

Atlanta spa shooting victim remembered as fun and selfless

By Kate Brumback
The Associated Press

PEACHTREE CORNERS, Ga. — While a pastor spoke during Yong Ae Yue's funeral last month, a sunbeam came through the window and shone upon Yue's two sons, a sure sign their mother was watching, one of them said.

As his mother's body lay before him in a casket draped with pink flowers, Elliott Peterson pointed to a large photo of her on display and asked friends and family gathered in a funeral home in Peachtree Corners to remember her like that — a big grin on her face and two fingers on each hand extended in a "V."

Yue was one of eight people fatally shot March 16 in attacks on massage businesses in Atlanta and nearby Cherokee County.

The others are also being grieved by friends, family, and their communities. Suncha Kim, 69, volunteered for charities. Soon Chung Park, a former dancer, remained youthful and fit at 74. Xiaojie



"Emily" Tan, 49, was an entrepreneur who owned Youngs Asian Massage and other businesses. Daoyou Feng, 44, was one of her employees. Delaina Yaun, 33, was a new mother. Paul Michels, 54, installed security systems. Hyun Jung Grant, 51, loved music and worked at Gold Spa to

support two sons.

Four of the women slain were of Korean descent, and leaders of the Korean-American community held an online vigil in Norcross to mourn their deaths and speak out against the huge rise in violence against Asian Americans during the coronavirus pandemic.

Democratic state representative Sam Park said many community members have been traumatized by the attacks, asking him, "Am I next?"

"Do not be afraid," Park said during the vigil. "This is our home, this is our country, and we will stand and fight to protect our community, the vulnerable among us, and the next generation. We must unequivocally condemn the racist political rhetoric that put a target on the backs of our children, parents, and members of the Asian-American community."

Yue, 63, was born in South Korea and immigrated to the U.S. in 1979 with her then-husband, Mac Peterson. He was in the Army and they moved to the Columbus area. Their older son, Elliott, was born in South Korea, while their younger son, Robert, was born after they moved to Georgia, said attorney BJay Pak, who is representing Yue's sons.

The couple divorced some time after their second son's birth and Yue made the tough decision for her boys to live with their father, believing that would give them a better chance to succeed, but she remained a loving presence in their lives, Pak said.

Elliott Peterson said his mother wasn't very outwardly affectionate but showed her love through food. She was selfless and would be happy about the outpouring of support her sons have received, he said.

Monica Baker, Peterson's wife, recalled the first time she met Yue, nervous and determined to make a good impression. She fell in love with karaoke that night aided by the liquid courage provided by the soju Yue poured for her, she said, drawing chuckles.

Yue held a variety of jobs over the years, and had only started working at

RACISM RISING. Flowers, candles, and signs are displayed at a makeshift memorial on March 19, 2021, in Atlanta. A 21-year-old white man is accused of shooting five people, killing four and injuring one, at Youngs Asian Massage in Cherokee County. Police say the suspect then drove 30 miles south to Atlanta and shot three people at Gold Spa before going across the street to Aromatherapy Spa and shooting Yong Ae Yue. Seven of the slain were women, six of Asian descent. (AP Photo/Candice Choi)

Aromatherapy Spa in Atlanta in October, Pak said. She told her sons her job was to cook, clean, and watch security cameras.

She lived alone with a dog and a cat and had a tight-knit group of friends, Pak said.

Elliott Peterson, 42, served in the military and retired last year. He said during the funeral that he's so grateful he and his children were able to spend two weeks visiting his mother in October.

Robert Peterson, 38, saw his mother frequently while doing undergraduate studies at Morehouse College in Atlanta and then went on to get a doctorate in medical sociology in Ohio, Pak said.

"As Bobby tells it, she used to brag to her friends, 'Bobby's a doctor but not a medicine doctor, he's a thinking doctor,'" Pak said.

A funeral also was held for Tan, who owned the Cherokee County spa. The service in nearby Marietta was private though a video was posted online.

Tan's ex-husband, Michael Webb, spoke about how she was intent on showing him her country after they met in China in 2003. They travelled to small cities and villages, living among the "kind and wonderful people of China," he said.

They later moved to the U.S., where she was determined to work and become an American citizen, he said. She had a strong work ethic and saved money to open her own businesses.

"Her customers became her friends and she would always bring them gifts or homemade dumplings, which she would share with the neighboring businesses," he said.

She put her daughter Jami through college, insisting that she become an accountant, and passed along her work ethic and kindness to her, Webb said.

"Sadly, Jami's family in China wishes for Jami, a proud American citizen, to return to China because they think it's just not safe here anymore, and who could blame them?" he said. "This is the kind of example our country is setting for the rest of the world."

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Associated Press writer R.J. Rico contributed to this report.

Daughter: Bystander disrupted attack on Asian-American woman

By Michael R. Sisak
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The daughter of an Asian-American woman attacked in New York City says a person not seen on surveillance video helped the woman by screaming to distract her assailant while others watched and did nothing to intervene.

Elizabeth Kari, writing on a fundraising webpage she set up for her mother's care, said the bystander was across the street when a man accosted her 65-year-old mother, Vilma Kari, kicked her in the stomach, knocked her to the ground, and repeatedly stomped on her face during the daytime in late March near Times Square.

The person, who has remained anonymous, "yelled and screamed to get the assailant's attention," Elizabeth Kari wrote. Fundraising service GoFundMe

verified the authenticity of the webpage. The Associated Press has been unable to reach the Karis for comment; a message seeking an interview was left with Elizabeth Kari.

"I want to THANK YOU for stepping in and doing the right thing," she wrote. "This gesture of action is what we need in our world right now. I hope one day, my mom and I can thank you personally."

Brandon Elliot, a 38-year-old parolee convicted of killing his mother nearly two decades ago, was charged with assault and attempted assault as hate crimes. His lawyers urged the public to "reserve judgement until all the facts are presented in court."

The attack, among the latest in a national spike in anti-Asian hate crimes, drew widespread condemnation and raised alarms about what appeared to be

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Vaccination gives us hope the pandemic will end

But in the meantime, we need to continue safety measures to keep the virus from spreading:

- Wear a mask
- Physically distance from others
- Wash your hands
- Avoid gatherings
- Stay home when you're sick



For more information visit healthoregon.org/coronavirus or call 211



COVID-19 vaccine side effects

After getting a COVID-19 vaccine, you might have side effects. This often means the vaccine is working to keep your body healthy. If you feel okay going about your day, that's okay too! The vaccine is still working, even if you don't have side effects.

Side effects

- Sore arm
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Fever or Chills (less common)
- Muscle aches or soreness
- Trouble breathing

What to do about it?

- Move your arm! Apply an ice pack.
- Rest when needed.
- Take it easy, take pain reliever. If fever is 102° or higher, call a doctor for advice.
- Take a pain killer if needed. You can also use a heat pack or ice pack.
- Call 911 for help.

Most of these side effects should go away in a few days.