

Kobe College Corporation – Japan Education Exchange Fall Newsletter

Fall 2018, Vol. 12



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Greetings from Dr. Roberta Wollons, President of KCC-JEE

The Annual Meeting in September was held at the Union League Club in Chicago, Illinois. The KCC-JEE Board of Directors was honored to welcome Kobe College Chancellor Ken Ii and his wife Naoko. This marks Rev. Ii's first year as Chancellor of Kobe College and we look forward to a continuing close and productive relationship with him and KC.

This year, the theme for the Annual Meeting was the Internship Program. Since the start of the Internship Program in 2001, 65 students from Kobe College have come to the USA to participate in the program. Guests of the Annual Meeting had the opportunity to meet this year's interns: Sara Nishimura, Tsubasa Eshima, and Yuki Ota. The fourth intern, Tomomi Nagayama, had already returned to Japan. In addition, we were delighted to welcome a former intern, Nao Shimogakinarumi-Silva.

The Internship Program has three essential parts: the Interns, the Host Families, and the Internship sites. Each plays an equal role in creating a successful Internship experience. Along with this year's interns, it was an honor to welcome host family Dr. and Mrs. William and Bonnie Kath. Dr. Kath brought the relationships to life with his presentation of the personal experience of hosting the students. We also welcomed Mitsukuni Baba from the Japan America Society of Chicago, one of this year's Internship host organizations. Of course, they offer the supervision and support for Internship opportunities.

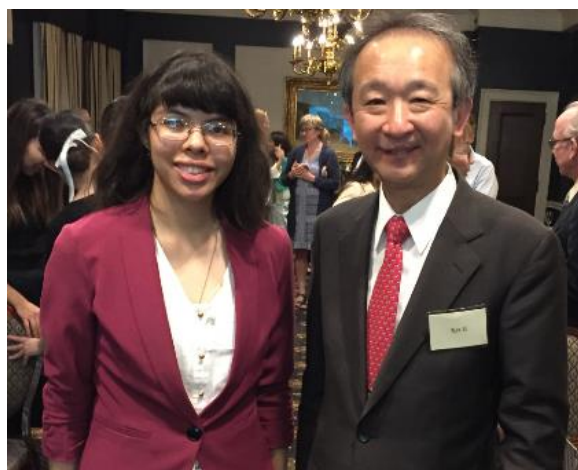
Last but not at all least, we welcomed our two new board members, Dr. Eric Fulcomer, President of Rockford University, and Elizabeth Hartung-Cole, a former Gottschalk teacher. We are looking forward to another excellent year for KCC-JEE Programs, and more planning for our 100th anniversary in 2020. Please stay in touch and visit our website, www.kccjee.org, for news and events.



The KCC-JEE Board with Dr. and Ms. Ii at the Annual Meeting



The 2018 KCC-JEE Interns



Former Essay Contest Winner
Verenice Alfaro Espinosa with Dr. Ii



KCC-JEE Welcomes New Board Member Dr. Eric W. Fulcomer

Excerpted from his Rockford University biography: <https://www.rockford.edu/about/leadership/president/>

KCC-JEE's newest board member is Dr. Eric Fulcomer, the 18th President of Rockford University.

Dr. Fulcomer joined Rockford University in March of 2013 as Vice President for Enrollment Management with nearly two decades of leadership experience in higher education. Prior to his time at Rockford, Dr. Fulcomer served for 19 years at Bluffton University in Ohio in a variety of roles.

He received his doctorate in Higher Education Administration from the University of Toledo, his master's degree in College Student Personnel from Bowling Green State University and his bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature, cum laude, from Eastern Michigan University.

In addition to his work in higher education, Dr. Fulcomer has been active in his communities. Since his move to the Rockford, he has become a board member for Rockford Christian Schools, the Golden Apple Foundation, Swedish-American Health Systems, Alignment Rockford Governing Board, Rockford International Education Center, and Rockford Leaders. He serves as a member of the Executive Committee for Rockford Christian Schools, Associated Colleges of Illinois and the Federation of Illinois Independent Colleges and Universities.

Dr. Fulcomer served for 11 years as an elected official in Bluffton, Ohio, holding the positions of Village Council member, Village Council President, and Mayor. His community involvement also includes: past president of the Bluffton-Pandora Rotary Club and past vice president of the Bluffton Lions Club Foundation,

Dr. Fulcomer and his wife Andrea, a physician assistant, live in Rockford and are proud parents of two teenage children, Noah and Anna. KCC-JEE is pleased to welcome Dr. Fulcomer to the Board of Directors.





Unexpected Connections

Elizabeth Hartung-Cole

In the fall of 1977, I had the great fortune to begin teaching English at Kobe Jogakuin junior and senior high school. By the second year, I asked my colleagues if they could refer me to a calligraphy teacher. For the rest of my years in Nishinomiya, I met once a week at the home of Sakai-sensei, who had recently retired from teaching at Kobe Jogakuin. What a treasure to study from this master who so kindly guided my efforts to tame my brush strokes. His house was a sanctuary of artistic simplicity augmented with the mingled essence of perfectly woven tatami and the stress-releasing rubbing of the ink stick upon the slate (no store-bought bottles of ink in these lessons!).

Flash forward forty years ... I have just become a KCC-JEE Board member and am working with the Gottschalk teacher hiring committee. For some serendipitous reason, I mentioned my calligraphy studies so long ago. A gasp was uttered as Fumiyo Young announced that I must have been in her house studying with her father! We were conferencing via computer so I ran to my dining room cabinet and showed her the fan her father had inscribed for me upon my departure from Japan. The unexpected connection we felt, even through the computer, was priceless. It was wonderful to finally meet her in Chicago this September.

I am so grateful that my life remains intertwined with Kobe Jogakuin in so many ways and after all these decades.





Reflection by Stacy Shimunuki, Essay Contest Winner



As my flight begins its descent into California, I think about how to characterize Japan and my month-long experience.

The Japanese landscape: mountains. I didn't really have a specific mental image of Japan before arriving, but now I picture it as an endless sea of green mountains, punctuated by bits of city. Both from the city surrounded by them and from the mountaintops themselves, the view is amazing.

The cultural spots: fukuzatsu, and pretty. Fukuzatsu roughly translates to complicated/complex, and connotes depth — such as the tradition behind every aspect of sado, the tea ceremony; or the history of warlord Hideyoshi's life at the Osaka castle; or the meaning of each hoko parade float at the Gion festival. At other places, like the Great Buddha at Nara or the mountaintop Kurama temple, I was content to just marvel at the picturesque buildings and nature scenery.

New friends: growing. Interacting, conversing, and hanging out with a variety of new friends (my host family, Taiwanese/French/Chinese classmates, Filipino expats from church, etc.) has been both incredibly fun and expanded my vision a bit to the world outside high school and college life.

My experience: colorful — literally and figuratively. The translucent green of kaede leaves in the sunlight, the light blue of the sky and clouds hiding the sun, the bright red of lantern-lit torii gates, the misty gray of the city after a sprinkle of rain, the dark brown of the wooden houses and shrines, the bright golden decor on many temples and roofs. Beyond the visual feast, my month has been a palette of so many different experiences: laughing at ridiculous skits in class, making okonomiyaki at home for dinner, wandering into one-room exhibits in downtown Nara. The karaoking at the arcades, waking up on the mountaintop bench because of the rain drops on my face, passing the noisy stalls of a riverside street festival/market, eating matcha kakigoori shaved ice in Uji, opting for the hour-long walk home at night rather than busing, feeding peanuts to monkeys at Arashiyama. On my last night in Japan, I watched Kansai's biggest fireworks show at Lake Biwako — an absolutely spectacular burst of (literal) colors and light unlike any I've seen before.

Leaving Kyoto, my new friends and host family was hard, of course, but tempered by the fact that I know I'll return to Japan at some point, and likely in just a couple years. Also, tempered by the excitement of leaving for Beijing in just a couple weeks — my next adventure!



KC Alumna Spotlight: Akiko Kawano Jones



I have been living in the United States for the last 48 years. After the graduation from Kobe College in 1967, I was given an opportunity to teach English as an adjunct at Kobe College High School and to work at Chancellor's office. Three years later, when I finished my work as an interpreter at Expo 70, I was offered a job of teaching Japanese language by the chair of Japanese Studies at Bucknell University in Pennsylvania with the recommendation of KC Chancellor Ariga.

While assisting the undergraduates with Japanese language and culture, I had responsibilities to teach Japanese at a local high school in Lewisburg, PA as a part of the federal grant to Bucknell University. I believe that it was the first high school in the east coast of the US that took the Japanese as a regular foreign language course. I also studied for a master's degree in educational research at Bucknell University.

I think that in the early 70s only a few Japanese people dreamed that Americans and other people of the world would have so much interest in Japan.

That was before many Japanese companies other than those in the stereo and television industries began manufacturing and doing business to the States. The town I first lived in was such a small rural community. I was asked by the children if we had the cars in Japan. Who would ask such a question now? It was my great desire then to tell the Americans about Japan and to get them to understand about Japan.

I have had the privilege of seeing with my own eyes how Japan has shown its development to the world and how the Americans have dramatically increased their interest in and understanding of Japan and Japanese culture. When I first came in 1970, I felt that Japan was in the shadow of such a big developed country. I felt everything in the States was very grand. However, soon I realized that I was proudly saying, "I am from Japan. I am a Japanese." I continue to proudly say and to feel that I am Japanese.

In 1974 I married an American. My husband took me to the Navajo Indian reservation in Arizona where we lived for four years. I was lucky to teach the American Indians at an Indian reservation in Arizona from spring of 1975 through summer of 1978. I remember my students in the 4th grade had a great time in presenting "Momotaro (Peach Boy)" on a Culture Festival Day. For a local talent show, I wore a kimono and demonstrated a traditional Japanese dance. Because of being a Japanese, I was accepted by the American natives better than the so-called whites at that time.

In the fall of 1978 my husband and I moved to Charlottesville, Virginia, where my husband studied for a doctoral degree, and our son and daughter were born. While we were at University of Virginia, I became acquainted with quite a few Japanese families who were also there for graduate studies. Most of the wives had limited skills in English and their abilities to interact with the larger community were very limited. I was very aware that my own proficiency in English, which began at Kobe College, allowed me to fully enjoy the community and make many friends.

My husband took a job on the faculty of Bowling Green State University in 1982. I started to teach at Bowling Green State University in 1983, and I never thought then that Japanese language and culture would be spreading around the world as it is now. The Japanese program was small and I might say that it was not easy to have it grow as large as it is now. I was lucky to have very energetic students even if they were small in number. I worked with a few university presidents and several deans; among them there have been some very great supporters of Japanese



studies. I had opportunities of showing Japanese cultural events to the town people and working with the company people. More people in Bowling Green and more students at BGSU now know a lot about Japan. More students like to go to Japan or stay there just like my dream of coming to the States many years ago.

I could not have continued to do my job this long without the support from my colleagues, community people, staff members, my family, and needless to say my students of Bowling Green State University. However, more than anything else, Kobe College prepared me for my career. If I had not received my 10 years of education at Kobe College Junior High, High School and College, I probably would not have learned how fun it would be to live and share in an English speaking community, I could not have had a chance to be teaching Japanese, and I could not have been a bridge between the two countries I love. It is not an exaggeration to say that ten years of my life at Okadayama have made me as I am.

In 2013, I completed the arrangements for a study abroad exchange program between Kobe College and Bowling Green State University. You can imagine that it was beyond my joy when I could make that exchange program between Kobe College who brought me up during my youth and Bowling Green State University where I have been teaching for the last 35 years.

With this gratefulness, I would try harder to be bridging the two countries I love by teaching the Japanese language and the culture. It was beyond my belief when I received the award of Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation in 2015 for the contribution for mutual understanding between Japan and the United States.

I love Japan and am proud of my country Japan, but I also love United States of America which made me grow as an adult for the last 48 years. I really feel I am in a fortunate position of introducing Japan to the Americans. I am fortunate that I can teach the language and the culture which are communication tools between the two countries I love. I am very gratified that I have been able to send many enthusiastic students on to careers of living and working in Japan. Finally, I am very happy that we now have four young grandchildren who are ¼ Japanese, and they speak some Japanese and are interested in things Japanese.

From the Archives:



Photos from Julia Dudley's Album



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