

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

July 12th, 2010
Consulate General of Japan

Japanese Foreign Minister Honors Two Oregonians

The Japanese Government announced on July 12th, 2010 that two Oregonians were awarded with the Foreign Minister's Commendation, an honor awarded once a year to individuals and groups worldwide who make outstanding contributions to the friendly relationship and mutual understanding between Japan and their countries.

One of the awardees is Mr. Henry Sakamoto, 83, of Portland. Mr. Sakamoto has been the President of the Japanese Ancestral Society of Portland until early this year, and is still active in the Japanese American community here as the Vice President of Oregon Nikkei Endowment, where he also served as President for a long time. As a young boy, he experienced internment during World War II. After the war, he devoted himself to the promotion of mutual understanding between Japan and the US. He has also been active in preservation of the history of Japanese immigrants to the US and contributed to the establishment of the Japanese American Historical Plaza along the Willamette River 20 years ago. On July 30, there will be a rededication ceremony of the Plaza. Mr. Sakamoto is also a star singer of the Minidoka Swing Band, named after the internment camp where he spent his boyhood. The award ceremony for Mr. Sakamoto is scheduled to take place on August 6 at the official residence of the Japanese Consul General, Takamichi Okabe.

Another awardee is Mr. Junki Yoshida, 60, Chairman and CEO of Yoshida Group and a well-known businessman and philanthropist. He has contributed greatly by nurturing a good relationship between Oregon and Japan in various capacities, such as advisor to the governor and a Port of Portland commissioner. He now serves as a commissioner of the State's Business Development Commission. Through teaching karate and producing the famed line of Yoshida sauces, he has also promoted Japanese culture and food in the US. He is very active in giving lectures both in Japan and in the US about his life story, inspiring many youths and encouraging mutual understanding between the two countries. The award ceremony for Mr. Yoshida will be held later this year.

The foreign Minister's Commendation for 2010 was awarded to 58 individuals and 39 groups all over the world.