



## Dr. Unsup Kim

September 2, 2019

“Life means everything to me” are the words written by a young Korean Army Captain describing how he found the strength to perform an emergency amputation on an American soldier’s leg while serving in a M.A.S.H. hospital during the Vietnam War. For this act of bravery, he was later awarded the United States Bronze Star for Valor, as well as a Gold Star from the Republic of Korea, and a Silver Star award from Vietnam.

Dr. Unsup Kim, former Director of Surgery at Elmhurst Hospital in Queens, New York, and Professor of Surgery at Mt. Sinai’s Icahn School of Medicine in New York, passed peacefully in his home in Teaneck, New Jersey on September 2, 2019.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 56 years Myungsoon Kim of Teaneck, NJ, devoted daughters Kathlyn Kim and Sandy Kim (and her husband Dave Limone), wonderful grandchildren Sydney Shilan, Jake Shilan, and David Limone Jr, and sisters Kyung Jah (Seoul, Korea) and Kwi Jah (Busan, Korea).

Born in 1934, Dr. Kim was the middle son of 8 children born in a small country village in South Korea to poor farmers.

Despite the hardships of the Korean Civil war, at the age of 16, he was able to work as an “errand boy” in a U.N. Swedish hospital because of his command of the English language. It was this fortuitous event which we call “IN YEUN” in Korean that changed the course of his life. While working at this hospital Dr. Kim met and befriended Dr. Tor Van Schreeb who planted the seed in him that he should pursue a career in medicine. They remained lifelong friends.

Defying all odds, given his family’s lack of education and financial means, Dr. Kim had the gumption to take the rigorous exam for Seoul National Medical school, and passed with flying colors.

After graduating in 1959 and starting his surgical residency at the Korean Army hospital, he had the great fortune to meet Myungsoon Kang, the love of his life.

They met after Miss Kang hired Dr. Kim to teach her to speak French so that she could understand the French films which were all the rage at the time.

Unsup was a very strict teacher and if she mispronounced a word he would instruct her to “repeat” it over and over until she said it perfectly.

As payment for her lessons, Miss Kang invited Unsup to attend a concert with a famous

American pianist, Rudolf Serkin.

They soon fell in love and were married in 1963.

In 1966 he became Chief of Surgery in Korea at the Military hospital.

From 1967 Dr. Kim was invited to continue his Surgical training in the United States at Mt. Sinai Hospital, followed with a guarantee of U.S. citizenship after 5 years.

Recognized for his surgical and leadership abilities, Dr. Kim was promoted numerous times, and in 1975, was appointed as Director of Surgery at Elmhurst hospital, a role which he held until 2011. Even after he retired as Director, he continued to operate and provide exceptional patient care until 2016.

As dedicated as Dr. Kim was to patient care, he was equally passionate about being an educator, and felt honored to serve as a professor of Surgery at Mt. Sinai's Ichan School of Medicine- a position he held starting in 1983.

During his tenure at Mt. Sinai, he had the privilege of training and mentoring thousands of medical students, surgical residents, and Fellows, many who have gone on to have illustrious careers serving as Directors of their own Surgical departments, fellow Professors, and accomplished authors.

A stern, but generous educator, he was highly respected and loved by so many of his students who nominated him for numerous awards over the years, including the "Robert Paradny Outstanding teacher of the year". His legacy for compassion, serving others, and putting "life above all" will continue through his family in whom he instilled these values, and the many medical professionals who he trained and mentored.

Family and friends will be received on Saturday, September 7th at the Volk Leber Funeral Home, 789 Teaneck Road in Teaneck, New Jersey from 10:00 AM- 2:00 PM with a service immediately following.

In lieu of flowers, friends and family may make a gift in Dr. Unsup Kim's memory to support medical student scholarships through the Enhanced Scholarship Initiative. Gifts can be made online by sharing the following link: <http://giving.mountsinai.org/UnsupKim>  
Donations can also be mailed to: Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, One Gustave L. Levy Place, Box 1049, New York, NY 10029

In the check memo line, please include: "Gifts to be made in honor of Dr. Unsup Kim to support scholarships"

# Cemetery

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## Private

789 Teaneck Road  
Teaneck, NJ,

# Events

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**SEP** **Visitation** 10:00AM - 02:00PM

**7**

Teaneck

789 Teaneck Road, Teaneck, NJ, US, 07666

**SEP** **Service** 02:00PM - 03:00PM

**7**

Teaneck

789 Teaneck Road, Teaneck, NJ, US, 07666

# Comments

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“ A tribute video has been added.



**Volk Leber Funeral Home** - September 06, 2019 at 09:05 AM



“ Dear Myungsoon and family.

We are very sad to hear of Dr. Kim's passing away. He contributed to the training of many Israeli surgeons. We all share very fond memories of him. I am sorry he was not able to visit Israel. I had the privilege of having Dr. Kim as my boss for several years. His dedication and love of teaching were inspiring.

**Tehilla Menes Danny Silverberg** - September 07, 2019 at 12:21 AM



“ Many years ago, if you visited Elmhurst Hospital after evening rounds, you might find Dr. Kim discussing events of the day with the residents, and sharing some informed observations about history and literature.

Recently, if you visited Elmhurst and the operating rooms which he designed, you might see the older Dr. Kim helping prepare a patient for surgery, and perhaps sharing a smile and a hug with the nurses and staff who knew him well.

In between, there have been decades of teaching, patient care, and Dr. Kim's presence as a model and inspiration to all of us.

Ernest Kirchman, MD and the Plastic Surgery team

**Ernest Kirchman** - September 08, 2019 at 07:46 PM

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“ Dear Mrs. Kim and family,

I'm so sorry for your loss. Please accept my deepest condolences. Dr. Kim was a gentleman and consummate professional and wonderful teacher, humble and fierce at the same time. He has touched so many of us who worked with him and learned so much from him. He will be very missed.

**Sonam Rosberger** - April 11, 2020 at 01:25 PM

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“ Sincere condolences to the family of Dr. Kim.  
I knew Dr Kim through my work at Elmhurst Hospital. In addition to his being an educator, administrator, and surgeon, he was a compassionate and kind person. Dr Kim was also my surgeon.  
I am so very sorry to hear of his passing. May he Rest In Peace.  
Beverly Carroll, RN

beverly Carroll - October 13, 2019 at 07:45 PM

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“ From: Aida Bernacet, RN and family purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of Dr. Unsup Kim.



From: Aida Bernacet, RN and family - September 06, 2019 at 07:15 PM

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“ Love, Shagha and Pete DeNoble purchased the Magnificent Life Spray for the family of Dr. Unsup Kim.



Love, Shagha and Pete DeNoble - September 06, 2019 at 03:06 PM

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“ Treasured Lilies Spray was purchased for the family of Dr. Unsup Kim.



September 06, 2019 at 02:09 PM

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“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Dr. Unsup Kim.



September 06, 2019 at 01:07 PM

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“ 94 files added to the album LifeTributes



Volk Leber Funeral Home - September 06, 2019 at 08:43 AM

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“ He embodied the strict guru and nurturing mentor. Though I did not become a surgeon - he made me a better physician. I am grateful for his dedication to medical education. May his soul Rest In Peace

pruthvi patel - September 05, 2019 at 11:03 PM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Sandy - September 05, 2019 at 10:43 PM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



**Sandy** - September 05, 2019 at 10:41 PM

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“ Guiding Light Bouquet was purchased for the family of Dr. Unsup Kim.



September 05, 2019 at 09:38 PM

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“ My sincere condolences to Dr. Kim's family. He was my mentor as a medical student and resident, and significantly shaped my decision to become a surgeon and my training. He had a huge impact in medical education and was truly an inspiration to many of us. He will be missed.

**Paula Denoya** - September 05, 2019 at 03:18 PM

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“ My condolences to Dr Kim's Family. I developed a strong working relationship with Dr Kim, during my 30 years at Elmhurst. I retired 3.5 years ago as the CEO and still maintained a friendship with Unsup. He was truly a wonderful person, filled with passion and commitment for his role as the Director of Surgery. He will truly be missed. Chris Constantino, Retired CEO/SR VP at Elmhurst Hospital.

**Chris Constantino** - September 05, 2019 at 10:58 AM

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“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Dr. Unsup Kim.



September 05, 2019 at 10:07 AM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



**Sandy** - September 04, 2019 at 10:15 PM

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“ Condolences to the family of Dr Kim. Having worked with him for the past 27 years at Elmhurst I admired his passion for his work and his patients. He truly was an extraordinary man. May he Rest In Peace

**Anna Mulvey, OR Scheduling Department** - September 04, 2019 at 08:24 PM

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“ Meong and family  
We are deeply saddened by the passing of our dear Teaneck friend and neighbor, Unsup Kim. We cherished our friendship. May he rest in peace.  
The Zywotow Family

**Rise Zywotow Birnbaum** - September 04, 2019 at 03:52 PM

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“ The Deane Family purchased the Lovely One Spathiphyllum Plant for the family of Dr. Unsup Kim.



The Deane Family - September 04, 2019 at 11:33 AM

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“ Dear Dr Unsup Kim, it's me Willie. I know you always like an uncle to me, and what a marvelous one you were!

I will always treasure your love for our family(my parents, my sisters, and my wife and son). I have learned so much from you, and you have helped me a lot when I first ventured on my journey back to the US.

I cannot believe that you are already in Heaven...I can still see your face. I can hear your voice. I can draw your home in my mind.  
I will never forget you and your family, ever.

Thank you for coming to my wedding. Thank you for being so supportive. And most of all thank you for just being YOU.

With love, William S Baek

William S Baek - September 04, 2019 at 01:05 AM

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“ Your Arizona friends at Kennel-Me-Not SCS, LLC purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Dr. Unsup Kim.



Your Arizona friends at Kennel-Me-Not SCS, LLC - September 04, 2019 at 12:33 AM

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“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Dr. Unsup Kim.



September 03, 2019 at 11:23 PM