

**Masatoshi Tsujimura** was born in Shimonoseki, Japan, in 1957. Masa was the fourth child of Noritoshi and Ayako Tsujimura. Masa's father was the founder of Sumiyoshi Industrial, a major outfitter of equipment for fishing fleets in Southern Japan. Masa's childhood was filled with outdoor activities and a growing love of cooking and all kinds of food. He attended university at Tokai University in Kanagawa where he majored in Mechanical Engineering. After graduating university, Masa made the big decision to attend graduate school in the United States at the Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne, Florida. Melbourne was a long way from Japan and while in Florida, he got a part-time job working in a local Japanese restaurant. It was at this restaurant that he discovered that becoming a chef, and not studying Mechanical Engineering and Operations Research, was his true passion.

Masa turned his full attention to his culinary career and worked at various restaurants in southern and Central Florida. Masa came to North Carolina in 1984 to open the sushi bar at Kanki Japanese House of Steaks in Raleigh. As the chef at one of the first sushi bars in North Carolina, Chef Masa introduced sushi to many first time customers and developed a loyal following of sushi lovers.

In 1997 Chef Masa left Kanki to open his own restaurant, Waraji Japanese Restaurant. Consistently described as one of the most authentic Japanese restaurants and sushi bars in the region, Chef Masa is passionate about representing the highest quality of authentic Japanese cuisine to his customers and community. In addition to fine Japanese cuisine, Waraji has developed one of the largest sake offerings on the East Coast. Now offering nearly 100 sakes, Chef Masa has brought a passion not only for fine sake but also for sake education to the Triangle area. He has sponsored quarterly sake dinners which feature representatives from various sake breweries in Japan to teach guests about what is sake, how sake is made and the various forms and flavors of sake.

Chef Masa is also actively involved with the North Carolina Japan Club and its activities to educate and to promote Japanese culture. He has been a tireless supporter of the Bon Odori festival, the International Festival, Shin Nen Kai, and the Japanese language congregation of First Baptist Church. He has been a "field trip" destination for multiple school groups throughout Eastern North Carolina who are learning about Japan and Japanese cuisine. In addition to supporting Japanese culture organizations and festivals, Chef Masa has also been a long time supporter of the Cystic Fibrosis society and Make-A-Wish society by donating in home caterings and sake tastings for these worthy charities to auction off during fundraisers. He has married 32 years to Naomi Tsujimura and together they have three children: Miyuki Ruth Keller (married to Frank Keller in Tallahassee, Florida) and twins Norikazu Joshua Tsujimura and Toshiya Lucas Tsujimura. Their dog, "Raleigh", a lovable mutt, is their favorite fourth child.