family never left Sammy, and in 1970, he convinced his childhood friend, Kai Yin Tam, to open a modest Chinese takeout restaurant in the sleepy borough of Staten Island - Lum Chin Inn was born. Though Lum Chin was only the third Chinese restaurant to operate on the entire island, with Sammy's business acumen, it quickly attracted many customers. In the next 20 years, Sammy and Kai-Yin built a small empire of over 9 different Lum Chin restaurant locations all over the New York and New Jersey metropolitan area, including two in elite neighborhoods in Manhattan.



## Obituary

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Lum Chin reframed Chinese cuisine as not only affordable take-out food, but also as fine dining experiences. Ahead of his time and sparing no expense, Sammy strategically showcased the sophistication of Chinese cuisine by building equivalently posh and modern interiors. Lum Chin Hylan Boulevard (#6), with its striking contemporary walls made of glass blocks, and Lum Chin Bay Ridge (#7), with its dark, intimate decor and piano bar lounge, became weekend destinations for the local communities.

Sammy was the quintessential entrepreneur, throwing himself into new projects and businesses with fearless enthusiasm and laser focus. With two additional children - Eva in 1972 and Mark in 1975 - Sammy rose to the challenge of building a brand-new house for Agatha in Staten Island,

with no construction experience. He went on to build several more homes and developments, in partnership with friends and family that he brought into the business. Sammy also opened a fine-dining Western continental restaurant and two laundromats in his hey-day. Throughout this and many other ventures, Sammy provided employment and opportunity for his extended family and hundreds of others. He sponsored donations, visas and Little League teams, believing firmly in 'paying forward' his fulfillment of the American Dream.

Though his businesses were time-consuming and rewarding, Sammy's greatest joy was still his family, and he utilized the flexibility of his small business schedule to spend time with them. Weekly trips out to dinner or shopping, baseball games, piano practices, yearly trips to the Caribbean, and of course, cooking endlessly and being home for nightly family dinners - Sammy made sure to always be around for his children and provide them the happy experiences he never had growing up. Despite all his accomplishments, his children - Elaine, Eva and Mark - were his proudest achievement and gave him so much happiness and fulfillment.

In 2000, Sammy left NYC, moving to Florida and eventually marrying his childhood friend Kay Tang. Together, they built a quiet, restful life in Miami and starting in 2010, in California, close to Eva and her family, and Kay's mother and sister. Sammy found his favorite job ever, thanks to Mark - 'working' as security for the Golden State Warriors and other local teams. Sammy delighted in taking care of his grandchildren - Ryan, Billy, Emily, John and Ben - whenever he could - watching and playing games, reading bedtime stories, chauffeuring them around - and proudly watching them grow. Frequent visits back to New York would sate his craving for authentic Italian food, as well as catching up with his brother Tommy and sister Amy and other family and friends. He enjoyed the many opportunities to travel with his children in his retirement - Elaine in Paris, Grand Canyon and Hawaii; Mark in Normandy, Washington DC, Seattle and Vancouver.

And of course, he loved to feed us all. Pithy with words, he showed his love through his generous and delicious meals. Because Sammy lived a life that was so, so full, it is hard to let go. Thank you, Sammy, for showing us all how to love and live fearlessly. As he wrote recently to his granddaughter Emily, "Each one of us makes our own happiness." And he certainly made his. Sammy, may you rest in peace with your mom, dad, brother Jimmy and sister Mamie around you. We will see you again real soon.

Livestream of the funeral can be found at:

<https://eCondolence.com/join-viewneral?>




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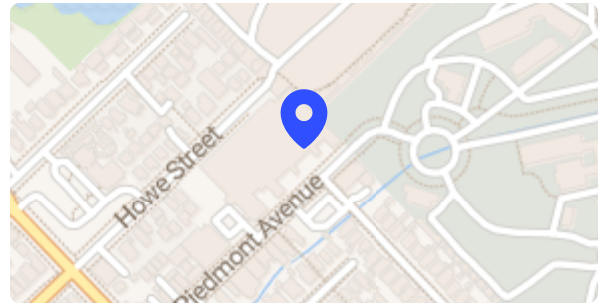


# Events




**Sammy Wing Chiu**  
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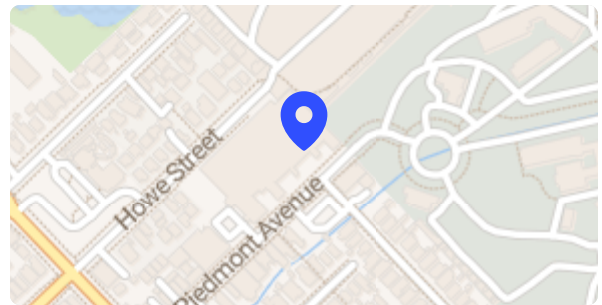
## Visitation prior to ceremony

-  **Saturday**, October 23, 2021
-  9:00 AM - 10:30 AM PT
-  **Chapel of the Chimes**  
4499 Piedmont Avenue, Oakland CA



## Funeral Service

-  **Saturday**, October 23, 2021
-  10:30 AM - 12:00 PM PT
-  **Chapel of the Chimes**  
4499 Piedmont Avenue, Oakland CA





# Tribute Wall

**Sammy Wing Chiu**  
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**Chapel Of The Chimes Oakland** shared a **Live Webcast**.



October 21 at 7:11 AM



**Kimmee** October 23 at 8:36 AM

The Chiu family was truly blessed to have Uncle Sammy. What a wonderful tribute. Beautifully done. Rest in peace Uncle Sammy! Love to all. Karmin, Kimmee and Eric



**Anonymous** sent a Sentiments of Serenity Spray to the Chiu family.



October 23 at 4:29 AM



O2

**October 23Rd, 2021** sent a Rays of Light Spray to the Chiu family.



October 22 at 7:07 AM



JF

**Jennifer & Family** lit a candle in honor of Sammy.



October 22 at 2:31 AM



**Anonymous** sent a Sentiments of Serenity Spray to the Chiu family.



October 21 at 1:21 PM



# Tribute Wall

**Sammy Wing Chiu**  
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**Anonymous** sent a Peaceful White Lilies Basket to the Chiu family.

October 21 at 6:12 AM



**Mr. George Lui And Louis Lui** sent a Magnificent Life Spray to the Chiu family.

October 20 at 9:53 PM



**Anonymous** sent a Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum to the Chiu family.

October 20 at 9:27 AM



**Anonymous** sent a Lavender Reflections Spray to the Chiu family.

October 20 at 1:30 AM



**Anonymous** sent a Magnificent Life Spray to the Chiu family.

October 19 at 12:24 PM



**Anonymous** sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Chiu family.

October 19 at 7:31 AM





## Tribute Wall

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**Lisa Strigel** sent a Fiery Lily and Rose to the Chiu family.



October 18 at 2:57 AM



# Media

**Sammy Wing Chiu**  
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**Chapel Of The Chimes Oakland** shared a **Live Webcast**.

October 21 at 7:11 AM



**Kimmee** October 23 at 8:36 AM

The Chiu family was truly blessed to have Uncle Sammy. What a wonderful tribute. Beautifully done. Rest in peace Uncle Sammy! Love to all. Karmin, Kimmee and Eric



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Sammy by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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