

**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**Japanese Government Awards Mrs. Seiko Igarashi**

On July 19, 2012, the **Foreign Minister's Commendation** (*Gaimudaijin Hyosho Award*) was awarded to **Mrs. Seiko Igarashi** by Mr. Koichiro Gamba, Foreign Minister of Japan. Mrs. Igarashi, a resident in Memphis, Tennessee is recognized for her exceptional contributions in promoting mutual understanding between Japan and the United States as well as the development of Japanese language education.

The Foreign Minister's Certificate of Commendation was introduced in 1983 to honor those who have acted with distinction in the promotion of friendly relations with foreign countries and international cooperation. The annual conferment ceremony for the honor coincides with the anniversary of the establishment of Japan's Foreign Ministry, which was founded on July 8, 1869.

Mrs. Igarashi was a Japanese language instructor for over twenty years. Since 1987, her outstanding efforts have laid the solid foundation for Japanese language education in Memphis. This has resulted in the Japanese language being taught in K-12 levels all throughout the city of Memphis. Though she retired in 2010, she continues to volunteer her time and assists in Japanese language courses. Mrs. Igarashi has also been recognized with introducing Japanese culture in collaboration with the University of Memphis, the Japan-America Society of Tennessee West Center, and the Japanese Traders and Manufacturers Association of Memphis.

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