

# World's oldest man, who said his secret was smiling, dies at 112

By **Yuri Kageyama**  
The Associated Press

**T**OKYO — A Japanese man who received his certificate as the world's oldest man with a raised fist and big smiles in early February has died at age 112.

Guinness World Records had given the certificate to Chitetsu Watanabe on February 12. The organization and the funeral home handling his services confirmed he died on Sunday, February 23. No cause was given.

He had not been able to eat recently and developed a fever and difficulty breathing a couple of days before his death, Japan's nationally circulated newspaper *Mainichi* reported, citing family sources.

Watanabe is survived by his five

children, 12 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild, *Mainichi* said.

Watanabe's family did not immediately answer calls to their home.

Watanabe was born in 1907 and worked in Taiwan for 18 years. After returning to Niigata, northern Japan, he worked for the prefectural government until retirement.

He grew fruit and vegetables on the family farm and loved cream puffs and bonsai, the Japanese traditional art of raising small sculpted trees.

He used to say the secret to longevity was to keep smiling.

Guinness in Japan offered its condolences to his family.

The oldest living person is also Japanese, Kane Tanaka, a 117-year-old woman.

## Japan to close schools nationwide to control spread of virus

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confirmed on the northern island of Hokkaido.

Abe's announcement came hours after several local governments announced their own decisions to suspend classes for shorter periods.

Officials in Hokkaido said they were closing all 1,600 elementary and middle schools. Hokkaido now has at least 54 confirmed cases, the largest in the country outside the cruise ship.

Some local governments quickly said they will abide by the request, but others criticized the short notice and said it would affect working parents who need to find sitters for young school children.

"Society will fall apart because of the measures," said Chiba mayor Toshihito Kumagai, adding that he will come up with

measures to support working parents during the school suspension.

Japan's school year ends in March, leaving little time for final exams or graduation ceremonies.

Schools should keep exams and graduation ceremonies to a minimum and take all necessary precautions, Abe said.

"Our graduation ceremony is coming up soon, and it's quite a hectic time of the year," Norinobu Sawada, vice principal of Koizumi Elementary School in Hokkaido's Kitami City, told TBS television. "The most important thing is to prevent infections, so there aren't many other options."

The Japanese government has also asked companies to allow employees to work flexible hours or work from home to reduce infection risks.



**SECRET WAS SMILING.** Chitetsu Watanabe, 112, poses next to the calligraphy he wrote after being honored as the world's oldest living man by Guinness World Records in Joetsu, Niigata prefecture, northern Japan, in this February 12, 2020 file photo. Watanabe, who received his certificate as the world's oldest man with a raised fist and big smile in early February, has died. (Kyodo News via AP, File)



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**Tuesday, March 3, 2020**  
9:30-11 a.m.
- Clackamas Service Center  
8800 SE 80th Ave, Portland  
**Tuesday, March 10, 2020**  
10 a.m.-12 p.m.
- A Safe Place Family Justice Center  
256 Warner Milne Rd, Oregon City  
**Tuesday, March 17, 2020**  
10 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Orchid Health Clinic  
535 NE Sixth Ave, Estacada  
**Friday, March 20, 2020**  
10 a.m.-12 p.m.

- MULTNOMAH**  
Department of Human Services:  
Alberta Office  
30 N Webster St, Portland  
**Tuesday, March 3, 2020**  
10 a.m.-12 p.m.

- MULTNOMAH**  
CareOregon Open Hours  
315 SW Fifth Ave, Portland  
**Wednesday, March 4, 2020**  
12-3 p.m.
- Department of Human Services:  
East County Office  
11826 NE Glisan St, Portland  
**Friday, March 6, 2020**  
11 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Community Conversations  
with the Mayor  
Multnomah Arts Center Gymnasium  
7688 SW Capitol Hwy, Portland  
**Saturday, March 7, 2020**  
9 a.m.-12 p.m.
- PSU Free Food Market  
PSU Park Blocks, Portland  
**Monday, March 9, 2020**  
11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Department of Human Services:  
SE Malden Office  
8129 SE Malden St, Portland  
**Tuesday, March 10, 2020**  
1:30-3:30 p.m.

- MULTNOMAH**  
Meaningful Care Conference  
Portland Airport Sheraton  
8235 NE Airport Way, Portland  
**Wednesday, March 11, 2020**  
8 a.m.-3 p.m.
- CareOregon Open Hours  
315 SW Fifth Ave, Portland  
**Wednesday, March 11, 2020**  
9 a.m.-12 p.m.
- Portland Rescue Mission  
Burnside Shelter  
111 W Burnside, Portland  
**Friday, March 13, 2020**  
8-10 a.m.
- CareOregon Open Hours  
315 SW Fifth Ave, Portland  
**Wednesday, March 18, 2020**  
9 a.m.-12 p.m.
- Department of Human Services:  
East County Office  
11826 NE Glisan St, Portland  
**Thursday, March 19, 2020**  
9 a.m.-12 p.m.

- MULTNOMAH**  
Union Gospel Mission  
3 NW Third Ave, Portland  
**Tuesday, March 24, 2020**  
2-4 p.m.
- Wallace Medical Concern  
124 NE 181st Ave, Portland  
**Tuesday, March 24, 2020**  
9 a.m.-12 p.m.
- CareOregon Open Hours  
315 SW Fifth Ave, Portland  
**Wednesday, March 25, 2020**  
9 a.m.-12 p.m.
- WASHINGTON**  
Beaverton City Library  
12375 SW Fifth St, Beaverton  
**Thursday, March 5, 2020**  
12-2 p.m.
- Department of Human Services:  
Hillsboro Office  
5300 NE Elam Young Pkwy, Hillsboro  
**Thursday, March 5, 2020**  
9-11 a.m.

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