





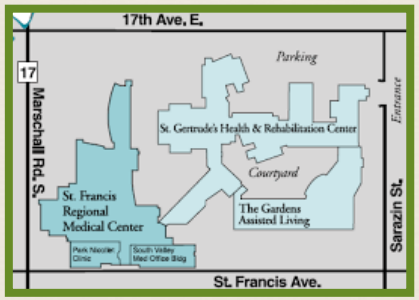

Benedictine
LIVING COMMUNITY | SHAKOPEE

Chhenglim Pay was born July 5, 1940 in Poipet (Phnom Penh), Cambodia. She was the second oldest of four siblings, two brothers and two sisters.

Chhenglim married Kimhout Seng. They had nine children.

Poipet is located on the border with Thailand and is a significant border crossing point. Phnom Penh is the capital and largest city of Cambodia and also the political, economic, cultural, religious and transportation center of the country. Poipet is directly adjacent to Aranyaprathet in Thailand, forming the primary border crossing, a key gateway for trade and travel between the two countries.

Poipet's history includes being a key location during the Cambodian civil war and a center for international relief efforts. Chhenglim and her family survived the Khmer Rouge, a Cambodian genocide that took place from 1975-1979.

The fate of Cambodia shocked the world when the radical communist political party Khmer Rouge, under their leader Pol Pot, seized power in April 1975 after years of guerrilla warfare, according to the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust website.

The Khmer Rouge ruthlessly imposed an extremist program to reconstruct Cambodia (under its Khmer name Kampuchea) on the communist model of Mao's China. They aimed to remove social classes and Western influences from the country.

The population was made to work as laborers in one huge federation of collective farms. City and town inhabitants were forced to leave. No-one was spared: the ill, disabled, old, and very young were also driven out, regardless of physical condition. People who refused to leave, those who didn't leave fast enough, and those who disobeyed orders were all murdered.

All political and civil rights were abolished. Children were taken from their parents and placed in separate forced-labor camps. Factories, schools, universities, and hospitals were shut down. Lawyers, doctors, teachers, engineers, scientists, and professional people in any field were murdered, together with their extended families. It was possible for people to be shot simply for knowing a foreign language, wearing glasses, laughing, or crying.

It is estimated that well over two million people were murdered during this period, from execution, disease, exhaustion, and starvation.

Chhenglim came to the United States on May 22, 2002. While living in Minnesota, she gained citizenship and became an official Cambodian American.















Chhenglim was a kind and loving person who enjoyed cooking and spending time with her family. Her family and friends favored her cooking and were well fed by her. An avid gardener, she used vegetables she grew for the food she cooked.

Chhenglim loved walking, and would visit her neighbors. Neighbors said she had a friendly nature, and she always smiled and waved She was also a member and supporter of the Watt Munisotaram Cambodian Temple. She spent many afternoons there. The Watt Munisotaram is a Cambodian Buddhist temple in Hampton, Minnesota, about thirty minutes south of the Twin Cities.

Before Chhenglim moved to St. Gertrude's and the Gardens in Shakopee, she lived in Savage with her youngest daughter's family. She was a daughter, mother, grandmother, and great grandmother.

Chhenglim had a history of type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes means the body cannot use insulin properly. Without treatment, type 2 diabetes can cause various health problems, like heart disease, kidney disease, and stroke. For her it caused kidney failure. She spent years on dialysis. Dialysis is often necessary when kidney function declines significantly. Individuals with type 2 diabetes who develop end-stage kidney disease require dialysis or a kidney transplant to survive.

High blood sugar levels over time damaged Chhenglim's tiny blood vessels in the kidneys, impairing filtering ability.

As diabetic nephropathy progresses, the kidneys may become unable to filter waste and excess fluid, leading to kidney failure, which is what happened with Chhenglim.



Chhenglim died at the Benedictine Living Community-Shakopee at St. Gertrude's and the Gardens, located at St. Francis Regional Medical Center (1850 Sarazin Street).

Chhenglim Pay was survived by her three daughters, five sons, twenty-five grandchildren, and eighteen great-grandchildren.

Bibliography

"Cambodia: 1975-1979." *Holocaust Memorial Day Trust.* hmd.org.uk/learn-about-the-holocaust-and-genocides/cambodia/.

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Chhenglim Pay
1940-2025

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