

## **His Majesty, Emperor Akihito's 82<sup>nd</sup> Birthday Reception a Success in Spite of Rain**



**Consul General Okaniwa and Mr. William Scott Wilson**



**Consul General Okaniwa and Commissioner Ken Russell of the City of Miami**



**Consul General Okaniwa and Mayor Boria of the City of Doral**

On the afternoon of Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015, the Consulate General of Japan in Miami hosted a reception in honor of the birthday of His Majesty, the Emperor of Japan, who turns 82 this month. Despite the inclement weather punctuated by heavy rainfall, over 100 guests joined the celebration that was held under tents at the Official Residence of the Consul General. Among the many special guests attending were Doral City Mayor Luigi Boria and Miami City Commissioner Ken Russell.

Following a live performance of the Japanese and U.S. national anthems by jazz singer Nanami Morikawa, Consul General Okaniwa took the podium. Before commencing with his speech, he addressed the latest terrorist attacks that occurred in San Bernardino on December 2nd with a solemn vow “to work with the US and others to fight terrorism.” In his remarks on his Majesty, the Emperor’s birthday, Consul General Okaniwa mentioned the trip made by the Emperor and the Empress to Palau on this 70th year since the end of World War II. He proceeded by praising the fine example of reconciliation set by U.S.-Japan relations in those 70 years, and spoke about the Florida-Japan connections including Japanese courses offered in Florida schools, the many Japanese companies operating locally, the sister regional government relationships, the Morkami Museum and Japanese Gardens in Delray Beach, and the participants of the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program from Florida.

Taking advantage of this special day, Consul General Okaniwa conferred the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette upon translator and author William Scott Wilson. Mr. Wilson, who is considered one of the world’s foremost translators of classical Japanese literature, cited his Kayak trip along the coast of Japan that first sparked his interest in the country many years ago, and thanked Consulate General of Japan for bestowing him this honor.

The ceremony closed with a toast led by Mayor Boria of the City of Doral. With congratulations to the Consulate-General of Japan and His Majesty the Emperor on this auspicious day, he presented Consul General Okaniwa with a medal on behalf of the City of Doral. Amongst the crowd huddled under the tarps, there were warm greetings, laughter, and an air of celebration as guests enjoyed food and drinks.

At the Consulate-General of Japan in Miami, we are thankful to everyone who braved the downpour and shared in this special day with us!