

**CONSULATE-GENERAL OF JAPAN**

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Conferral of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette upon Mr. Glen Yoshiaki Gondo, former President of the Japan-America Society of Houston

On April 29 (Japan Time), the Government of Japan announced the foreign recipients of the 2013 Spring Imperial Decorations. Among the 40 foreign recipients is Houstonian Mr. Glen Yoshiaki Gondo, former President of the Japan-America Society of Houston and current President of Gondo Company, Inc., who will receive the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette, in recognition of his contributions to promoting the mutual understanding between the United States and Japan and introduction of Japanese culture in the United States.

- DECORATION: The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette
- SERVICE: Contributed to promoting the mutual understanding between the United States and Japan and introduction of Japanese culture in the United States.
- NAME (AGE): Glen Yoshiaki Gondo (64)
- MAJOR TITLES:
 - ◆ Former President of the Japan-America Society of Houston
 - ◆ Former Vice-President of the Japanese American Citizens League (Houston Chapter)
 - ◆ President and Owner of: Gondo Company, Inc.; Tokyo Gardens Catering, LLC; Sushic, LLC; Gondo Consulting; Pacific Ventures; and Houston 8.
- ADDRESS (NATIONALITY): Houston, TX (USA)

Mr. Glen Gondo is a third-generation Japanese American born in Los Angeles, California in 1948. In 1962, his parents moved to Dallas to open the first Japanese restaurant in Texas. He attended North Texas State University in Denton majoring in Economics. In 1966, the family moved to Houston to open the large Japanese restaurant Tokyo Gardens, of which from 1984 Mr. Gondo was manager. It was the first restaurant to open a Japanese sushi bar and to introduce Japanese sake and beer to the Houston area. Though Tokyo Gardens closed in 1998, Mr. Gondo has since been active in developing and expanding his own many businesses and becoming very involved with non-profit organizations.

Mr. Gondo is an established businessman who has won many awards, such as the Asian Chamber of Commerce Asian-American Entrepreneur Award and the Minority Business News Houston's 1999 Remarkable Minority Business Award, for his entrepreneurial success.

Outside of his wide business interests, Mr. Gondo has been very active with the Asian communities of Houston, having served in several officer positions of non-profit organizations, including as the President of the Japan-America Society of Houston (JASH). He currently serves on the Board of Directors of JASH, the Chao Center of Asian Studies, the Asia Society of Texas, the Asian Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Houston Partnership, the Greater Houston Convention Visitors Bureau, and the World Trade Organization. He has previously been a board member of the Japan-America Society of Houston and the Greater Houston United Way. Mr. Gondo was also selected to be the

chairman of the Houston Mayoral Advisory Committee for Asian Affairs. He has received numerous awards from the Asian community for his contributions in raising political awareness, such as the 2005 Heritage Award for Community Service from the Asian/Pacific American Heritage Association, the Asian American Leadership Award from the Asia Society, and the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation.

Mr. Gondo served as the Japan-America Society of Houston president three times and as a board member for almost 20 years, and one of the greatest impacts he made on Houston was in his first term by founding the Houston Japan Festival. Japan Festival is a two-day fair that introduces Japanese culture, arts, and cuisine to the Houston community. The festival is held in Hermann Park every year and is the largest of its kind in the southern United States. The festival showcases Japanese pop culture elements, like contemporary music and anime, alongside traditional culture, like ikebana, tea ceremony, and martial arts. Due to the efforts of Mr. Gondo, the Japan Festival has consistently grown over the years and attracts about 30,000 visitors. \$10,000 of proceeds from the Japan Festival, which is now celebrating its 20th year, is donated for the maintenance of the Japanese Garden in Hermann Park. While serving on the JASH board, Mr. Gondo has been supporting the Annual Texas Japanese Language Speech Contest and promoting sister-city exchange between Houston and Chiba.

Mr. Gondo has also made significant contribution to the improvement of the status of Japanese Americans in the U.S. as a member of the Houston Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), the largest and oldest Asian American civil and human rights organization in the nation, established in 1929. As a member of the Houston JACL, he and others reached out to the Texas Board of Education to have included in the state's history curriculum: 1) Executive Order 9066 made by President Roosevelt to intern Japanese Americans during World War II, and 2) the rescue of Texas' 36th Infantry Division from behind enemy lines by the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, a unit comprised mostly of Japanese Americans. Houston JACL succeeded in its efforts and the Board of Education has included these key pieces of Japanese-American history in the curriculum.

For more information or if you plan to cover this event, please contact Lisa Kostelecky at 713-652-2977 x2107

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