

Remarks by Eiichi Kawahara CG of Japan in Miami
At the farewell reception on July 16, 2013
At official residence



First of all, I would like to acknowledge those friends coming from across the State, in particular, Hon. Gray Swoope, Secretary of Commerce & President of Enterprise Florida, Honda sensei from Pensacola, Professor Watt from UF in Gainesville, Prof. Tad Hara from UCF in Orlando, Navy Captain Yoshino from CentCom, Nozu sensei and Takuya Yamada from Tampa. I also received many messages and good wishes from friends throughout Florida. I do not have time here to mention all those kind people, but I am grateful for their wonderful friendship extended to our consulate and me on many occasions.

Ladies and gentleman,

It is of great significance for me to speak with you tonight of the current relations between Florida and Japan. I have been here for two and half years. I am grateful for your support and cooperation on many occasions. You are the most wonderful people to promote our relations, now and in the future. I visited many Japanese affiliated companies throughout the state. They are well established, well managed and welcomed by the communities. I found also quite a number of Florida based companies that had been very active and had been well received by Japanese consumers and market.

In this connection, I would like to mention the important roles played by Japan-US SEUS Florida Chapter. One good example is their hosting of the Florida-Japan Summit every year with panels on business, education and cultural relations. This summit takes place at different cities every year. I enjoyed very much the panel discussions of the 10th Summit in Tampa last June 7, which had strong support from USF and local community. I thank all those people who engage in those exchanges of information with great added value. Next year the summit will take place at Morikami.

I found that more than half of state universities in Florida offer Japanese related courses, and that the number of students at these universities studying Japanese related subject has been steadily increasing.

The number of young generation and students dispatched to Japan has also been on the rise thanks to exchange projects such as JET, Kizuna, and Kakehashi (Bridge for the future).

The sister city exchanges have also been very active in several cities with their counterparts cities, which includes St. Petersburg, Clearwater, Orlando, Delray Beach, Pensacola, and Miami. Every year students and teachers exchange programs and/or visits by mayors and senior staff of school boards members take place.

I should refer to the very important roles played by the Morikami Board of Trustees. As you know, the Morikami has developed as the most authentic Japanese gardens and Museum. I am a great admirer of the Morikami, and every time I visit it, I am fascinated by its immense beauty and richness. The place and people working there eloquently speaks about Japanese culture and tradition. I do not know any other Japanese museum and garden in the US of this magnitude as public park.

I therefore would like to express my profound appreciation to the Board Members for their excellent management and planning for more than 35 years . At Morikami , we now have plan to conduct the Modern Japanese art crafts exhibition from October this year, which represents 100 masterpieces produced by eminent Japanese craftsmen.

I must also thank UWF, City of Pensacola, and Gero City for their wonderful project in March of last year to celebrate in Florida the first centenary of Sakura Gift from Japan to the US. To commemorate this gift and symbol of growing friendship, one hundred young cherry trees were planted in the grounds of UWF. My wife and I wish to one day in the future visit the campus of UWF and enjoy full blossoming of Sakura in spring time.

Finally, I would like to express deep appreciation for excellent support by the Office of Foreign Mission here. Thanks to your help, we have a wonderful life here.

Thank you all for attending my reception. Thank you very much for your kindness and friendship. And I hope to see you again.