

‘Yu-Gi-Oh!’ creator Kazuki Takahashi dies at 60

Takahashi’s fans are mourning the loss of the legendary figure of the manga industry whose creation grew into a multibillion-dollar global enterprise

By [Michael Cavanaugh](#)

July 7, 2022 at 3:45 p.m. EDT

Fans of the “Yu-Gi-Oh!” manga, anime and trading card phenomenon are mourning the death of its legendary creator, Kazuki Takahashi.

The body of Takahashi, 60, was found Wednesday floating off the southern Japanese coast of Nago in snorkeling gear, according to the nation’s coast guard and reported by local broadcaster NHK.

The creator, also known as Kazuo Takahashi, began working in the manga industry in the ’80s and hit it big the following decade with “Yu-Gi-Oh!” The influential underdog-fantasy manga series written and illustrated by Takahashi features a spiky-haired high school outsider named Yugi who, once he solves an ancient puzzle, becomes a mystically empowered version of himself: Yu-Gi-Oh, the King of Games and champion battler of evildoers.

“Yu-Gi-Oh!” was serialized in Japan’s highly read boys’ magazine, Weekly Shonen Jump, from 1996 to 2004. Takahashi’s creation grew into a multibillion-dollar global enterprise, spawning an anime franchise and video games. In 2011, Guinness World Records recognized “Yu-Gi-Oh!” as the biggest trading-card game ever, with more than 25 billion cards sold, according to the game maker Konami. Takahashi received the Inkpot Award from San Diego’s Comic-Con International in 2015.

Takahashi’s creation was appreciated for its expansive appeal, including the anime, which was introduced in the United States as “Pokémon’s heir apparent,” Daniel Dockery, senior writer for Crunchyroll, told The Washington Post.

“The common theme that connected it to fans was Takahashi’s fascination with how people play, and how we fall in love with our favorite monsters,” said Dockery, author of the forthcoming “Monster Kids: How Pokémon Taught a Generation to Catch Them All.” “The spirit of interactivity, and the way people grow through that, ensures his work’s legacy.”

Takahashi's creatures range from horror to fantasy, yet "there's a common craftsmanship among them — the kind of thing that reveals hidden details over time, as well as the visceral 'Oh my God, that looks so rad,'" Dockery said. "The fact that they would be summoned in a world not too unlike our own makes them even more appealing to the eye. They are truly yours to adore and play with, making you feel powerful and inspired in equal measure."

Takahashi had recently worked on this year's Marvel's "Secret Reverse," a manga graphic novel team-up featuring Spider-Man and Iron Man/Tony Stark, who travels to a Japanese gaming convention.

"As one of his fans, who also had the privilege to work on the English adaptations of his comics, I'm deeply sad to hear that Takahashi died so young," said Jason Thompson, who edited VIZ Media's English manga editions of "Yu-Gi-Oh!," "Yu-Gi-Oh!: Duelist" and "Yu-Gi-Oh!: Millennium World."

"He was a gracious man who loved games and American comics and was a pleasure to work with."

Thompson noted that the original "Yu-Gi-Oh!" graphic novel series was one of his favorite manga, with "an emotional core which gives it a life beyond the cliffhanger battles and bizarre monsters."

On social media, fans shared favorite memories about "Yu-Gi-Oh!" and Takahashi. "Yu-gi-oh! defined my taste in anime when I was a kid, and the game got me out of the house and my own head when I needed it most as an adult," one fan said on Twitter. Another added that the fantasy series had "made a massive impact on global culture. It's an important story about facing evil head on with hope and friendship, and always fighting for a brighter tomorrow."

anya || thank you, kazuki takahashi

@DUELISTKINGDOM · [Follow](#)



i would like to take a moment to share a clip of this video of takahashi showing off his yugioh merch. the fact he loved the series, loved what he created just as much as we do is amazing.

Watch on Twitter

9:57 AM · Jul 7, 2022



[Read the full conversation on Twitter](#)

♡ 11K 💬 Reply 🔗 Copy link

[Read 30 replies](#)

Geoff Thew

@G0ffThew · [Follow](#)



Yu-gi-oh! defined my taste in anime when I was a kid, and the game got me out of the house and my own head when I needed it most as an adult.

Kazuki Takahashi's dark and brilliant imagination did a lot to shape the course of my life, and I'm far from the only one. RIP, Legend.

Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG  @YuGiOh_TCG

4:47 PM · Jul 7, 2022



[Read the full conversation on Twitter](#)

 2.6K  Reply  Copy link

[Read 14 replies](#)



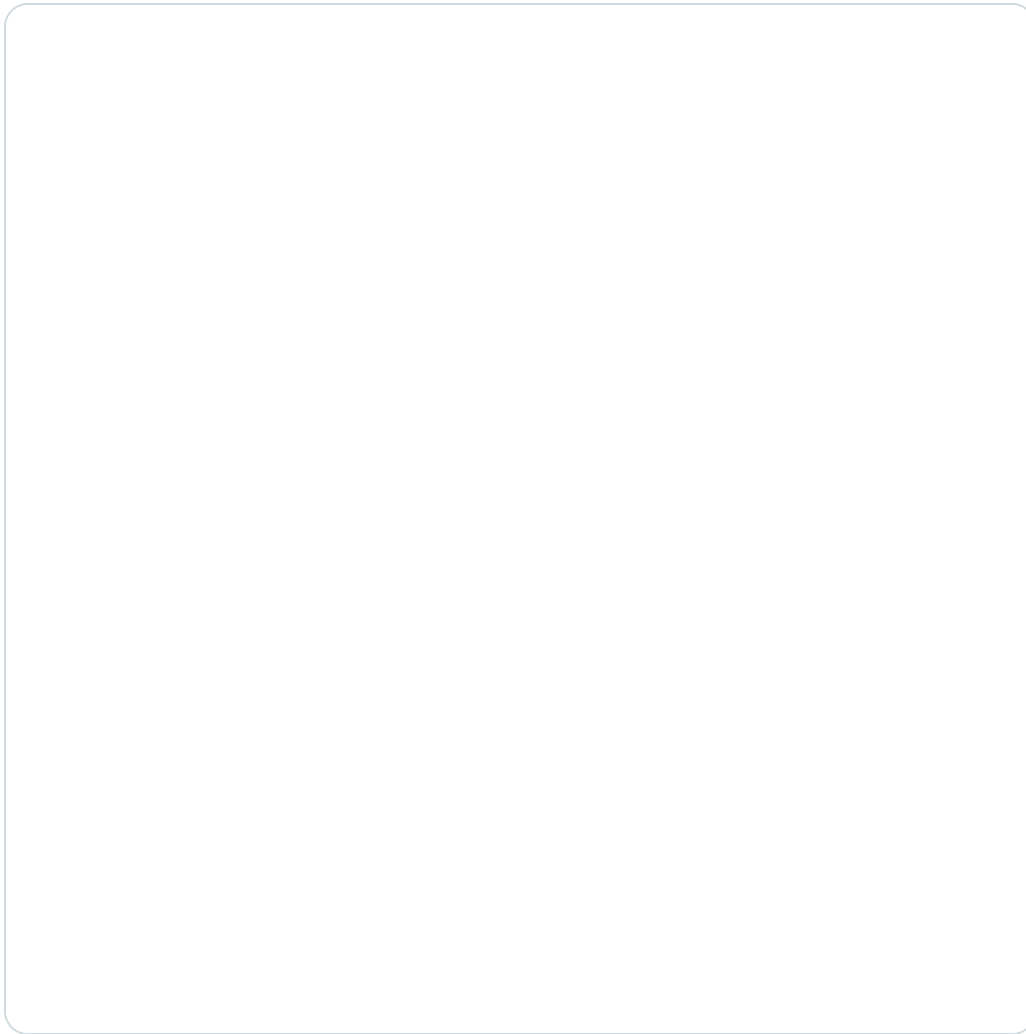
The Millennium Microphone

@millenniummic · [Follow](#)



Yu-Gi-Oh! has touched so many lives and made a massive impact on global culture. It's an important story about facing evil head on with hope and friendship, and always fighting for a brighter tomorrow.

Thank you, Kazuki Takahashi. You were gone too soon, but rest in peace.



3:18 PM · Jul 7, 2022



432



Reply



Copy link

[Read 1 reply](#)