

**Foreign Ministry Award: Sen. Karen Fraser**  
**Panorama City Auditorium**  
**March 12, 2015 (as prepared)**

Good evening. I would like to take a moment and give appreciation for Consul General Omura and Mr. Mizuguchi for being here this evening to celebrate our honoree Senator Karen Fraser's accomplishments. Thank you to Ralph Munro, our esteemed former secretary of state, not only for your introduction but for your longtime involvement with our sister state relationship between Hyogo, Japan and Washington and our many sister cities with Japan throughout our state.

I am happy to say the cities of Washington have more sister city agreements with counterparts in Japan than with any other nation. There are 37 of them. I credit this to the efforts of former Secretary Munro and Senator Fraser for their forward thinking approach and willingness to exchange education, culture and trade with Japan.

Now many of you may know Senator Fraser and myself go back many years. She was back then and is still today fierce in her decision making, and has spearheaded international cultural exchanges for decades. She is a lawmaker, an educator and a pioneer for bringing together two different cultures. Being one of ten distinguished Americans to receive the Foreign Ministry Award from Japan is a hard-earned honor that Senator Fraser should display with pride.

It was only a little over a year and a half ago that we, with *just a little help* from Senator Fraser, were marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary – the Golden Jubilee - of sister statehood with the Hyogo Prefecture. There were a number of events and activities in Seattle and Olympia. We were honored by the large delegation that came from Japan, led by Hyogo Governor Toshizo Ido. One of the highlights was the signing of a historic, first of its kind sister marina agreement between the Shin Nishinomiya Yacht Harbor and the Port of Olympia.

As a result of all our trade and sister city relationships and the groundwork laid by Senator Fraser and others, there are numerous trade delegations, business and cultural missions, and exchanges between young professionals and students each year between Washington and Japan. These relationships bring cultural opportunities to educate our local communities- from the Japanese language, ikebana to Soren Bushi, the traditional Japanese folk dance you saw performed by students from St. Martin's University. Impressively this school year alone, St. Martin's University is hosting 43 students from Japan and has already sent 17 students to study in Japan.

What I believe is the greatest gift of Senator Fraser's visions and foresight to develop relationships with people from around the world, is the elimination of barriers of ignorance and misunderstanding that too often keep people apart rather together in harmony.

I am privileged to not only be a colleague of Senator Fraser, but to have a friendship with an outstanding, internationally minded lawmaker of our state. Congratulations on this highest honor and my sincere appreciation to the people and government of Japan for giving my friend Senator Karen Fraser this exceptional and well deserved honor.