

June 18, 2011

Japan honors Mr. Robert C. Arnett,
Former President of the Japan-America Society of Tennessee

On June 18, the Government of Japan officially announced that **Mr. Robert C. Arnett** will be honored with a prestigious decoration, *the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette*, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to promoting friendly relations between Japan and the United States. The decoration is conferred by **His Majesty the Emperor of Japan**.

The Order of the Rising Sun was established in 1875 as the first national decoration awarded by the Japanese Government. The decoration is bestowed upon individuals who have made significant contributions to positive relations between Japan and other countries. Mr. Arnett is recognized primarily for his abiding dedication to the promotion of strong relations between Japan and the United States.

Involved in the establishment of the Japan-America Society of Tennessee (JAST) in 2000, Mr. Arnett served as a board member and vice president before becoming the organization's second president in 2003. Under his strong leadership over the following seven years, JAST greatly expanded its activities in business, education, and community development. Achievements include the establishment of scholarships; development of interactive media guides introducing Japan to Tennesseans; establishment of the JAST Annual Community Service Awards; expansion of outreach activities in Memphis; and the launches of the successful Nashville Cherry Blossom Festival and Japanese Speech Contest in collaboration with Consulate-General of Japan in Nashville.

Throughout his involvement with JAST, Mr. Arnett also served as the private-sector delegation leader of the Tennessee delegation to the Annual Joint Meetings of the SEUS/Japan Associations. His role was not only to demonstrate that Tennessee welcomes Japanese companies, but also to make himself available for prospective investors.

Mr. Arnett was first exposed to Japan in 1957 while serving as an officer in the U.S. Navy. His ship docked in Kobe for seven days, during which time he was able to tour small Japanese towns by himself. He was immediately impressed with the friendliness of Japanese people despite their language barrier.

His involvement with Japan deepened when he joined for Toshiba America Consumer Products in 1992. He retired as a Senior Vice President and General Manager after nearly 11 years with Toshiba. He was also the only American elected to the Board of Toshiba America Consumer

Products. His executive position led him to serve as one of the key representatives of the Japanese community here in Nashville, assisting community members in adapting to local society through various social events. An active civic leader, Mr. Arnett has served on the Nashville Chapter American Red Cross Board, Nashville Symphony Board, the Vanderbilt University Heart Institute Advisory Board, and others.

(End)