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Ben Oki (1927-2018)

Ben Oki was born in Sacramento, California in 1927 and moved to Hiroshima, Japan when he was six years old where he learned the arts of Japanese landscaping and stone setting. After graduating from Matsu Moto Business School he returned to the United States in 1950 and has managed his own landscape gardening business for many years.

Ben studied bonsai under bonsai master **John Naka** as early as 1958 and was John's right hand man for many demonstrations and meetings. Ben is an internationally known bonsai masters and takes key roles at conventions by conducting workshops, demonstrations and critique sessions. Ben specializes in California Juniper. He is well known nationally and internationally for his rugged, freeform style, fine detail work fast wiring and skillful tree splitting techniques.



In Indiana, the late Charles Owens and his wife Cheryl instituted the International Ben Oki Design Award and the Ben Oki National Design Award -- the awards for excellence in bonsai design quality -- sponsored by **Bonsai Clubs International** and by the **American Bonsai Society**, respectively. In 2001 Ben received the Ryokuhaku-Juyukosho (Green and White Achievement Award) from the Agricultural Society of Japan. In 2003 he received the **Golden State Bonsai Federation** Circle of Sensei Award at The Huntington Library.

Ben was the founding curator of the bonsai collection at The Huntington. He passed away February 2018 and has left behind a living legacy in the trees he cared for so diligently.