

MESSAGE FROM CONSUL-GENERAL SASAYAMA TAKUYA

February 2023

Though Groundhog Day was back in early February, the cold climate continues, and I am yearning for spring. However, it seems this year there are more days than usual with mild weather. Skating on the Rideau Canal, a winter tradition in Ottawa where I lived before Toronto, will likely not be possible this winter due to the warm temperatures. Unfortunately the snow quality also seems poor at ski resorts around Toronto.

Emperor's Birthday Reception

On Feb. 23, we were able to hold the National Day reception in-person for the first time in three years at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre. Despite concerns over the weather that day, we were able to celebrate the birthday of His Majesty, the Emperor of Japan, who turned 63 this year, in the company of over 300 guests.

The Hon. Kinga Surma, Ontario's Minister of Infrastructure who visited Japan in January, kindly gave remarks. Minister Surma spoke very positively about her fruitful trip and expressed her hope for future cooperation between Japan and Ontario. She also conveyed a celebratory message from The Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario.

The Hon. Victor Oh, Senator of Canada, also graciously said a few words expressing the importance and value he placed on Japan-Canada relations.

Consul-General Sasayama's own remarks can be read here:
https://www.toronto.ca.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/11_000001_00412.html

Ms. Elizabeth Santos sang the national anthems of Japan and Canada, and guests were treated to sushi, tempura, *tamagoyaki* (Japanese omelettes), grilled fish, and, as a taste from the streets of Japan, *gyudon* (beef bowls). Representatives of Japan's National Tax Agency and Japanese businesses served sake.

I wish to thank everyone who attended despite the inclement weather. I was able to speak to many people face-to-face and this made it a truly meaningful event.



Ms. Santos sings the National Anthem.



Consul-General Sasayama gives remarks.



Minister Surma gives remarks.



Senator Oh gives remarks.

Funeral for Former Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion

The funeral for former Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion, who passed away in January, was held on Feb. 14 – Valentine’s Day which would have been her 102nd birthday. In attendance were: The Right Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada; The Right Hon. Jean Chrétien, former Prime Minister of Canada; The Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario; Her Worship Bonnie Crombie, Mayor of Mississauga; several dignitaries from government and business, as well as people with whom she was associated during her lifetime. A letter of condolence had also been delivered from Kariya, Mississauga’s sole sister city.

The former mayor had earned the nickname “Hurricane Hazel” during her lifetime. She was passionate about raising the status of women, attracting Japanese businesses to her beloved city, and promoting women’s sports. The venue of the funeral was the ice hockey rink she’d built. Those in attendance spoke with humour and affection of her boundless energy.

Successive past Consuls-General of Japan in Toronto had received wisdom from former Mayor McCallion, and I was one of them. I had met her several times, and she also visited my official residence. Despite her age, she had the remarkable ability to see through people as soon as she met them, as well as the wisdom to provide warm and appropriate advice based on this insight. She was truly a wonderful person. I would like once again to express my heartfelt appreciation for all her hard work and my hope that she can now rest in peace.



From the funeral of former Mississauga Mayor McCallion.



One-year Anniversary of the Invasion of Ukraine

It has now been a year since the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a violent act which shook the very foundations of the international order. The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, in partnership with the

Consulate-General of Ukraine in Toronto, curated a photo exhibit in her gallery at Queen's Park entitled "The Year of Resilience" to strengthen Ontario's support for Ukraine. I understand this was to coincide with the resumed session of the provincial legislature. I was deeply moved by the many graphic photos conveying the current reality of war. I would like to present just one of them: a single Sakura tree blooming in front of the wreckage of what was once an apartment building. I saw it as a symbol of hope that is present even in the harshest of realities.



Photo of Sakura in Ukraine.



Mr. Oleksandr Shevchenko, Consul-General of Ukraine in Toronto.



Strengthening support.

Chef SAITO Masaki appointed Japanese Cuisine Goodwill Ambassador

Chef SAITO Masaki of Sushi Masaki Saito has been appointed by Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries as Japanese Cuisine Goodwill Ambassador. Such Goodwill Ambassadors are professionals engaged in Japanese cuisine capable of providing appropriate consultation on the dissemination of Japanese food and dietary culture. Chef Saito is the only chef in Canada to have been awarded two stars from the Michelin Guide. His story was also featured prominently in the Globe and Mail last year. The popularity of Japanese cuisine in Toronto shows no sign of waning. I hope Chef Saito will take full advantage of this opportunity to further his activities.



Consul-General Sasayama with Chef Saito.