



## Sangok "Kathy" Choi Smith

May 30, 1944 - August 19, 2024

Sangok "Kathy" Choi Smith, beloved wife, mother, grandmother, and friend, passed away peacefully on August 19, 2024, in Lakeland, Florida, at the age of 80. Born on May 30, 1944, in Inchon, Korea, Kathy was the cherished daughter of Ik-Chang Choi and Sung-son Yu. In 1971, she courageously left her homeland to marry the love of her life, Vernon Smith, in Charleston, South Carolina, on November 8, 1971. Their bond was one of profound love and companionship, as they remained inseparable for nearly 53 years.

Kathy was a woman of many talents, each one marked by a meticulous dedication to excellence. Her teens and 20s in Korea were a testament to her incredible flair for fashion—every outfit she crafted was a masterpiece of head-to-toe perfection. This innate sense of style was more than a personal passion; it became a foundation of her identity. As a skilled seamstress and needleworker, her creations were works of art, admired by all who knew her. Her talent caught the eye of Disney in the 1990s, leading to commissions for beautiful crafts that were sold at Walt Disney World, a testament to her impeccable craftsmanship.

In addition to her artistic talents, Kathy was deeply committed to education and service. She dedicated herself to teaching, particularly focusing on helping students who had immigrated to the United States learn English. Her role as an educator extended beyond the classroom, as she tirelessly

volunteered at the school whenever possible. Yet, despite her many skills and achievements, the true joy and cornerstone of Kathy's life was her unwavering service to others. Whether it was her family, friends, or students, Kathy was selfless to her core, always ensuring that those around her were comfortable and cared for—even in her final days. Her deep love for her husband, daughter, and grandchildren was the guiding force in her life, and her legacy of kindness and service will be remembered by all who had the privilege to know her.

Grammy, as her grandchildren affectionately called her, often expressed her love through food. She will be fondly remembered for her crunchy toast, perfect grilled cheese sandwiches, irresistible Chex mix, and her incomparable frozen chocolate chip cookies.

Kathy is survived by her loving husband, Vernon Smith Jr., of Lakeland, FL; her daughter, Emily Smith Dunakey, and son-in-law, Patrick Dunakey; and her adored, treasured grandchildren, Daphne Dunakey, Ferris Dunakey, and Fitz Dunakey, all of Tulsa, OK.

# Tribute Wall

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“ *The Netzers purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Sangok "Kathy" Choi Smith.*



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**The Netzers** - August 27, 2024 at 07:06 PM

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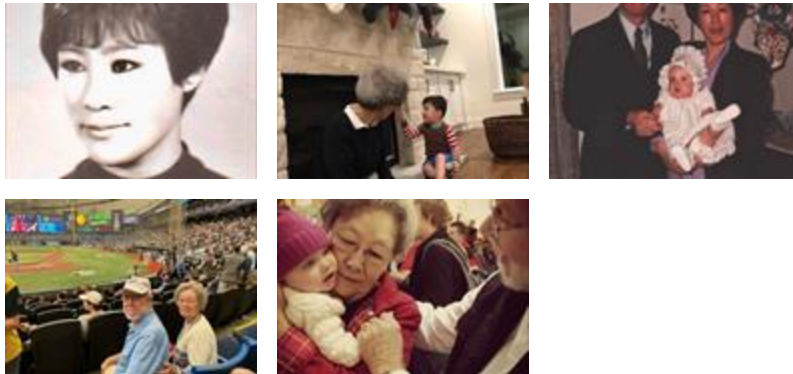
“ *The Netzers planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Sangok "Kathy" Choi Smith.*

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**The Netzers** - August 27, 2024 at 07:06 PM

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“ *8 files added to the album Sangok "Kathy" Smith*



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**Emily Dunakey** - August 26, 2024 at 01:00 PM