

Contributions by Mrs. Kathleen Kimura, MBE

1. Career Overview

Mrs. Kathleen Kimura, MBE has played a crucial role in fostering understanding of Japan for over 30 years through her work with the Japan Society of Northern California, where she has previously served as Chair. Mrs. Kimura currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors, and has held this position for 25 years.

Additionally, she is greatly devoted to sister city activities, as shown through her accomplishments as the Co-Chair of the San Francisco-Osaka Sister City Association. She also helped bring together the City of Millbrae, where she resides, with Hanyu City, Japan, as friendship cities. Mrs. Kimura also contributed greatly to establishing the annual Millbrae Japanese Culture Festival, and continues to seek other ways to spark further interest in Japanese language and culture, as well as promote an understanding of Japan amongst Bay Area residents.

2. Japan-Related Accomplishments

a. Member (and former Chair) of the Board of Directors, Japan Society of Northern California (JSNC)

Mrs. Kimura has served as a member of the JSNC Board of Directors since 1989. Additionally, she acted as interim Chair and then Chair from 1994 to 1997.

Most notably, Mrs. Kimura is credited with helping the JSNC expand by searching for new ways to collaborate with local startups, helping broaden the Society's involvement beyond the Japanese community to include a wider circle of organizations and institutions. She also highlighted the importance of promoting non-Japanese Bay Area residents' understanding of Japanese culture, and promoted regular Japanese language courses and cultural workshops. Even after Mrs. Kimura retired as Chair, the Society has continued this mission, and as a result has contributed greatly to fostering understanding of Japan among the community and local media.

After retiring from her position as Chair, Mrs. Kimura has continued to make major contributions in promoting understanding of Japanese culture through her active role in community events and activities. She served as a member of the Sakura Matsuri Board of Directors, and serves as one of the Founders and Chair of the Millbrae Japanese Culture Festival Committee.

b. Involvement in Sister City and Other Community Organizations

Since 1997, Mrs. Kimura has been a Co-Chair of the Executive Committee of the San Francisco-Osaka Sister City Association. Through the Association's extended stay program for high-achieving students, Mrs. Kimura has made significant contributions to cultivating the next generation of U.S.-Japan relations.

Additionally, Mrs. Kimura has served as a member of the Millbrae Sister Cities Commission since 2013, and has helped bring Millbrae together with Hanyu City as friendship cities (the 100th sister/friendship city relationship between California and Japan).

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