

Japan America Society of Minnesota



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***Tsushin* Special Edition in Memory of Takuzo Ishida**

Obituary: Takuzo Ishida



Takuzo Ishida of Woodbury, MN peacefully passed away of lymphoma on April 25, 2019. Takuzo was born in Hirado, Japan in 1944. He received his undergraduate and graduate degrees in Chemistry at Chiba University in Japan. In 1981, he moved from Tokyo to St. Paul, MN with his wife and three children to assume a position as a research chemist at 3M Imaging Technology Laboratory. He held more than 20 patents in the field of dry process imaging technology, and his work was honored with a Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 1997.

Additionally, he volunteered his time tirelessly to promote awareness of and education about Japan, and friendly Japan-U.S. relations. He served as the president and emeritus director of Japan America Society of Minnesota and a vice president of Kobe College Corporation, and was a founder of the Minneapolis Japanese School. Takuzo was a 2017 recipient of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette, conferred by His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. A lover of classical music, he served as a board member of the Chamber Music Society of Minnesota and as the vice president of the Bach Society of Minnesota. Takuzo will also be remembered for his passion for

carpentry, bonsai, ceramicware, and his Japanese garden. He is survived by his wife Noriko, daughter Aki in Virginia, son Tetsunori in California, and daughter Mio in Minnesota. He will be entombed at the Garden Mausoleum of Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis.

A memorial service will be held at the Weisman Art Museum on June 12 from 4 to 7:30pm. The family suggests, in lieu of flowers, sending memorial contributions to the Japan America Society of Minnesota, 43 Main Street SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414, with instructions "For the Takuzo Ishida Memorial Scholarship," or by PayPal to jasm@us-japan.org through this link: mn-japan.org/2019/05/takuzo-ishida-memorial-scholarship-fund/.

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Tribute to Takuzo Ishida by Ambassador Walter F. Mondale



Takuzo Ishida was a wonderful member of our Japan America Society of Minnesota. He and his wife were always present and added spirt and lift to the work of JASM. I am shocked by his loss. We really needed him, and he must be remembered for the special way he carried on his remarkable work.

Ambassador Walter F. Mondale

Ambassador Mondale Awarding Mr. Ishida the Mondale Award at the Mondale Scholarship Gala 2011 (Picture left)

Memorial message for Takuzo Ishida by Consul-General Naoki Ito

On the passing of Mr. Takuzo Ishida, I would like to express my sincere condolences to Mrs. Noriko Ishida and the Ishida family.

Mr. Ishida's legacy is truly inspiring. Not only did he obtain numerous patents in the field of chemistry, but he also played a central role in promoting exchange between Japan and Minnesota. His impressive achievements were recognized by the Japanese government with the awarding of the Foreign Minister's Commendation in 2007. In 2017, I had the honor to present Mr. Ishida with the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette, which is conferred by His Majesty the Emperor of Japan.

Mr. Ishida did so much to bring Japan and Minnesota together. As I talked with the guests at his conferment ceremony, I could tell that he was beloved by the people of the Twin Cities. His way of connecting people from all walks of life with Japan brought many new members and companies into the Japan America Society of Minnesota under his leadership. And his passion for education made the Minneapolis Japanese School one of the best Japanese schools in the Midwest.

I remember how Mr. Ishida always used to lend his own bonsai to grace the entrance to the Mondale Dinner. The way he was able to get everyone to participate in *tejime*, or the traditional clapping at the end of the dinner, also spoke to his charismatic leadership. These vital parts of the event will be hugely missed this year.

I am so grateful for Mr. Ishida's life and his many achievements. I know his legacy will live on in this community that he served with wholehearted dedication.

Consul-General Naoki Ito, Consul-General of Japan in Chicago

Takuzo Ishida, the Renaissance Man by Dick Stahl

I first got to know Ishida-san in 2006 when I became involved with the Japan America Society of Minnesota (JASM). Ishida-san was a constant presence at JASM events and activities. The more I got to know Ishida-san the more I marveled at the broad range of his activities and accomplishments. Thus the title of The Renaissance Man for my comments. My dictionary defines a Renaissance Man two ways:



At the Mondale Gala 2017

- . a cultured man of the Renaissance who was knowledgeable, educated, or proficient in a wide range of fields
- . a present-day man who has acquired profound knowledge or proficiency in more than one field

Ishida-san certainly fits both definitions.

Amongst his accomplishments were:

- . founder of the Minneapolis Japanese School
- . vice president of Kobe College Corporation
- . leadership in classical music organizations including Bach Society of Minnesota and Chamber Music Society of Minnesota

Two things that stand out for me about Ishida-san were the exhibiting of his bonsai trees at JASM's Mondale Gala and his leadership in leading the *tejime* closing ceremony at the JASM Mondale Dinners. He made sure we practiced before and we were all ready to go. He will be greatly missed.

Dick Stahl, Honorary Consul of Japan

Tribute to Takuzo Ishida by Elizabeth Fehrmann

There are few in our community who have been as integral and influential as Takuzo Ishida-san was. He was a friend and a mentor to many, and his passion and support for the Japanese community in Minnesota shaped JASM in ways great and small. His wisdom, energy, and warmth will be sorely missed. JASM would also like to convey our special thanks to the Ishida family for their establishment of the Takuzo Ishida Scholarship Fund so that, with the help of the Ishida family and the community, we will be able to continue to honor Ishida-san's legacy.

Elizabeth Fehrmann, current JASM President

Tribute to Takuzo Ishida by Rio Saito

I had so many thoughts in my head until I started to write about Ishida-san. It is very difficult to write about him because when I am done writing this, I may have to actually accept the loss. I met him for the first time in 2014 when I started working for JASM as program manager. I was very intimidated by him in the beginning. Right away, I could tell that he was someone who was very well respected and looked up to. Once I got used to speaking with him, I asked so many questions about everything. How do I properly address the head of Tokyo Bank? How do I write an email to the Consulate without sounding like a samurai and how do I maintain a small garden? Every single time, I felt smarter after talking to him.

One of the many things Ishida-san worked with very closely was JASM's Harukaze concert. For the years I worked for JASM, he was there to lead the event. He was a wonderful leader who led the group by example and was very passionate about giving to our community.

It is impossible to find appropriate words to describe how wonderful it was to have him as our leader, teacher and friend. All we can do now is keep his legacy alive by following in his footsteps. I feel so lucky and privileged to have known Ishida-san and to be able to keep working with this great community that Ishida-san helped to build.

Rio Saito, JASM Executive Director, July 2018 to current

Tribute to Takuzo Ishida by John Babcock

It is with great sadness that I convey my condolences to the Ishida family and the JASM community. Takuzo Ishida was a pillar of our community and one of the greatest contributors of a strong and healthy relationship between Minnesota and Japan.

I had the pleasure of working side by side with Ishida-san during my years as President of JASM and also when my children attended the Minneapolis Japanese School at MCAD. Ishida-san played key roles in many of our community projects such as bringing the Japanese Consulate in Chicago to Minneapolis to renew passports, helping lead the charge for many JASM-sponsored events such as the Harukaze concert series, Mondale Dinner and Award Gala, and the JASM New Year's festival. In fact, my fondest memory of Ishida-san is pounding mochi at the festival for the first year which then became an annual tradition for us all. He touched so many of us in so many ways and our community is a better place because of him. Let's celebrate the memory of Takuzo Ishida in our hearts.

John Babcock, Former JASM President 2006-2007

Tribute to Takuzo Ishida by Marc Blehert



*At the Commendation Ceremony
2017*

Dear JASM Members,

It is with a heavy heart that we mourn and honor our friend, Ishida-san. The greatest asset of JASM is our wonderful, talented and generous members. Ishida-san was at the heart and soul of our fine organization.

One of the greatest perks of being a JASM President was getting to know Ishida-san, work with him and learn from him. It was always a thrill to receive a personal invite from Ishida-san to join him for his rousing *tejime* performances. He certainly knew how to conclude JASM events on a festive and positive note. Personally, I asked a lot of Ishida-san and never heard him say, "I'm too busy," or "I don't have time." Rather, he was always available to cheerfully lend his expertise and encouragement and share wise counsel. Through his tireless efforts, commitment, and leadership, Ishida-san has bestowed numerous legacies upon the community. He certainly made our world a better place.

The best way we can honor Ishida-san is to be kind, have a positive attitude, volunteer, and give back to the community.

May we all draw inspiration from our special memories of Ishida-san.

Marc Blehert, JASM President 2017-2018

Tribute to Takuzo Ishida by Charles Chan

I served with Ishida-san on the Mondale Scholarship selection committee for the last seven years, as well as interacting with him at the Minneapolis Japanese School. Ishida-san was very thoughtful and deliberate in our interviews with the scholarship candidates. Regardless of whether the candidates were selected or not, he always gave pearls of wisdom to the students in their pursuit of studying Japanese language and culture.

That same generosity for sharing and teaching carried over at the Minneapolis Japanese School. I have three elementary-aged children in the school and he frequently took time to talk with each one of the them. My son, Conner, who's 10 years old now, always reported when he talked with Ishida-san. Ishida-san made enough of an impact on Conner that he wrote a letter thanking Ishida-san for his teaching and leadership. Ishida-san will be missed.

Charles Chan, Mondale Scholarship selection committee member

Mr. Takuzo Ishida's Portrait by Michiko Kato Dressen

First, I would like to send my deepest condolences on Mr. Ishida's passing. And I would like to present a portrait in words of Mr. Ishida, with my deepest sincerity as one of his friends.

Mr. Ishida has shown genuine leadership by conducting and carrying out projects not only for JASM but also for the greater Japanese community in Minnesota, and moreover the broader U.S.-Japan relationship. He has been a leader for many JASM projects as well as projects for other organizations.

I have been fortunate to serve as one of the Mondale Scholarship selection committee members together with Mr. Ishida. All of the committee members (who have different career backgrounds) submitted results based on each student's prospects in the selection process each year, but I remember that Mr. Ishida frequently brought conclusive opinions that all of us could agree upon at the final moment.

I've known him since he was the president of the Japanese Saturday School, which was the only Japanese school at that time. Mr. and Mrs. Ishida served as founders, the administrator, and the teachers. They still serve as essential persons in the school up to this day. Both of them have always encouraged students and us teachers, and always have been supportive with lots of advice and thoughts. We are all so thankful!

All of us will miss Mr. Ishida with his supportive character, leadership, and friendship, and will remember that nice smile! *Arigatou gozaimashita*. Thank you so much for all you've done for us, from the bottom of my heart.

Michiko Kato Dressen

Remembering and Honoring Takuzo Ishida by Mirja Hanson

Global Citizen Ishida-san was a consummate bridge-builder who was proudly grounded in his Japanese heritage. In founding the Minneapolis Japanese School, enriching cross-cultural skills was the aim of teaching language and traditions. His work with Kobe College Corporation supported programs to foster broadminded students and educators. For four decades, Ishida-san promoted grassroots Japan-Minnesota ties as a driving force of the Japan America Society (JASM), a supporter of cultural organizations, and a respected partner of the Consulate of Japan in the Midwest.

Renaissance Man Ishida-san exemplified a person of broad intellectual interests in the arts, sciences, and knowledge in many fields. He was a technology entrepreneur at 3M and shared his love of intellectual pursuits in hosting the JASM *Nichibei* Lecture Series. He coordinated the annual *Harukaze* Concert and actively sought to bring the joy of classical music to devotees and new audiences. The masterful bonsai works he displayed at Mia, Como Conservatory and other events sparked viewer wonder and delight. Calling them his "other children," the trees were among many artistic pursuits he enjoyed with his wife Noriko.

Servant Leader Ishida-san was an effective public spokesperson and also worked diligently behind the scenes to build enduring programs and pathways of opportunity for others. His enlivening presence, humor, and respect of neighbor empowered teamwork in every venture. Without doubt, the *tejime* was his most visible role. As with everything Ishida-san did, the closing ritual was never performed halfway. In full garb and compelling voice, he successfully led large groups in synchronized, spirited clapping.

Evidently, *tejime* "observes fulfillment, realization, and completion." I join others in mourning the completed life of a beloved friend, colleague, leader, and father of the Ishida family. We are grateful for the legacy and lasting impacts that Ishida-san fulfilled and realized as a gift to our community.

Mirja Hanson, Former JASM President (1992-96) and Emeritus Honorary Consul

Tribute to Takuzo Ishida by Asako Hirabayashi

Mr. Ishida was the first Japanese person I met when I moved to MN in 2001. He was in the audience at my first performance in the Twin Cities. He was a classical music lover and philanthropist and generously supported many musicians and music organizations. He and I did so many projects together through JASM; I would never have imagined that the 2019 Harukaze Festival would be our last opportunity to work together.

All that said, what I appreciate and will remember most about Mr. Ishida was the educational opportunity he provided for my children. My daughter went to the Minneapolis Japanese School for three years, and my son attended there for 14 years. When I asked Mr. Ishida if my daughter who has multiple disabilities could be enrolled at MJS, as the president of MJS he accepted her without any hesitation even though the school does not have a special education department. For my daughter, those were the only three years in her entire life that she could study with normal students in a typical classroom setting.

My son, who spent his first 4 years in an orphanage in Japan, had difficulty adjusting to his new life in the U.S. after I adopted him. For him, MJS was an oasis and his classmates became his second family. Without MJS, my son would have really struggled to find his place. Mr. Ishida gave such precious, priceless experience and opportunity to my children, and I can never thank him enough nor can I repay him for what he has done for them. He is such a warm, compassionate man and a pillar of our Japanese community. I will never forget how much he meant to my family and will treasure all the wonderful memories. His passing was shocking and such a great loss to all of us.

Asako Hirabayashi

Tribute to Takuzo Ishida by Young-Nam Kim



Takuzo Ishida at Mia as a featured bonsai artist

The world is so much poorer without "Sir" Takuzo. He was one of those pure souls who dedicate themselves tirelessly to promote friendship among people. The April issue of the Woodbury Magazine cover featured a photo of Takuzo tending his beautiful Japanese garden at home smiling proudly, under the title "Growing Great Friendships."

So gifted in many fields in addition to being a brilliant chemist, I treasure a tea-cup that he repaired as a *kintsugi* artist. The photo I am enclosing shows his love and dedication to bonsai which he shared with the public at the Minnesota Institute of Art every spring as a chosen bonsai artist along with his wife, Noriko, whose ikebana was also displayed. I wish the magazine story above also featured him as a carpenter who built a Japanese house in the lower level of his home.

A devoted fan of western classical music, he was more knowledgeable about music than many professional musicians, and served as a most fervently dedicated board member of the Chamber Music Society of Minnesota and Northern Lights Chamber Music Institute. His annual presentation with Noriko of incredible sushi at the CSMG gala was legendary and his annual summer visit with Noriko to the NLCMI camp will be profoundly missed.

I was a proud cheerer for the many honors that was bestowed upon Takuzo; the Mondale Award and the "Knighthood" conferred by the Emperor of Japan, among them. It was my great privilege and honor that Sir Takuzo considered me a friend. The void he left in my heart, as in all of us, would be impossible to fill. I look forward to greeting him again in the next life.

Young-Nam Kim, Violinist and Artistic Director, Chamber Music Society of Minnesota



Tribute to Takuzo Ishida by Darryl Magree

I first got to know Takuzo Ishida as the quietly effective coordinator of One-Day Consular Services, which allowed dozens of Japanese living in Minnesota to complete official paperwork without needing to make a trip to Chicago. I was impressed that one person could be entrusted to pull off such a complex event, and curious to know how he could make it happen so smoothly with so little fuss. Little did I know this was only one of the many ways he led by serving.

I then had the good fortune to work much more closely with Ishida-san during his long and profoundly influential tenure on the JASM board of directors. He strengthened board governance, increased JASM outreach to Japanese residents of Minnesota, built partnerships with other civic organizations, and set high standards for JASM programs and events. At the same time, my wife Yukiko and I became part of the overlapping communities to which he belonged, and we became family friends. Every time I thought I'd discovered all the relationships he'd built and the good works he'd accomplished, I would realize there was more to his story and more that he was willing to do.

For me, Ishida-san was a living embodiment of the JASM mission – bringing the peoples of Japan and Minnesota closer together in mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation – and I will miss him greatly.

Darryl Magree, JASM Executive Director, 1999-2006

Tribute to Takuzo Ishida by William G. Paterson

Ishida-san was a special person in my life, both personally and professionally. On a personal note, he made many contributions to our Japanese garden at our home, including guiding our purchase of a special tree (*Ishida-san no matsu*), which he trimmed in the Japanese fashion many times for us. With the help of his brother's expertise in calligraphy, the garden also had an eye-catching bilingual sign. The beauty of that garden had many improvements, thanks to Ishida-san.

Together with David Smith and his wife, who also had a beautiful Japanese garden, the three couples met numerous times, with the love of Japanese gardens being the central theme. He was an inspiring leader professionally, as shown by his many contributions to our local community, which were recognized by many awards and citations. I am also indebted to his wife, Noriko-san, who was my Japanese tutor at 3M. I made many business trips to Japan, and her linguistic helpfulness was instrumental in the successful outcomes of those trips.

William G. Paterson, JASM Board Member

In Memory of Takuzo Ishida by David Smith



At Harukaze 2014

On my first day as a Japan America Society of Minnesota board member, I had the great honor to meet Mr. Takuzo Ishida. JASM was my first non-profit board seat and I was so fortunate to serve under such a dedicated leader.

One of the greatest lessons he taught me was to lead by example. If he said he would do something, it got done to perfection. He valued hard work, volunteering and making a difference in everything that was important to him.

When I had the opportunity to become the JASM President, I particularly enjoyed having Mr. Ishida on the Mondale Scholarship Selection committee with me. His comments to students were also so valuable as he inspired them to pursue their dreams of studying and living in Japan.

Mr. Ishida, his lovely wife Noriko, and I each had a passion for Japanese gardens. Each summer we enjoyed garden parties to share gardening tips, share stories, and catch up on the latest news of Japan. Of course, the trip to Mr. Ishida's home was always special. He would discuss and share his bonsai collection and update us on the most recent enhancement of his ornamental garden. The evening would be capped with a wonderful and refined Japanese feast.

After my move to Japan, I was fortunate to stay in touch with Mr. Ishida. He and Noriko would visit Japan every year for an extended period of time to visit family and friends. We would meet in a park, stroll approvingly through a Japanese garden, and catch up over a nice lunch.

I will never forget the many lessons that Mr. Ishida taught me. Due to Mr. Ishida's legacy of giving and volunteering, his memory will live on for generations to come.

David Smith, Past President of JASM

Tribute to Takuzo Ishida by Sayuri Testa



*In front of his bonsai at the
2015 Mondale Gala*

I had many opportunities to introduce Mr. Ishida to the public, and I always had trouble choosing the correct words. Should I say he is a scientist, an inventor, a former JASM president, a school founder, a decorated award recipient, a carpenter, a gardener, a chef, or a music critic?

For each of these areas, he didn't just stop at the level of enjoying, but became an expert. By drawing one of his inventions on a piece of paper, by explaining NPO management in meetings, by serving fish he filleted, and by listening to music from the speakers he handcrafted, he taught me a lot during the past 15 years. My husband, Craig, calls him a true Renaissance man. I call him a mentor and a friend.

Sayuri H. Testa, a former JASM Board of Directors 2012 – 2017

Tribute to Takuzo Ishida by Ben van Lierop

It is with much sadness that I write in tribute to Takuzo Ishida. He would be uncomfortable with accolades. Yet, he was remarkable, worthy of admiration and respect. A giant among us, Ishida-san led a multifaceted life. He was a talented chemist, educator, artist, and organizer. An example of his pioneering leadership is his founding of the Minneapolis Japanese School. Ishida-san was also a dedicated Japanese landscape gardener, a skillful carpenter, and a gourmet chef.

Another passion was classical music. During his years in Minnesota, he joined organizations such as the Chamber Music Society of Minnesota, the Bach Society of Minnesota, and the Minnesota Orchestra.

Ishida-san's contributions to JASM are too many to name. Some highlights include President in 2004-2005, Chair of the Harukaze organizing committee, and founder of the Nichibei Lecture Series. Takuzo and Noriko were the first JASM members to join the Sakura Circle. I knew him as an inspiring community leader and dear friend. He was always there to lead an initiative or join in organizing an event. And he did it with consistent wisdom, calm, and joy.

Ishida-san exhibited his exquisite bonsai at many venues, including the Art in Bloom event at the Minneapolis Institute of Art. He collected spruce saplings from the mountains of Wyoming. In winter, Ishida-san kept the saplings outside protected from the snow by a thin cover. But not protected from the cold. Ishida-san said the winter cold helped the saplings to grow strong. For me, Ishida-san's care for the trees is symbolic of his nurturing and guiding spirit. Today we remember a wonderful human being with a natural guiding spirit for plants as well as for people. How we miss you, Ishida-san. Thank you for your nurture and guidance.

Ben van Lierop, former Executive Director, JASM

Takuzo Ishida Tribute by Tom Haeg

Once while I was looking for wood at a local lumber yard for a garden project, so was Takuzo Ishida. We met and talked. I introduced him to a young yard worker upon whom I often relied for advice. Their encounter was an inflective moment in my esteem for Ishida-san.

From a safe distance I witnessed their conversation; close enough to hear but far enough to remain detached. And what began as a conversation with a simple customer for a simple wood order for a simple garden project morphed into an existential, life-transforming moment for our young retailer.

Ishida-san, not content to just place a *pro forma* order and pay on the way out (thank you), and without pedantic veneer, went on to explain how a tree grew, where planted, the grain and rings, its softness, durability, moisture content, its care, the shade offered to cool, its warmth when fired, the soil, tactility, aroma, roots, and its birth as a seedling. There was no written material. No rehearsals. His commentary was unrepentant honesty. When done, our young clerk was mesmerized. No customer had deigned to talk to him like this. Until Ishida-san. Can you imagine how our young clerk felt after this encounter? This seeming random act of kindness may have enabled him to gain a heightened appreciation of self, worth, and work. Before, there was a job, now perhaps a career. What once was a void now had value. I believe that he no longer just sold fungible lumber off the shelf; instead, he was now building a garden to secure *wa* and glimpse the supernatural. And just because Ishida-san took the time.

And, for this serendipitous observation, and more, I am grateful to Takuzo Ishida.

Tom Haeg, Former JASM Secretary

Japan America Society of Minnesota



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通信

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The Japan America Society of Minnesota is a non-profit, non-political association engaged in bringing the peoples of Japan and the United States closer together in mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation. Through programs and interchange, it endeavors to promote an appreciation of cultural, educational, economic, public, and other affairs of interest to both peoples. Membership in the society is open to individuals, corporations, and other organizations interested in furthering its programs.

The Japan America Society of Minnesota is a member of the National Association of Japan-America Societies.

(Please report any inaccuracies you find in this publication to jasm.interns@gmail.com)

In Memory of Mr. Takuzo Ishida

