

CD remembers career

A return to West Michigan by an alumna early in her career has become part of a tribute in remembrance of her four decades later.

Sakiko Kanamori (Mook) '63 died in August 2004. Her husband and their two sons have just brought out a CD in her memory that features performances she gave around the world, including in Hope's hometown of Holland.

Sakiko came to Hope from Japan in 1959. She intended to major in social science, but according to a local newspaper account was "discovered singing in a corridor in the music building." She joined the Chapel Choir, studied voice with Norma Hark Baughman, auditioned for the Metropolitan Opera during her junior year, and was chosen Homecoming Queen as a senior. With her Hope degree in hand, she started at the Juilliard School of Music in 1963.

After completing her M.Sc., she entered the Metropolitan Opera auditions. She won the Eastern regional competition and then went on to share



first prize in the National finals. She was the first National Council winner from East Asia.

While at Juilliard, Sakiko returned to Hope for a recital accompanied by Anthony Kooiker of the music faculty. A review in *The Holland Evening Sentinel* praised her performance: "She will certainly be heard from again and we are certain she will go high in the musical world. We in Holland where she got her start are already proud of her today and are certain to be even more so in future." Five of the selections from the recital are included on the CD.

Sakiko's international career took her to Germany, where, between 1969 and 1981, she appeared in lead roles in more than 400 opera performances. She also had an active concert career with a focus on German lieder, as well as on 19th-20th century French chansons and 20th century American songs.

In 1964, she married Byron Mook, an Oberlin graduate and a specialist in agricultural development. Between opera and concert performances, they had one son and she commuted to India, Sri Lanka, and Sudan (where they lived for one year and she learned Arabic). They then settled in the Netherlands and had another son. Barry and Dennis are now both medical doctors.

The CD contains selections from recital and opera performances and rehearsals at Hope, at Juilliard, and in



Sakiko Kanamori '63 Mook, shown in traditional clothing from her native Japan, began her musical training at Hope and went on to international acclaim as an opera singer. A CD produced in her memory collects performances from around the world including, fittingly, portions of a concert in Holland.

Europe. Byron "discovered" the tape of the 1965 Hope recital in the Joint Archives of Holland, which now has a copy of the CD. Copies are also available from him (www.sakiko.org).

Byron, Barry, and Dennis plan to establish a small endowment at Hope in Sakiko's memory. Proceeds will be used

each year to support promising Hope voice students as they take their first steps outside the college on their ways to professional singing careers. Sakiko always remembered her first public recital, at the St. Cecilia Society in Grand Rapids, and her first public orchestra concert, with the Battle Creek Symphony. 🐣

