

MESSAGE FROM CONSUL-GENERAL TAKAKO ITO

February 2019

In January, I had the pleasure of hosting special ceremonies for two outstanding Japanese Canadians whose conferment of Japanese Imperial Decorations were announced on Nov. 3 of last year.

On Jan. 11, I presented Mr. Frank Moritsugu with the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays. Mr. Moritsugu is a second-generation Japanese Canadian whose career as a journalist spanned many years during which he worked for such major Canadian news outlets as the *Toronto Star* and the CBC. He also wrote and edited for the *New Canadian*, a newspaper which provided vital information to the Japanese Canadian community during the Second World War, and still contributes in the publishing and writing of the *Nikkei Voice*.



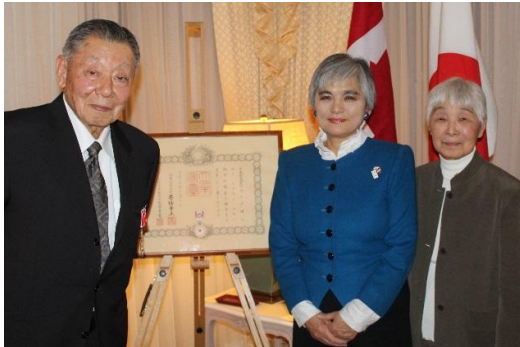
He is also an avid practitioner of judo who was instrumental in the establishment of Judo Canada. In addition to devoting many years to the promotion of judo in this country, he wrote the first major article on judo ever to be published in *Sports Illustrated* magazine. Because of such remarkable achievements, Mr. Moritsugu was made a life-time member of Judo Canada. As well, he was appointed Deputy Commissioner of



the Ontario Pavilion at the Osaka Expo in 1970, where he trained the pavilion's staff in Japanese and in proper Japanese hospitality. He also worked on site, supervising the pavilion himself and contributing towards strengthening exchange between Japan and Ontario. Mr. Moritsugu was also instrumental in unifying the views of the

Japanese Canadians in order to obtain their redress in 1988 for their internment during the Second World War. Even today, he gives presentations on his personal experiences and advocates tirelessly for a society free of discrimination.

On Jan. 31, we held a ceremony to confer the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette, to Mr. Roy Asa, who founded the Canadian Kendo Federation and served as its President for 29 years. Mr. Asa contributed to the spread of kendo in Canada and North America and to the promotion of exchange between Japan and Canada through kendo. In order to increase the popularity of kendo, Mr. Asa not only trained competitors but also provided opportunities to hold workshops for referees and coaches. He also encouraged exchanges with Japanese

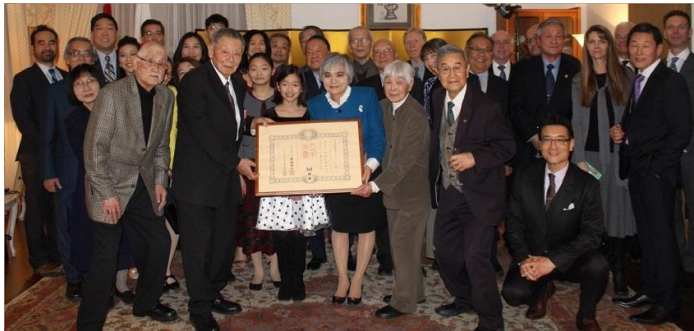


competitors and instructors by inviting them to Canada from Japan. When the World Kendo Championships were held in Canada in 1991, Mr. Asa fulfilled his duties admirably as the President of the Canadian Kendo Federation, successfully hosting this major event. Mr. Asa has also been given an award by

the All Japan Kendo Federation for his meritorious work, and still enjoys practicing kendo to this day with his children and grandchildren.

I myself practiced kendo in Ottawa about 30 years ago, and participated in the provincial kendo tournament in Ontario as well as the national tournament. There is no comparison between then and now in the number of people learning kendo in Canada and their skill level, both of which having risen dramatically. At the JCCC (Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre) Senior Kendo Tournament in November last year, fierce competition took place among participants from across the country. I was deeply moved in seeing how there were teams attending from many university clubs which did not even exist before. Regarding how the culture of kendo, such as respect, diligence and peace of mind, are spreading among Canadians along with the sport, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to Mr. Asa and countless other devoted kendo practitioners for their hard work and dedication.

These conferment ceremonies were attended by the family and friends of the recipients, some of whom traveled a long distance for the occasion to share in the joy and celebration. There is nothing more gratifying for us, the staff of the Consulate-General of Japan, than seeing how our work in arranging the conferment results in such happiness among so many people.



Foreign recipients of Decorations are individuals who have made distinguished contributions in enhancing Japan-Canada relations. They should be over about 50 years old in age and their work with Japan must have lasted more than five years. This work may be in a wide variety of fields – not just limited to government or diplomatic relations. They include academics, education, social contribution, business, economics, culture, sports and more. Indeed, in Ontario, the area of which is 2.8 times that of Japan, there may be many people who have worked for years to promote Japanese culture in Canada and have supported exchange between the two countries without being noticed by our office. If you are aware of such “hidden benefactors”, whether you are recommending someone else or even yourself, please do not hesitate to contact our Consulate-General of Japan.