



EXCHANGES

Japanese Sister City
Committee

Spring 2007

Garden Rededication

Memorial Plaque Unveiled Rededicating the Japanese Garden to the Memory of Mayors Reiji Kumaki and Richard King

On January 20, 2007, a special rededication ceremony was held at the City Japanese Garden. It was to officially rename the former Friendship Garden in memory of former Mayor Reiji Kumaki and to honor the two public servants who acted to establish the very special sister city relationship that exists between Higashimurayama City and Independence. At this special event, a new memorial marker was unveiled. The new plaque was a gift to the City by Mr. and Mrs. Richard King. Dick was Mayor at the time of establishing this association in 1978. He passed away last August. Deedee King, his widow, commemorated the event with the following remarks.



Mrs. Richard King delivers dedicatory remarks.

“Thank you all for being here today and allowing me a moment to say a few words. You should be hearing this from Dick himself. He would surely be more eloquent; but, I know I speak for him that this is a very special occasion—one of the few things left unfinished when he died.

It was on a day much like this—a record breaking cold January day almost thirty years ago—when the Sister City relationship between Independence and Higashimurayama became official.

The delegation from Japan included Mayor Reiji Kumaki, the Superintendent of Schools and three other men. Accomplishing this was an awesome feat for both cities. It required Vision Persistence and Will. Fortunately, the stars were aligned and Lana White provided the Vision,. Carolyn Weeks provided the Persistence, and Dick provided the Will. After months of gently suggesting that Independence should respond favorable to the invitation by Higashimurayama, Lana and Carolyn were able to persuade Dick that it was a great idea.

Mayor Kumaki was equipped with all three: Vision, Persistence and Will. Because of his vision, Higashimurayama succeeded in passing by a city-wide referendum to approve this paring. Imagine what it must have been like to convince people that they could become family with the hometown of President Harry Truman!

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Mrs. Richard King's Dedicatory Remarks Continued

This might give you a glimpse of man who is so humored and respected at home. You only have to be in his presence for a moment, even if neither of you could speak the other's language, to know what a remarkable human being he is. His smile is radiant, his quiet authority is awesome, and his gentle warmth is always inviting.

When we last visited Japan in 2004, Dick came to believe that Mr. Kumaki should have permanent recognition in Independence and wanted to have something named for him. He and Larry Blick



Mayor Don Reimal Speaks

and others wanted to recognize the legacy of Mr. Kumaki by naming this garden, planned and created for us by Higashimurayama, in his honor. Today we are here to celebrate the extraordinary relationship between two similar

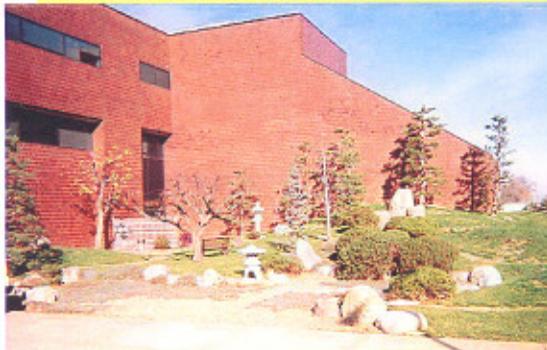
and very different cities: one is a suburb of Kansas City, the other in the outskirts of Tokyo. We are unique in the Sister-

hood we have forged. Most Sister Cities only focus on economic development, goods and services, and business relationships.

But, our Sister City and we have become family. With high school student exchanges, home stays, the affection shared by parents and students at Glendale Elementary School and Megurita School, the letters and emails that are frequently sent, the tears shed at our arrivals and partings - all signify the depth of our caring and the strength of our connection.

Early on, several people helped to create this amazing Sisterhood; over the years many, many people have held hands and helped us forge a virtual bridge across half a continent and a vast ocean. It is so appropriate to honor the Vision, Persistence and Will of one of the founders Mayor Reiji Kumaki, with this eloquent stone engraved in two languages symbolizing the beauty and love we share with our extended family in Higashimurayama."

Deedee King



The Garden after trimming by Koji Morimoto

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Anniversary Celebration

Following the Rededication Ceremony, the annual Anniversary Celebration was held at the Truman Memorial Building.



Bill Shaw and Bill Anderson Retire

After serving over 25 years as committee members, Bill Shaw and Bill Anderson retired. A special reception was held in their honor at the home of Lyle and Carolyn Weeks. Special citations were presented to them in honor of their many years of dedicated service to our sister city relationship. Carolyn, Lana White, Peggy Hausheer and Deedee King represented the original founding group of pioneers who forged this lasting and remarkable relationship. Rosie Smith prepared a wonderful table of refreshments. Many past and present members and friends attended, sharing memories and stories of past events and visits.



Photos from Higashimurayama's Student Visit



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<http://www.ci.independence.mo.us/sistercity/>

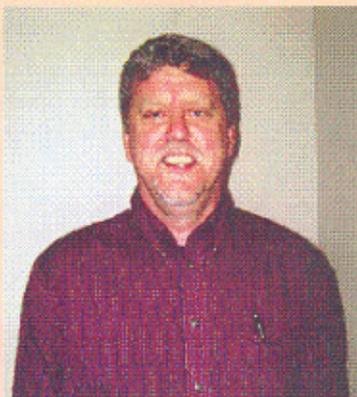
E-mail us at: visitjapan@fcmail.com

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2007 Student Ambassadors

Student Ambassadors traveling to
Higashimurayama in June are:



Escort John Seeley

Mandy Brixey
Geoff Ekey
Leanne McLaughlin
Audrey Moxley
Susan Peoples
Jared Seeley
Joshua Seeley
Rachel Stagg
Anthony Williams

& Lori too!

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