

Kobe College Corporation Japan Education Exchange

Newsletter



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Celebrating the 150th Anniversary of Kobe College (Jogakuin)

Yuki Ohigashi, KCC-JEE President

On October 12, the Founding Day of the school, Kobe College (KC) held its 150th anniversary celebration. A group from KCC-JEE took part in the celebration. Our group consisted of:



Relatives of Ms. Julia Dudley (a co-founder of KC)

Julia Vassar Samson and John Samson, Patti and Craig Holroyd, Amy Duke

Relatives of Dr. Charlotte DeForest (the 5th Chancellor of KC, and the visionary for the foundation of KCC)

Charlotte Alexandre, Doug Alexandre

Former and current KCC-JEE board members

Ed and Terri Grant (former president of KCC-JEE and his wife, Terri),
Tami Mizuno, Yuki Ohigashi

What a group to represent KCC-JEE for this special occasion!

We got together at Nishinomiya-Kitaguchi Station. With the help of some KC alumni, we were transported to the campus through the main gate—which was a special arrangement for us, for the gate was not open to other vehicles. There, a team of KC alumni awaited us with a delightful lunch, and we were able to rest a little bit. Before the ceremony, we had a chance to see Julia Dudley's desk and some materials of Charlotte DeForest's at the library, which was another special arrangement for our group. After taking group photos with KC leadership, we were seated in the Emily White Smith Memorial Auditorium. The ceremony consisted of



three commemorative parts (a service, a concert by KC music students, and a lecture by Tatsuru Uchida, Professor Emeritus). After the ceremony, the Megumi-kai Alumni Association hosted a reception for us. We even got to sing "I Love to Tell the Story," alongside the organ that belonged to Charlotte DeForest.

It was a full day of meeting and reconnecting with so many people at KC. I hope you will enjoy reading what this day meant for other members of the group. We thank KC for inviting us to share in this celebration, and Eriko Hashimoto and her friends for arranging our rides and preparing a thoughtful lunch gathering for us, and Megumi-kai Alumni Association for a warm reception for us. We also thank the KC alumni who escorted some of us from the hotels to the KC campus, and Keiko Nishimoto for being our interpreter during the ceremony.

...Stories from the group continue on page 3

150th

2026 High School Essay Contest

By Angie Gaspar

The High School Essay Contest Committee consists of David Janes, Pat Gottschalk, and Angie Gaspar. This year, we received 40 submissions from 12 states. For this year's prompt, suggested by board member Elizabeth Hartung-Cole, students were asked to select an artifact or object from Japan that sparked their curiosity and, in 300-500 words, describe why that object intrigued them, along with information about the object's background.



Atticus Lee, a sophomore from Washington state, is this year's winner. His essay was about the Hyoma Doll, a collectible plushie created by the avant-garde fashion brand 20471120 in the 90's that connects to Japanese youth culture. In his spare time, Atticus loves

fashion, hip-hop, and other musical genres, bodybuilding, and cooking. We look forward to hearing about his adventure! This summer, Atticus will attend the Genki Japanese and Culture School in Kyoto, Japan, where he will spend four weeks studying Japanese and staying with a homestay family. This is an excellent opportunity for students not only to improve their Japanese language skills and gain independence as they navigate a foreign country, but also to meet students from all over the world who attend the school and make many cross-cultural friendships.

Many thanks to our judges this year: Jeanne Sokolowski, former chair of the Essay Contest for many years, David Janes, Cindi Sturtz-Sreetharan, Roberta Wollons, and also to Kanae Takenaka for her stellar work coordinating the many details of the contest.

We have some tragic news to share. High School Essay Contest committee member, Brant Dykehouse, tragically passed away at his home in December. Although he was only on the committee for a short time, he brought many fresh ideas and enthusiasm. He also worked for KCC-JEE in the 1990's as an office administrator. We are all grateful to have known this wonderful man and to have had the opportunity to work with him. He will be greatly missed.

To read the winning essay and learn about the 2027 contest, which will be posted in October 2026, please check our website at <https://www.kccjee.org/highschool-essay-contest> We will have some exciting news to post then!

Gottschalk Teacher

By Elizabeth Hartung-Cole



This photo is from the 1981 S1 Farewell Party. I treasure this memory and all the KCHS students I had the

honor to teach for four wonderful years.

Gottschalk teachers continue to be a meaningful part of Kobe College. We are happy to welcome Lisa Trunk as a new member of the Gottschalk Teacher Recruitment Committee. Lisa taught at Kobe College High School from 1993 to 1996 as a missionary teacher. We are grateful to have her support.

Read her article for the partnership appreciation in MN on page 11.

Look forward to updates for the Graduate Fellowship and the Bryant Drake Professor program in the fall newsletter!

It all started with a desk....

Julia Vassar Samson, Patti Holroyd, Amy Duke

When my grandmother gave me an antique desk that belonged to her Great-Aunt Julia and asked me to find her story, I never imagined it would bring me and my family to an elite women's school and college in Japan. All my grandmother knew of Julia Dudley was that she was a missionary in Japan and co-founded a school for girls. Imagine the surprise when I googled, "Julia Dudley Japan College," and not only found Kobe College but also a photo of Julia Dudley and her story. The amazing alumni and KCC-JEE organization further helped me to learn more about her. I was also able to reconnect the descendants of Julia Dudley's siblings, Edward and Mary. Learning about Julia Dudley's life and journey to Japan in 1873 as a missionary and her help in starting Kobe College told me a lot about who she was and the resilience she embodied. With the help of Go and Kay Sigiura and countless others, the old desk and other artifacts were returned to Kobe College to be cherished for generations to come.



Julia Dudley in the middle



My family and I were invited to attend the 150th Anniversary Celebration by Yuki Ohigashi. With a lot of help and planning, we made our first trip to Japan. The hospitality shown to us and being able to see the beautiful campus and the many places connected to Julia Dudley was the highlight of our trip. We were so happy to see the desk and artifacts displayed so beautifully in the college library. We were also able to bring Julia Dudley's tea set to join her desk.



A special thank you to Yasuyo Matsumoto and Liulan Wang-Kanda for showing us the historical sites in the city of Kobe and making sure we did not get lost. Everyone we met was so warm and generous; we truly appreciated the many gestures. The Club Fantasy performance showcasing the musical talent of Kobe College graduates was a highlight as well. Experiencing and learning about the college and strong alumni community first-hand left a lasting impression. Female education has always been important in our family, but to see the legacy left by our ancestor and the tenacious spirit of the graduates will always be remembered.



The remainder of our visit we learned about Japan's history and culture through tours of historic temples and ornate gardens in Kyoto and Nara with the help of a local guide. We are grateful to have a small connection to Kobe College and will never forget our time in Japan. We hope the college will continue to thrive and provide a safe haven for young women with a thirst for knowledge for another 150 years and then some.

Kobe College 150th Anniversary Celebration

By Terri & Edward Grant



The trip of a lifetime. We felt honored by the extraordinary kindness and generosity of Kobe College, and the many graduates and others affiliated with it, during the beautiful 150th anniversary celebration.

On October 8, we traveled to Osaka where we were welcomed by Yuriko Kurose Takenaka and her sister

Kikuko, both Kobe College alumni, our hosts for our stay. We visited the original site of Kobe College, followed by dinner with Keiko Harada, former KC Trustee.



The next day, we toured the beautiful Kobe College campus. We felt like valued guests, meeting with President Nakano and Professor Tateishi, Board Chair, followed by lunch with Chancellor Ii in his office. That evening, we enjoyed dinner with former Chancellor Matsuzawa.



On October 12, we were part of the KCC-JEE delegation which included President Ohigashi and VP Tami Mizuno, along with five relatives of Julia Dudley and two of Charlotte DeForest. The celebration was in three parts: first the ceremony with speeches (including an excellent one by President Ohigashi in English) scripture and prayer, followed by a commemorative concert (including an arrangement by Hikaru Sasa, HG Suehiro scholarship recipient), followed by a

commemorative lecture by Professor Emeritus Tatsuru Uchida. Speeches in Japanese were simultaneously translated. All parts were beautifully done. All parts were moving. It was a worthy 150th anniversary celebration.

Following the celebration, the KCC-JEE delegation joined the Megumi-Kai reception, hosted by Chair Hiroko Yonezu, with Chancellors Dr. Mori and Dr. Ii, Hikaru Sasa and many others. It was delightful.

It is difficult to fully convey the wonderful emotions of that day and that trip. We remain very moved to this day and deeply grateful to so many connected to Kobe College, particularly to our host Yuriko Takenaka.



Your Support Makes a Difference!

By donating today, you are helping to empower students, teachers, and scholars in the U.S. and Japan, including those at Kobe College. You can make your gift online from [here](#) or by sending a check to the KCC-JEE office.

Kobe College 150th Anniversary

By Charlotte and Doug Alexandre

Kobe College holds a special place in our family history. Charlotte B. DeForest—my great-great-aunt and the namesake of my mother, Charlotte L. Alexandre (née Pettus)—served as President of Kobe College from 1917 to 1940.

In early 2025, my aunt Betsy Losa (née Pettus) emailed our family to ask if anyone would be interested in traveling to Japan to participate in Kobe College's 150th anniversary celebration. I immediately responded—I had long wanted to visit Japan. My mother soon heard about the plans and eagerly decided to join as well. From there, preparations for the trip began in earnest.

We arrived in Tokyo on October 3. After spending a few days sightseeing there, we traveled to Kawaguchiko, where we were fortunate to enjoy views of Mount Fuji. We then made our way to Osaka, where we stayed during the anniversary events.

On the morning of the celebration, we were met at our hotel by gracious hosts, who escorted us on the train journey to Kobe College's beautiful campus in Kobe. Upon arrival, we were welcomed to lunch with faculty members and fellow guests, including relatives of Julia Dudley.

After lunch and photographs, we attended the anniversary ceremony in the auditorium—and what a beautiful ceremony it was. We heard inspiring speeches from the President, the Dean, and even Japan's Prime Minister, followed by a remarkable musical performance by the Kobe College orchestra. Afterwards, we joined a tea gathering where alumnae and faculty shared more about the college's history. One especially meaningful moment was going upstairs to sing hymns accompanied by Charlotte DeForest's organ—a deeply moving experience.

The evening concluded with a wonderful dinner at a nearby restaurant, shared with fellow guests from the United States and members of the college faculty.



We returned to campus the following day for a more personal visit, including a meeting with the President. After lunch with the President and Dean, my mother presented a Kutani vase that had once belonged to Charlotte DeForest. The vase had been given to her by a former student after World War II. The student had reached out to Charlotte for help, and Charlotte sent clothing in response. In gratitude, the student sent the vase—an object she had protected during the war by burying it to keep it safe from bombing.



We spent our final hour touring the campus, visiting the former residence of President DeForest, admiring the architecture, and learning more about the college's history and our family's connection to it. My mother was also able to share personal memories of her aunt with many of the guests, which made the experience even more meaningful.



Dr. Hatanaka
Dr. DeForest
(1950)

Kobe College at 150: Carrying the Legacy Forward

By Tami Mizuno

I had the pleasure of attending the 150th anniversary celebration of Kobe College this past October. It was a truly special occasion, bringing together alumnae, faculty, and friends, and offering a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the College's long and remarkable history.

During the celebration, I had the privilege of speaking with a descendant of Julia Dudley, one of the missionaries who played a central role in the founding of Kobe College. In fact, she, same name as Julia, shared that Dudley is her great-aunt, which made the connection feel even more personal. Through our conversation, I learned about Dudley's later years, which she spent in La Jolla, California. I am also grateful to Saeki-san from the Kobe College Archives for generously sharing valuable historical insights, which further enriched my understanding.

These encounters made the history feel much closer and more alive. What had once seemed distant became something I could relate to in a very immediate way.

Recently, while walking in La Jolla with a friend/KC Alumna visiting from Tokyo, we visited the Congregational Church of La Jolla, a church that Julia Dudley is said to have attended in her later years. Although we could not go inside at the time, we are planning to return soon to attend a Sunday service.



Moments like these remind me that the legacy of Kobe College continues to live on—not only within the institution itself, but also across time and place in unexpected ways. As we celebrate this important milestone, I feel a renewed sense of responsibility to carry this legacy forward, so that its values may continue to inspire future generations.

With Special thanks to KC Megumi-kai and all KC members,
Tami K Mizuno

New Leadership at Kobe College

Please join us in welcoming the following new leadership at Kobe College:

Chairperson of Board of Trustees: Dr. Tatsuru Uchida

Chancellor: Dr. Keiichi Nakano

Principal of Kobe College Junior/Senior High School:

Dr. Mitsuho Okado



We look forward to working with them.

My Heart-Felt Trip to Visit KCHS With My 15-Year-Old Granddaughter Julia

By Pat Gottschalk

KCHS English teacher 1959-1962, KCC Former Board Member and President



With Ms. Miki Kawamura

November 19, we boarded our Delta flight to Osaka from Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport. We had chosen to go over Julia's Thanksgiving school break because the Kansai weather would be cool and KCHS was in session and could host Julia as a student for 4 days.

It was quite a thrill for me to be taking Julia (with 3 years of Japanese language study) to introduce her to Japan. Now at age 88, I wasn't sure that could ever happen. But here we were — on board the plane and gently moving toward Osaka.

Of course, I had spent time thinking about this journey — and planning our personal schedules.

Visiting both Japan and Kobe College again made my heart sing. It was deeply heartwarming to visit over 25 friends in Japan and experience a sweet powerful reminder of how much my life has been enriched by my long years of association with KC and its wide community. Being able to introduce Julia, was deeply satisfying. I was suddenly at KC able to share one of the deepest treasured relationships in my life with Julia.

The biggest impact on me of being on the KC campus was being taken back to when I was a very green 22-year-old and plopped down to teach at KCHS.

In my chapel talk at KCHS on November 28, I showed some 1960s photos of the KC campus and of the students then. You can view the photos at <https://tinyurl.com/Pat1962photos>.

My focus was on encouraging these present-day KCHS students to dream about their own future opportunities and to seize those opportunities with gusto.

What a treasure to savor this emotional review. It was a wonderful personal experience to be at Kobe Jogakuin again in 2025.

My heart sang with joy. I am deeply honored and grateful.



With Ms. Yuko Iwatsu
At Hiroshima Peace Park

Trip to Japan

By Julia Gottschalk

It was such an amazing experience to visit Japan for the first time. I really enjoyed specific things about Japan that differed from America, but I think that it was mostly the general vibe that made me enjoy my stay so much. There is a quiet, almost contemplative air to every street and train car. I would absolutely love to return and be able to experience that again.



I really enjoyed attending Kobe Jogakuin for a week, and I thought it was very different from my school in Minneapolis. The things that surprised me the most were the longer breaks in between classes, how we stayed in the same place while many teachers came to us (instead of the other way around), and how we were able to eat between classes at any point throughout the day. It felt like the faculty trusted the students to behave themselves and display integrity, which was an attitude that is not present in most American schools. What's more, with all this flexibility the students were given, everything was clean and orderly! It was very freeing and empowering to experience. I suppose it is an example of how Japan's culture includes more personal responsibility while also creating a more comfortable environment for people to live in.

What's more, everyone there was so kind to me. They found lots of ways to make sure I was cared for and included. My host family was very welcoming. I enjoyed meeting their two cats, and they showed me around lots of cool places. We had many conversations about linguistic details as well as cultural things to look out for. I feel very lucky that I ended up staying where I did.

I also adored the popularity of trains over cars. It was a cheaper, more compact, and more environmentally friendly means of transportation. I think that big cities around the world could certainly learn a thing or two. Not to mention that they are super fun to ride. I tried to learn to balance without holding on to anything, but it turned out to be more difficult than I had anticipated. That was something I'd never gotten the opportunity to try in Minneapolis. At home, cars are pretty much a necessity. The public buses are lacking at best, and there are really no other reliable and efficient ways to get around. If I ever live in Japan, I hope I can ride the trains every day. Maybe I will finally figure out how to navigate the train stations (which I find super confusing).

Finally, I absolutely loved the food. I had been told that food in Japan was much better than food in America, but I was not prepared for the insane extent to which that was true. It was hard to go back to eating freezer-burned, stale, and ultra processed foods when I returned to America. Even the vending machines in Japan were filled with fresh, delicious sandwiches. I really miss the vending machines.



Overall, I found that Japan was a much more serene, deliberate, and well-designed place. I really enjoyed being a part of that for a bit. I really hope that I can go back, and I have gained new motivation to work hard at my Japanese language studies.

Congratulations!

2025 - 2026 Hannah Gulick Suehiro Scholarship



Ms. Ose (L)
Ms. Nakamura (R)

It is with great pleasure that we announce this year's winner of the Hannah Gulick Suehiro Undergraduate/Graduate School Scholarship, which is awarded each year to a talented Kobe College music student. Ms. Koharu Nakamura, flute major, and Ms. Wakana Ose, violin major, are the winners for the undergraduate scholarship. Ms. Rina Hirano, piano major in the Graduate School of Music, is the graduate winner. We are so proud of their accomplishments and wish them a very successful career in music. Congratulations to all!



Ms. Hirano with Dr. Li

Thank You, Volunteers!

We would like to thank the following individuals for volunteering their time and talents for KCC-JEE from April 2025 to March 2026 on our committees:

Verenice Alfaro Espinosa (Essay Contest)

Silvia Magana (Essay Contest)

Brant Dykehouse (Brant Drake Guest Professor, Essay Contest)

Yasuko Sanborn (Archive/Documents)

Natsuko Furuya (Brant Drake Guest Professor)

Hina Takenaka (Publications/Website)

Linda Gosselin (Gottschalk Teacher Recruitment)

Dave Therkelsen (Robert Mason Memorial Fund)

Pat Gottschalk (Essay Contest)

Alice Valentine (Graduate Fellowship)

Ed Grant (Robert Mason Memorial Fund)

Sarah Vrtiska (Gottschalk Teacher Recruitment, Publications/Website)

Marnie Jorenby (Robert Mason Memorial Fund)

Fumiyo Young (Archive/Documents)

Marjorie Kinsey (Brant Drake Guest Professor, Archives/Documents)

John Zeugner (Graduate Fellowship)

If you would like to volunteer for KCC-JEE, please contact [our office!](#)

KCC-JEE Exchange Programs in Minnesota

By Sue Doffing



The first student the Doffing hosted in 1983, who visited MN to see them in 2000.

Starting in 1983 with Kobe College High School students coming to Chicago for an opportunity to learn more about American culture and practice their English language skills, several students continued on to the Twin Cities of Minnesota as part of a contingency and as an opportunity for the program to flourish as the then KCC Board was aging and unable to host so many students.

With the overwhelming success in Minnesota, the Board of Kobe College Corporation and the participants in Minnesota requested an opportunity to take on the program full scale. In 1984, a couple of families and participants from the initial Minnesota hosting group traveled to Japan as a thank you from the school and experienced the Japanese school, families and culture. The program was then solidified as a Minnesota program by the Board of KCC.

In 1985, 40 Kobe College High School students and 40 Minnesota families took part in the exchange. The exchange program was repeated every other year for the Japanese and Minnesota students and family members for the next 23 years. This initiated a strong desire within the Minnesota school district, particularly at Henry Sibley High School in Mendota Heights, to further develop extensions of the exchange. Hence, a yearlong exchange program for high school students was developed, and a graduate of Kobe College with a teaching degree was brought into the school district as a teacher of Japanese language and culture.



Students with the hosts in 1990

The entire set of programs have changed the lives and families of thousands by allowing them to participate in international events that promote the understanding of different cultures. Many families and students have maintained lasting communication and/or hosted previous connections in the years since. Graduations, weddings, children and grandchildren have and will continue to have the wonderful relationships developed during and by the KCC-JEE programs.

This was formally recognized by the current Board of Kobe College Corporation in September 2025 by holding their Board meeting in Minnesota. They voted several previous board members and participants in the programs to join others with the prestigious title of "Honorary Board Member". A reception was also held to recognize families that had been hosts over the years and to meet the current Board of KCC-JEE.

Thank you to KCC-JEE for the confidence and support during the years of these programs. It changed the lives of students, families, schools, and communities by promoting international understanding.

Sue Doffing, Honorary Board Member

KCC-JEE MN Partner Appreciation

By Lisa Trunk

What a pleasure it was to attend the KCC-JEE appreciation reception held in Minnesota this past September. It was my great fortune to teach at Kobe College High School from March 1993 to March 1996 as a missionary teacher, the position later referred to as a Gottschalk Teacher of English. Thirty-three years ago, I returned from Japan, forever grateful for the relationships and experiences of my tenure.

At the partner appreciation event, I was graciously welcomed like an old friend and quickly found comradery within the reception hall. Teachers always have stories to share, fond memories of students and moments of entanglement to quietly laugh about. This reunion however offered something more: *natsukashii*, that joyous and sometimes bittersweet feeling of happy memories.

As we shared our fond recollections, a rich appreciation for KCC emerged. Truly *natsukashii*, that deep gratitude for the memory without sadness for the passing of time. How wonderful to be part of this unique fraternity. Thank you to the committee for arranging for this social time of reconnection.



1993: Missionary teachers
Lisa (Schiller) Trunk (far right)



My first Tanabata
celebration with East
Dorm students



1993: High School
English Office




1993: English Department
Christmas party at
Kenwood House.
Lisa Trunk (Front row left)

Save the Date!



Partner Appreciation Reception

 September 19, 2026 (Sat)


 3:00PM

 DoubleTree by
Hilton San Francisco Airport
sanfranciscoairport.doubletree.com

We would love to see you in person to thank you for your involvement. We might have some representatives from Kobe College join us in person!

2026 Annual Membership Meeting

 September 25, 2026 (CT)
September 26, 2026 (JPT)

 7:00PM - 9:00PM (CT)
9:00AM - 11:00AM (JPT)

 Zoom

Please join us to learn more about our activities for FY2026 (April 2025 to March 2026) and to find the results of voting for various positions on the Board.

Carolyn Moore

By Reiko Mrozik



Carolyn Moore (Third from left, back row)

Reiko Mrozik (far right)

My family always described Carolyn Moore as a lady – beautiful, kind, smart, and curious. Sometime in the 1960's she came into my dad's store – Nagatani, Inc. on Michigan Avenue in Chicago. Carolyn was interested in learning more about Japanese artifacts and that made her special in my dad's eyes and a special friend for my family. Encouraging her interests, my dad introduced her to the curator of Asian artifacts at the Field Museum of Natural History. That was the beginning of Carolyn's long tenure as a Field volunteer and later a member of their Women's Board.

Many years later, I joined Carolyn as a Field volunteer, working on digitizing the catalog cards of the Asian collections. Meanwhile, Carolyn was making connections with young Japanese women who were in the Chicago area accompanying their husbands who worked at Japanese global businesses. These young women helped with the translations of documents and other volunteer activities. Our lunch breaks were especially enjoyable as we learned so much about each other.

Carolyn's knowledge and deep interest in Japan led her to "curate" an exhibit of snuff bottles at the Field. Partly because of Carolyn's efforts, the Boone collection was donated to the Field. One of Carolyn's special interests focused on Ainu and Ainu textiles. When I visited Ainu museums in Hokkaido, I gave her photographs of the textiles exhibited, which she enjoyed.

My mother was a long-time KCC Board member and Vice President. Because of Carolyn's interest in Japan and as a family friend, Carolyn was introduced to KCC. Soon, she joined KCC as a board member. It was because of her that KCC had several annual meetings at the Field. These were very special and well-attended events.



Carolyn and I exchanged Christmas cards for many years, but at some point, we lost touch. This was my loss.

Carolyn Moore was a very special lady. She was generous in her volunteer work at the Field and with KCC. Please remember her kindness and grace.

In Memoriam

Brant Dykehouse passed away on December 7, 2025. He worked as office support to KCC-JEE from 2002 to 2007 and served on the BDGP and Essay Contest Committee in recent years. The photo is of Brant Dykehouse with Dave Therkelsen at the annual meeting (unknown year). He is greatly missed.

