

Japan America Society of Minnesota



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***Tsushin* Special Edition in Memory of Ambassador Walter F. Mondale**



Ambassador Walter Mondale meant so much to so many people, in Minnesota and Japan, around the U.S. and around the world. We mourn the loss of this great public servant and friend. In this Tsushin Special Edition, many dignitaries, JASM members, and past and present JASM staff & board members share their recollections and tributes to a great Minnesotan and world citizen.

Thank you, Ambassador Mondale.

Please visit [the guest book](#) on our website. It is open to everyone to read. To add your remembrances and messages of gratitude for Ambassador Mondale you need to be JASM member. Here is [the link](#) for members to use add a message.

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the United States of America TOMITA Koji

Tribute to Vice President Walter F. Mondale

On the passing of Vice President Walter F. Mondale, I would like to pray from the bottom of my heart that his soul may rest in peace, and to express my sincere condolences to the Mondale family.

During my diplomatic career, it was my great luck and honor on many occasions to work directly with Mr. Mondale to advance Japan-U.S. relations. In fact, when Mr. Mondale served as Ambassador to Japan, I was watching his endeavors rather closely, as I was a principal officer of the Section in charge of the United States at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During this period, I saw Mr. Mondale work tirelessly to strengthen the Japan-U.S. Alliance, addressing difficult and complex issues such as Japan-U.S. trade friction and issues related to U.S. forces stationed in Japan.

While I was impressed by his bold leadership, which allowed him to address so many different issues, I also remember how kindly he spoke to us. What impressed me most was how he treated others with gratitude, regardless of their position. And of course, that spirit continued as Mr. Mondale worked on in his retirement to build ties between Japan and Minnesota. He always had an eye on the people-to-people ties that will ensure the future of our relationship.

As one of the beneficiaries of good Japan-U.S. relations, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude and respect for the many achievements that Mr. Mondale made as a leader. What we can do now to honor Mr. Mondale's legacy is to follow in his footsteps and devote ourselves to the development of the Japan-U.S. relationship. I, along with many of my friends, would like to take on Ambassador Mondale's aspirations, and contribute to building on the beautiful friendship that unites us today. Mr. Mondale will always remain in our hearts.



Ambassador TOMITA Koji

Consul-General Kenichi Okada, Consul General of Japan in Chicago



Ambassador Mondale (middle), Governor Tim Walz of Minnesota, and General-Consul of Japan Kenichi Okada

On the Passing of Vice President Walter F. Mondale

I was deeply saddened to hear of the passing of the Honorable Walter F. Mondale. He leaves behind an enduring legacy and will long be remembered as an advocate for truth, as a catalyst for progress, and as a champion of people from all walks of life. In every facet of his remarkable life, he was a true friend to Japan and her people. Both the Japan-U.S. and Japan-Minnesota partnerships are stronger because of his dedicated efforts.

During his time as U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Mr. Mondale remained committed to doing the greatest good. He played an instrumental role in enhancing the mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and the United States.

Upon returning home, Mr. Mondale and Mrs. Joan Mondale became key proponents of the Japan-Minnesota partnership. It has been a great honor to work alongside the Japan America Society of Minnesota as they present the annual Mondale Award for Japan-Minnesota Partnership — named after Joan and Walter Mondale — to an individual or organization that has contributed to the building of understanding, cooperation, and respect between the people of Japan and Minnesota.

Additionally, the relationship between Japan and Minnesota has been significantly strengthened because of the generous Mondale Scholarship, which is awarded to undergraduate students who want to broaden their knowledge of Japan through a combination of study and travel. Both the award and scholarship have facilitated and fostered a deeper understanding between Japan and Minnesota, helping to further promote the broader Japan-U.S. relationship. I would like to express my profound gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Mondale for all that they have done to grow these partnerships.

One of my most precious memories came during the 2019 Mondale Gala. My having just recently taken the position of Consul-General of Japan in Chicago at that time, Mr. Mondale graciously extended a warm welcome and his kindest encouragements to me. It was a great honor to meet and speak with him.

On behalf of the Consulate-General of Japan in Chicago, I wish to offer my sincerest condolences to the family of Mr. Mondale — my thoughts are with them during this difficult time.

U. S. Senator Amy Klobuchar



U. S. Senator Amy Klobuchar

My friend and mentor Walter Mondale, whom we sadly lost on April 19, was a leader of great dignity, decency, and civility. Minnesotans were proud to call Fritz our Attorney General, our Senator, and our Vice President. He was also a great friend to Japan, having served as U.S. ambassador to Japan from 1993 to 1996. As the highest-ranking U.S. official ever to hold this role, he dedicated himself to reinforcing the important alliance between our governments but also to expanding the strong ties between the American and Japanese people, becoming known affectionately among the latter as “Oh-mono,” which roughly translates to “the big cheese.” Vice President Mondale’s wife, Joan, who we lost seven years ago, was also greatly admired in Japan for her love of culture. Vice President Mondale championed close security cooperation between our two countries, promoted trade and economic cooperation, and expanded student exchange programs. And through his service as chair of the Mansfield Foundation, he continued to be one of the nation’s key advocates for a close U.S.-Japan relationship.

I know he was deeply honored that the Japan-America Society of Minnesota established the Mondale Award to recognize outstanding contributions to cultivating and strengthening this relationship. And he greatly valued the Society’s establishment of the Mondale Scholarship that helps Minnesota students travel to Japan to learn more about its culture. Diplomacy was woven into the very fabric of Walter Mondale’s life in public service: he was kind, respectful, gracious, and calm. When he returned to Minnesota after serving as Ambassador, he took on the mission of preparing the next generation of leaders for the next big decision by serving as a mentor to so many. His strong moral core defined his every action, and he always fought for policies that would improve peoples’ lives at home and around the world. On the wall in the Carter Museum in Atlanta are Vice President Mondale’s words uttered shortly after their 1980 defeat, summing up their four years in office: “We told the truth. We obeyed the law. We kept the peace.” I wrote those words down once on a piece of paper at the museum and slipped them in my purse. Those words have been my touchstone. *We told the truth. We obeyed the law. We kept the peace.* That is the minimum we should expect from our public servants. With Walter Mondale, we got that and so much more. He cherished his time in Japan. He set a high bar for himself throughout his distinguished life and kept passing it and raising it, passing it and raising it. I can’t think of a better role model.

Former U.S. Senator Al Franken



Former U.S. Senator Al Franken with Ambassador Mondale at 2018 Mondale Gala

There's a photo of me and Vice President Mondale accompanying this piece. It says a lot about the two of us. He's laughing uproariously. I'm laughing too and looking at him with utter admiration.

I remember one of the first interviews he did after his 1984 election. It was quite a while after – that loss really stung. He told the interviewer that he didn't quite get the American people to know him during that campaign. He was right. Fritz was hilariously funny. Very dry, but hilarious. Once interviewing him, I mentioned how Southern Democrats had become Republicans after the 1964 Civil Rights bill had passed.

"It took a while," I said as an afterthought.

"Not long," he replied in a flat, but devastatingly sardonic tone, as flat as the prairie he grew up on.

It brought me back to the second Reagan-Mondale debate. Toward the end of the first, one President Reagan seemed to lose himself telling a story about driving up the Pacific Coast Highway, raising concerns that he was failing. Reagan famously opened the second debate with, "I want you to know that also I will not make age an issue of this campaign. I am not going to exploit, for political purposes, my opponent's youth and inexperience." This was clearly a joke crafted by his team, and in my mind, anyway, kind of corny. Nothing in the league of "Not long." Yet, it worked. And the election was over. Reagan, who had spent the better part of his life as an actor, knew how to perform. Mondale, who spent the better part of his life as a public servant and statesman, couldn't get the American people to know him during that campaign.

The Fritz Mondale that I knew and that the people of Minnesota knew, was a wise, deeply committed, remarkably impactful progressive. In the Senate, Walter Mondale authored the 1966 Fair Housing Act that banned discrimination in housing. I recently read Jonathan Alter's biography of Jimmy Carter. Together Carter and Mondale created the modern Vice Presidency. Mondale was the first VP to have his office in the White House. The picture that emerges is of a Vice President whose political instincts were very often truer than his President's. He warned in no uncertain terms that the disastrous "malaise" speech would be just that – a disaster. "We got elected on the grounds that we wanted a government as good as its people," he told Carter and his political team. "Now, as I hear it, we want to tell them we need a people as good as the government. I don't think that's going to sell."

Mondale's last official position, of course, was as our ambassador to Japan. Though his accomplishments, especially in the area of trade, were manifold, Fritz always said that the Mondale that the Japanese people really took to was Joan. Joan, of course, devoted so much of her life to the arts, and herself was an avid potter, known for gifting folks they met with yunomis, Japanese teacups. My daughter, Thomasin, has taken up pottery as well, and sent Fritz a yunomi in honor of Joan and their love of the Japanese people. And our love of the Mondales.

Laurence Farrar, Former Foreign Service Officer

I have been reading tributes from former colleagues. Without exception, they emphasize Mondale's humanity and decency. They are so right in doing so. Fritz Mondale was a Minnesota guy. He once introduced me to a luncheon group in Minneapolis. He said, "When I arrived at our Tokyo embassy, Larry was already there. Then I learned he was from Minnesota, and he rose immeasurably in my esteem."

Fritz Mondale was generous. When he learned our family would be in Minnesota on home leave, he insisted we stay at his house on the St. Croix River. It is still a wonderful memory of nearly a week looking out over the river he cared so much about.

He was civic-minded. He twice responded positively to my request to speak to classes I was teaching on US-Japan relations for the University of Minnesota's Lifelong Learning Program.

He was perceptive. Invited to attend an event commemorating the World War II firebombing of Tokyo, he asked my opinion. I said we had never gone to the event & would likely receive protests from veterans' groups. He thanked me, but said he thought his attendance would now be the right thing to do. We had one protest as I recall.

There's more, but it is easy to see why we respected him. Thanks, boss.

Laurence Farrar served as Ambassador Mondale's Minister for Political Affairs, 1991-95.

Top picture: The new ambassador about to set out for the Imperial Palace to present his credentials to the Emperor. Bottom Picture: after the call at the Palace



Honorary Consul of Japan Ron Leonhardt

The passing of Ambassador Mondale is a big loss to our US-Japan community here in Minnesota and globally. Although he returned from Japan as our official U.S. Ambassador in 1996, he never retired from being our most engaged Ambassador to our Japanese community here in Minnesota. He continued to help bridge our two countries and cultures and enthusiastically promoted our US-Japan related programs in so many ways. But just as important as all his professional contributions to our community was his interpersonal demeanor. He was kind, dignified, and always made you feel like you were the only person in the room. We will miss him dearly.

Ron Leonhardt is Honorary Consul of Japan in Minneapolis, North Dakota, and South Dakota

Former Honorary Consul of Japan Dick Stahl



Ambassador Mondale (left) Dick Stahl (middle), and Consul-General Naoki Ito (right) at 2018 Mondale Award and Scholarship Gala

Our Friend Walter

I have had the pleasure of knowing Ambassador Walter Mondale since 2006 when I became Treasurer of JASM. The years 2006 and 2007 were financially challenging for JASM. Ambassador Mondale continually provided sage advice and encouragement as well as introductions to potential members and donors as JASM worked to get our financial ship back to sailing smoothly.

Ambassador Mondale did an outstanding job of welcoming the attendees at our annual Mondale Galas, visits by Japanese Ambassadors, and other major events. Ambassador Mondale had many friends at these events, and he went out of his way to meet old friends and to make new ones.

I was especially impressed by the way he received total strangers. He greeted them with a hearty “Hello” and a big smile. After talking a few minutes, they left feeling that Walter was an old friend. That is a great skill. THANK YOU, WALTER.

Dick Stahl is Former Honorary Consul of Japan in Minneapolis and former JASM President.

Elizabeth Fehrmann, JASM President

Genuine. Giving. Gracious.

It’s difficult to put into words everything that Walter Mondale was and everything he meant, because he accomplished so much and touched thousands upon thousands (if not millions) of lives over his 93 years. Many people remember him in his high visibility, high impact roles as Senator, Vice President, and Ambassador to Japan, and it is hard to overstate the positive effects Mr. Mondale and his work had on Minnesota, America, and — on some level — the world.

I, however, knew him best in one of his roles that was not as widely publicized: as a mentor, guide, and friend to the JASM community. Whenever I had a chance to sit down with Mr. Mondale for a meeting, for lunch, or just for a brief chat, one of his first questions was always “How are you?” and was often closely followed by “What can I do for you?” He was always so personable; one could forget that there was a massive political and diplomatic powerhouse behind that easygoing manner. Every time I had a chance to connect with him, he would listen carefully, then help put things in perspective or give suggestions and advice as needed, drawing on his vast wealth of knowledge and experience. He could tell when the situation called for a bit of humor and would throw out the occasional quip with a twinkle in his eye. Near the end of each conversation, he would always, always be sure to add “Just let me know how I can help.”

We, the JASM community — myself included — consider ourselves very lucky to have had the good fortune of having such a willing, amazing advocate so close to home. There’s no way I can adequately sum up the sheer quantity and variety of contributions that Mr. Mondale made to our community, but we will do our best to carry on his legacy.

Mr. Mondale, for your passion, dedication, generosity, and steadfastness over these many years:
Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Elizabeth Fehrmann is JASM President.

Clint Conner, Colleague at Dorsey & Whitney LLP and JASM Board Member



Clint Conner (right) and Chris Armacost (left) with Ambassador Mondale at his 90th birthday luncheon

Ambassador Mondale was a big influence on my life, and I had the great honor of getting to know him in his later years while working with him at Dorsey & Whitney on social causes, like working to preserve funding for the Legal Services Corporation, which Mr. Mondale helped create as lead author of the charter bill while a Senator. Being the emcee for the Mondale Gala for his last few years was a huge honor for me that I will never forget. I always had a sense of awe when standing in front of him to speak and passing the mic to him for his award announcement.

The things that most stood out about him to me were his continued compassion for all people, his endless curiosity about world and local events, his desire to make a positive impact, and his humility. He was one of the most humble people I have ever met.

He was driven by empathy. He was a National Hero. And I will never forget him and the time we had together. God Bless Walter Mondale.

Clint Conner is former colleague at Dorsey & Whitney LLP

Rio Saito, JASM Executive Director

I was surprised how much I was affected by Mr. Mondale's passing when I found out about it. I had the privilege of visiting him and having conversations with him numerous times. Every time I saw him, I always forgot what a giant he was to the community and to the world because of who he was as a person. As I read so many tributes of Mr. Mondale online and in newspapers, I could tell that he was deeply respected and honored and very well-liked by all. Even Japanese media spent quite some time talking about his achievements while he was in Japan. I also know that a local newspaper in Akita prefecture published a tribute to Mr. Mondale. These each show how much Mr. Mondale was revered by the U.S. and Japan. He was truly a bridge that connected the two countries.

Although it was a short amount of time that I could spend with Mr. Mondale, how I knew him was as a warm, unassuming, very friendly person, constantly making jokes and making me laugh. The last time I spoke with him was after 2020 election and I asked him what is going to happen to the United States. He said to me "It will be all right. America will be all right. I believe in the American people." And that it really made *me* feel all right. It was so powerful.

I am absolutely privileged to be a part of JASM and to have been in Mr. Mondale's orbit even for a moment. Even in this short amount of time, he showed the paths that he created with other leaders for people like me to follow.

Thank you, Mr. Mondale, for all you have done and for being a great friend to us all. Our community is very lucky to have you and is strong because of you. We will do everything that we can to carry on your legacy.

Rio Saito is JASM Executive Director.



From left: Rio Saito, Consul-General Kenichi Okada, Ambassador Mondale, and Governor Tim Walz of Minnesota at 2019 Mondale Award and Scholarship Gala



Mr. Mondale Speaking at JASM's 20th Anniversary, photo provided by Mirja Hanson



Ambassador Mondale with Ambassador Sasae at a JASM event, photo provided by Mirja Hanson



Mirja Hanson with Ambassador Mondale at the Mondale Award and Scholarship Gala 2017

Ben van Lierop, former JASM Executive Director



At 2017 Mondale Award and Scholarship Gala

Walter Mondale: Inspiring Leader and Gracious Friend of JASM

Since I learned of the passing of Walter Mondale in April, I have reflected on his personal decency, his broad world-view, and his numerous contributions to JASM. After he served as Ambassador to Japan, JASM benefitted mightily from Walter Mondale's international outlook. He became the ultimate JASM supporter, always expressing interest in JASM programming and mission, especially the Mondale Scholarship.

In his role as Ambassador to Japan, Walter Mondale and his wife, Joan, were well received by the people of Japan. They were both fascinated by Japanese arts and culture and immersed themselves in Japanese traditions. They cultivated a genuine love for the Japanese people and retained this outlook beyond their time in Tokyo.

Following Walter and Joan's return to Minnesota in 1996, the Japan America Society of Minnesota asked Walter Mondale to serve as Honorary Chair. From that time on, he was a vociferous JASM champion. He was elated when JASM established the Mondale Scholarship program in response to his desire to increase the number of U.S. college students studying in Japan. He and Joan loved to attend the Mondale Award and Scholarship Gala. I always consulted Ambassador Mondale regarding the keynote speakers for the event, and he offered to introduce the speakers during the program. He was also pleased that his son, William, served for a time on the JASM Board of Directors.

Walter Mondale's sincerity and curiosity made him eminently approachable. He knew how to put people at ease. Every year when I would join him at the Mondale Gala, I noted he could hardly move as people gathered around to greet and welcome him. During these events, he could often be seen talking with JASM interns, inquiring about their specific interests in Japan. In fact, he made all of us feel important, that our work mattered in building an enduring relationship between Japan and the United States.

Walter Mondale's significant involvement with JASM has left an enduring legacy which we will treasure even as we mourn the loss of his inspiring leadership. I will remember him as a compassionate and brilliant leader who took a personal interest in JASM. He was my hero, and I am grateful to have known him and to have witnessed his many contributions to the vital friendship between the United States and Japan.

J. Bernard van Lierop is former JASM Executive Director, 2006—2018.

Saiko McIvor, Former Colleague at Dorsey & Whitney LLP



At 2019 Mondale Award and Scholarship Gala

With an abundance of commentaries written on Mr. Mondale's greatness as a public figure, here is my snippet of the Mr. Mondale I knew. He was my senior colleague and mentor at Dorsey & Whitney. The firm hired me in 1987 to assist Mr. Mondale and his team on Japan matters. A lawyer fresh out of law school to be able to work with the Vice President?! I had to pinch myself to see if it was real. I vividly remember my first meeting with him. After a lengthy introduction he said, "I have a feeling you and I will get along great, and we will be a great team". He was down-to-earth, kind, warm, and funny, nothing I had expected of a high-profile public figure. And he was right; we would be friends for the next 34 years.

Mr. Mondale was a true joy to work with. No matter how small a role I played, he was always gracious and appreciative. He treated all people with the same genuine respect and dignity. In the firm's hallways, riding an elevator, or sitting at his favorite booth at Murray's for lunch, with "How are you doing?" to the staff and servers, everyone's face lit up. He truly loved people. And people loved him.



Mr. Mondale had a tireless work ethic. Until the pandemic, he, in his 90's, continued to work at his downtown office every day. I remember he was extremely diligent and meticulous in preparing any speech or article. At the same time, he had a wry wit. He invited me to speak with him on the 2011 Tohoku Earthquake and he referenced the Three Mile Island accident in his speech. About President Carter's visit there he said, "You know it must be safe, because if it wasn't, they would have sent the Vice President instead." Mrs. Mondale was even funnier. She was sitting in the audience next to my husband during the same speech and whispered to him: "He always tells that joke." They were a true pair in sassiness.

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Saiko McIvor, Former Colleague at Dorsey & Whitney LLP *continues...*

Mr. and Mrs. Mondale became big fans of Japan during his Ambassadorship. He said the most impressive part of Japan was the kindness, gentleness, and courtesy of the people. I told him Japan also found the same qualities in him. Japan also learned about Minnesota through them. As a pottery enthusiast, I enjoyed helping them with the display of pieces at the Embassy in collaboration with MIA.

To both of our initial pleasant surprise, we also have a family connection; his grandson, Louie, is my daughter's partner. Mr. Mondale loved his family, and his home and office were full of family photos. Louie and my daughter accompanied Mr. Mondale at the 2019 Mondale Award Dinner (photo). Who knew that this would be Mr. Mondale's last time to attend the Award Dinner in person?

Every time I think of Mr. Mondale, I get "warm and fuzzy" feelings, and am immersed with the greatest sense of pride, joy, and gratitude that he was my teacher and friend. I loved Mr. Mondale and I miss him very much.

Saiko McIvor is the friend and former colleague at Dorsey & Whitney LLP

Saint Paul—Nagasaki Sister City Committee, JASM Mondale Award Recipient 2005

Walter "Fritz" Mondale was a quintessential Minnesotan who had a significant impact not just locally or nationally, but internationally as well. His service as the United States ambassador to Japan from 1993 to 1996 enhanced the relationship between Japan and the United States. He and his wife Joan celebrated their friendship with the Japanese people and also promoted Japanese and American arts and crafts. In 1995, he called for more student exchanges in a speech to the Tokyo Rotary. So, it is most fitting that the Mondale Scholarship is presented to several students each year.

Members of the Saint Paul – Nagasaki Sister City Committee are grateful to have known Mr. Mondale. We remember him as a man of integrity, grace, and perseverance. He gave his time and energy to causes he believed in, working well into his 90s to make Minnesota, the United States, and the world a better place. He will be thanked and remembered for his service to our country and community, and for helping build bridges between people.

JoAnn Blatchley, Co-president of the Saint Paul-Nagasaki Sister City Committee.

Irene (Inkie) Brons, JASM Mondale Award recipient 2012



At 2012 Mondale Award and Scholarship Gala

In Memoriam Mr. Mondale

During 1993-1996, when Mr. Mondale was U.S. Ambassador to Japan, I sometimes visited his office at the Tokyo Embassy with representatives of Minnesota companies seeking his support. While a U.S. Ambassador serves all Americans, I always felt Minnesotans and Minnesota had a special place in Mr. Mondale's heart. We could tell by his extra warm welcome and the Minneapolis Star Tribune and St. Paul Pioneer Press on display on his coffee table.

In 1997, when I was the President of JASM, Mr. Mondale graciously allowed JASM to lend the Mondale name to its annual Gala, Award and Scholarship. Ever since, the Mondale family, but mostly Mr. Mondale, for many years together with his wife, have shown JASM tremendous support by attending the Gala and presenting the Award.

It was a special moment in my life to receive the 2012 Mondale Award from Mr. Mondale. He quipped that maybe I had planned in 1997 to eventually receive the award myself. If only I were that smart!

I will always fondly remember this kind and honorable man.

Irene (Inkie) Brons served as 1997-98 JASM President, is the 2012 JASM Mondale Award recipient, and served from 1990-2008 as the Japan Trade Representative at the Minnesota Trade Office.

Yoko Breckenridge, JASM Mondale Award Recipient 2006

In 2006 I was very honored to receive the Mondale Award for my role in helping other Japanese living in the Twin Cities area. I come from difficult and humble beginnings and would never have dreamed of being honored for anything in my life. Like most, I did not know a lot about Mr. Mondale or his work at that time. I only understood that the award was going to be presented at a fancy event by someone important! This was the first time since my arrival in the U.S. over 50 years earlier, that I wore a kimono! It was, for me a memorable event. My personal interaction with Mr. Mondale was minimal, and I did not see him again until one year later.

He was invited to be the guest speaker at another event in the Twin Cities area, and I sponsored a table for MN Nihonjinkai to attend. While standing in the doorway, I heard someone say my name "Yoko! How are you" or something like that. It was Walter Mondale! I could not believe that he would remember my name, or my face after one year. This impressed me a great deal. Even though I did not know a lot about his life and accomplishments, he made a lasting impression on me in our small encounters.

I recently spent an entire evening searching for articles about Walter Mondale and put together a scrapbook of almost 100 pages of articles and pictures I discovered on the internet relating to his life, work, and political career. I feel honored to have met him and am grateful to have received an award bearing his name.

Yoko Breckenridge is the owner of the MN Japanese Library, founder of MN Nihonjinkai, and the JASM Mondale Award Recipient 2006



2006 Mondale Award recipient Yoko Breckenridge with Walter Mondale

Yoshie Babcock, JASM Mondale Award Recipient 2013



2013 Mondale Dinner and Award

Our Sogetsu Study Group was selected to make an arrangement for the first Mondale Award Gala. We have continued every dinner since the first Gala and each time Fritz and Joan examined and complimented our work. Ever so thoughtful and kind.

Yoshie Babcock is chairperson of the Sogetsu Study Group ikebana association and the 2013 Mondale Award Recipient

Mirja Hanson, JASM Mondale Award Recipient 2017



Mirja Hanson presenting M. Mondale with a gift of Bresnahan pottery for headlining JASM's 20th Anniversary

What a privilege it has been for JASM to have Mr. Mondale as a true friend and active mentor since our 20th Anniversary! He kindly accepted an invitation to headline JASM's first major banquet in 1993 - just after serving as MN Attorney General and engaging on the national and international stage as Senator and Vice President. We were thrilled to welcome our top-choice speaker in the search for someone who could share insightful perspectives about Japan-U.S. relations and encourage cross-cultural citizen diplomacy. In the fall of that year, President Clinton appointed Mr. Mondale to the post of U.S. Ambassador to Japan. With his leadership prowess and Joan's grassroots arts engagement, the Mondale family was beloved by the Japanese people.

In 1997, the Award and Scholarship Program was named in Mr. Mondale's honor. The first award was presented to the Mondales but Ambassador Mondale never rested on his laurels. He made time to meet with visiting delegations; host events at his office; lend advice to initiatives; advocate for Japanese language and culture education ... and more. We have been royally enriched by Mr. Mondale's support (and also, the services of Lynda Pedersen, his trusted executive assistant throughout his public career).

Mirja Hanson served as 1992-96 JASM President, is former Honorary Consul of Japan in Minneapolis and the 2017 JASM Mondale Award recipient

Linda Hashimoto van Dooijeweert, JASM Mondale Award Recipient 2018



At 2018 Mondale Award and Scholarship Gala

In memory of Mr. Mondale, I would like to express my gratitude and admiration for all he has done to grow better bonds between Minnesota and Japan. He touched many lives, including mine, when he granted permanent U.S. residency in 1975 for my future husband, Willy, whom I married in 1977. Mr. Mondale was Minnesota at its best and I am honored to have been a part of his legacy.

I was recognized to be one of the privileged recipients of the Walter Mondale Award in 2018 and I hope to continue his legacy of better relationships between Minnesota and Japan through volunteerism in our community.

Linda Hashimoto van Dooijeweert received the Mondale Award in 2018.

Patricia Katagiri, JASM Mondale Award Recipient 2019

In 2019 I had the privilege to be given JASM's Walter Mondale Award for the work I have done to bring the Art of Tea (*Chado*) to Minnesota. I believe I was the last to receive the award from his hands. He was a most gracious public servant and I never saw him without a smile. He always was ready and willing to promote the Minnesota/Japan connection. Together with Yukimakai I pray that the soul of Minnesota's favored son rests in peace.

Patricia Katagiri received the Mondale Award in 2019.



At 2019 Mondale Award and Scholarship Gala

Bill Deef, JASM Mondale Award Recipient 2020



At 2020 Virtual Mondale Award and Scholarship Gala

I have great memories of working with Ambassador Mondale while he was in Japan. He warmly welcomed our delegations into the Ambassador's residence and was happy to participate in any opportunity to talk about and promote Minnesota to Japanese tour operators and travel media. He continually spoke about the need to get Minnesota students to come to Japan, as many Japanese students were coming to study in Minnesota at that time. This led to the establishment of the Mondale Scholarship Program which now has introduced dozens of Minnesota students to Japan over the years. I was honored to receive last year's Mondale Award for Japan Minnesota Partnership from Mr. Mondale, and while it needed to be virtual, it still felt special. He is known for so many of his professional achievements and dedication to public service, but he was also a genuinely nice person who took time for conversations with many of us. He will be greatly missed by the JASM organization and its members.

Bill Deef served as 1999-2000 JASM President, received the Mondale Award in 2020.

Tributes by Mondale Scholarship Recipients

The Mondale Scholarship helped me to study abroad in Japan, and the scholarship was my first contact with the Japan-America Society of Minnesota. Both greatly influenced the direction of my life, and I was fortunate enough to be able to thank Ambassador Mondale and his wife in person at the 2008 Mondale Gala. We spoke about Japan, of course, as well as our shared connection to Macalester College.

The encounter was brief, but Ambassador Mondale and the scholarship that honors him helped spark a desire to build bridges across cultures and to be involved in the community. Ambassador Mondale understood and (very successfully) encouraged these pursuits with his words as well as deeds, and the magnitude of his life reached many. We mourn the loss of a great man, but everything he inspired in all of the people he reached will ripple forward. I believe we who were fortunate enough to have been part of that understand its true value.

Kaeton Write, Mondale Scholarship Recipient 2008-2009

Thank You for Your Kindness

Looking back, I feel grateful for the opportunity that Ambassador Mondale gave me. His scholarship allowed me to improve my Japanese language ability, make Japanese friends, and experience Japan for the first time. Nowadays, I work as an Assistant Language Teacher through the JET Program. From my study abroad experience to my career in Japan, Ambassador Mondale made these things possible. As an ALT, I hope to bring Japanese people closer to the US, just as Ambassador Mondale brought me closer to Japan. We can all carry on his spirit by making it possible for American and Japanese people to share and build connections with each other.

Thank you for your kindness and the opportunity of a lifetime to live in Japan, Ambassador Mondale.

Christian Grande, Mondale Scholarship Recipient 2016-2017



Joseph Druckman (left) at 2017 Mondale Award and Scholarship Gala

I was very sad to hear about the passing of Ambassador Mondale. As a recipient of the Mondale Scholarship, I have always been inspired by the dedication that Ambassador Mondale brought to his role in supporting US-Japan ties. He was a true public servant who understood the importance of international cooperation not only as a political concept, but as a way to bring people together and create a more connected, caring world. Although I was unable to travel to Japan myself this past year due to the pandemic, Ambassador Mondale's spirit of public service and devotion to the relationship between Japan and the United States provided me with great encouragement as I thought about how to continue supporting US-Japan ties even in these trying times. Ever since the scholarship helped me to go to Japan for the first time in 2017, I have looked to Ambassador Mondale's example for guidance and inspiration, and I will continue to do so as I work towards achieving my own goal of working to strengthen US-Japan connections and promote international understanding in the future.

Joseph Druckman, Mondale Scholarship Recipient 2016-2017



Tributes by Mondale Scholarship Recipients *continues...*

I met Mr. Mondale at the Mondale Scholarship dinner in 2019. Though only meeting him once, I could immediately see how kind he was. I was so nervous to be at the dinner, surrounded by people who had accomplished so much. Mr. Mondale not only made sure I was included in the conversations at the table, but also introduced me to people after the speeches were over. The love and respect he received from the community was clear to see. He will be sorely missed.

As a history major, one of my classes touched on Mr. Mondale. A story that speaks volumes to me is while running for president in 1984, he was the first from any party in U.S. history to select a woman as the vice-presidential nominee! The Walter Mondale scholarship will also continue to provide students with opportunities within Japan.

As one of the recipients of the Walter Mondale Scholarship, I can say how honored I am and how helpful the scholarship was to me during my study abroad to Japan. I love history, so I used the money from the scholarship to visit historical locations and museums. My trip to Hiroshima was especially memorable.

Although he has passed on, Ambassador Mondale's name will live on through the great things he achieved, and the scholarship awarded in his name.

Tatiana Gust, *Mondale Scholarship Recipient 2018-2019*

Walter Mondale inspired generations of students and was a personal role model of mine. His strong engagement with civil society at home in the U.S. and his dedication to strong relations with Japan have inspired me and my own career path. From learning about Senator Mondale to Vice President Mondale to Ambassador Mondale, I have grown accustomed to hearing his name in class, in scholarly articles, and in public discourse. Walter Mondale was a staple of Minnesota politics and served an important role in national history. During my time at the University of Minnesota, I have been lucky enough to sit in Walter F. Mondale Hall, learning about his legacy and continuing his work for a brighter future. I am proud to have had Walter Mondale influence my life in so many ways and I am so proud to call Minnesota my home because of his work. From inspiring my studies in political science to helping fund my study abroad in Japan, Walter Mondale has left an invaluable mark on my life. He will certainly be missed.

Audrey Johannes, *Mondale Scholarship Recipient 2019-2020*

As someone who has a racial background connected to Japan, knowing that there are individuals who are devoted to making sure the connection between Japan and America is secure brings me lots of hope for the future of the two countries. This past year I received the opportunity to study abroad at Osaka Gakuin University. While I was unable to physically be in Osaka, Japan to study, I was able to continue my education through zoom class sessions. Without the Mondale Scholarship, I would not have been able to experience this unique classroom experience. The scholarship not only helped me gain more knowledge of Japan and Japanese; it also gave me the chance to meet people from all around the world who were as passionate as I am to learn about the culture and language. The platform and culture around Japanese and American relations that Ambassador Mondale fostered is something that I hope everyone will reflect on as the world progresses into a more globalized community. I will forever be extremely grateful for the opportunities that Ambassador Mondale has provided me with this scholarship as well as the hard work that he put into Japan-U.S. relations.



Claire Restad

Claire Restad, Mondale Scholarship Recipient 2020-2021





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Tsūshin
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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@us-japan.org)

In Memory of Ambassador Mondale

