

CREATING DESTINY FOREWORD

Wade Nomura's life is an incredible example of how to not let adversity rule life, but to overcome it in a positive manner. We should all listen and learn and relate his experiences to our own life. He has had to deal with the prejudice of being Japanese in a tough time of the century for the American Japanese. He has had to deal with being overweight and short at a young age. He has had to deal with having Polio, fortunately with no residual effects. He has had to deal with the loss of loved ones.

Being part of a family that has had to face extreme prejudice he could have reacted, as many have, in a negative way. But no, not Wade. Sure, he didn't like the prejudice and occasionally reacted, especially if aimed at others, but he never let it take away from the positive direction in which he wanted his life to go.

At every step of the way he has reached out to others, especially the youth, to provide guidance and mentoring. He has been driven by helping others to improve their lives, whether it was with his motorcycle and BMX prowess or golf or with his Volunteerism.

You can see his incredible competitive nature in all that he has done in his life. Whatever he has taken on he had to be the best, in a good way. Never showing an ego but focused on the hard work it would take, the time he would have to put into practice and the sacrifices he would have to make. He has always stayed focused on excellence. Whether it was Judo or BMX racing or Landscaping Design.

He constantly maintains an exemplary character with respect for others, no matter who they are or what they do. In return all who know him respect him and want him to be a part of whatever they do. You can see his love for mentoring the youth. His desire to teach and to train comes from a clear love of people and an internal knowledge that he might be able to help others to accomplish their dreams. This was especially true as he worked with the disadvantaged youth to help them go in a direction in their lives that did not include drugs and gangs. He has saved many and given them a direction they didn't even know they had available to them.

He is a humble man who is never driven by personal gain but by bringing creativity, compassion and excellence to every role he takes on. To win at BMX racing he designed and built a new kind of bike. He realized he could train young golfers to be their best and he did. He created Nomura Racing and was recognized "as one of the most successful racers in the history of the sport". So, of course, he started training youngsters how to be the best riders with amazing success. Even when he went to a Rotary Leadership program for the first time, he helped redesign it and train based on the new program.

His journey in Rotary has been exceptional in his rise to various positions because in each one he has given it all he has with innovation and enthusiasm. He has moved up the ranks faster than most and maintained his humility as he honestly expresses surprise that he would get elected to some positions because he is Japanese. He learned that in Rotary diversity is welcomed and embraced. His personal approach to all the Presidents of the Rotary Clubs when he was District Governor brought him success. From District Governor he continues taking on assignments and, as usual, excels in each one causing frequent requests to take on

greater leadership roles, such as with the Cadre for which he is now a Coordinator for one of the seven regions around the world. He is a worthy recipient of The Rotary Foundation's Distinguished Service Award, the highest recognition given to a small number of Rotarians globally for their outstanding service. He is clearly the role model that Rotary needs and wants.

Of course, the same happened with his rise within his beloved city of Carpinteria. It wasn't his goal to be in charge but a drive to help his community. He did an outstanding job as a member of the Architectural Review Board and so after many years was asked to move onto the City Council and then to be Mayor. Not something he longed to do but something he realized he could bring a new perspective to and make a difference to his community. Clearly, he has done that in many ways, from the Thomas Fire to the change in the Police culture.

He weaves throughout his story his love of family. His deep respect for his grandparents and his parents, from whom he has learned so many life lessons. And then his wonderful obsession with Roxanne and his love for his children, Ryan and Lisa. You can feel his broken heart and his deep sense of loss when his precious Roxanne passed away. For him it was another tragedy, perhaps he has had to face more than his fair share. And then along came Debbie and gave him back his engaging smile and renewed his love of life.

Wade Nomura has endured many hardships and tragedies during his life and yet he always emerged with a positive response and a desire to help others with whatever knowledge he has gained. He is leaving his legacy by helping others better themselves and by making our communities and world a better place. All of us who have known him have benefitted from his friendship.

Barry Rassin
Rotary International, President 2018 – 2019

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