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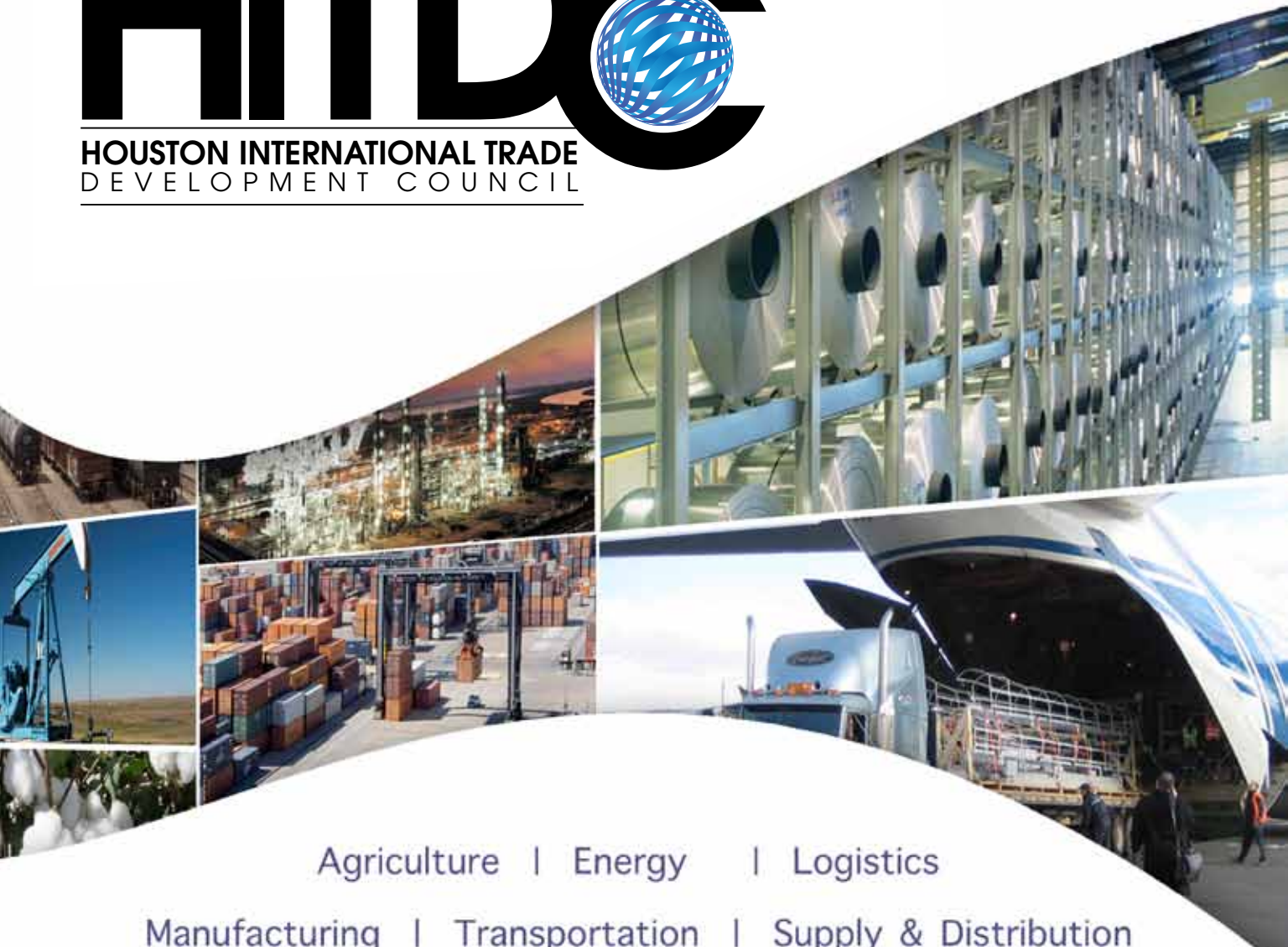
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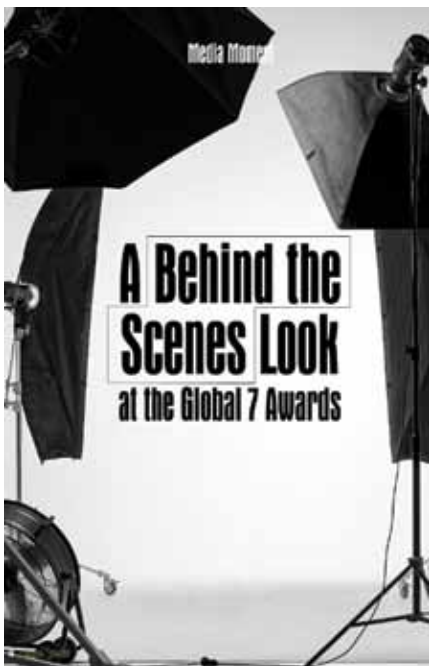
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2019 Global Seven Awards

On May 24, 2019 *iF Magazine* was seen on the scene at the Houston International Trade Development Council's (HITDC) 6th Annual Global Seven (G7) Awards Gala held at the Ballroom at Bayou Place. The event was a tremendous success! Boasting an audience of 300+ guests who were all there to celebrate the G7 Awards honorees for 2019. The entertainment and live and silent auctions were the highlights of the event. Nearly all of the event's guests participated in the auction which was purposed to raise funds for HITDC's F1 Visa International Student Scholarship program. The honorees were excited and grateful. G7 guests were dazzled with stories of courage and commitment from the honorees that are always the hallmark of successful people.



HONOREES FOR THE EVENING:

Dr. Laura G. Murillo
"Global Impact"

Flor Dimassi
"Excellence in International
Business Service"

Soledad Tanner
"Outstanding International Consultant"

Centrell Reed
"International Rising Star"

Shawntell McWilliams
"Outstanding Advocate"

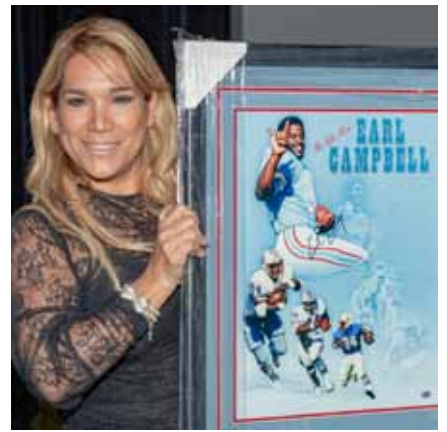
Harry Gee, Jr.
"Outstanding Nonprofit"

Angelica Garcia Davila
"Outstanding Corporate Citizenship"









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seen on the scene



Interfaith Iftar

An evening hosted by the United Arab Emirates
Consul General in Houston, Texas:
His Excellency Saeed Mubarak Almhairi

Our invitation reads: Houston has been recognized as the most Diverse city in the US. To celebrate the spirit of diversity we mark this year of Tolerance, at all levels, we will come together during the Holy month of Ramadan at Iftar with the international representatives, community members and religious leaders of faith organizations across the Greater Houston area to promote a more inclusive society and recognize the importance of bridging different cultures and faiths. On June, 3rd 2019 from 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm at Hilton Houston Post Oak by the Galleria 2001 Post Oak Blvd., Houston, Texas 77056



Shalom, Salaam, Peace.

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, observed by Muslims worldwide.





Ramadan is considered the holiest month of the year for Muslims. In Ramadan, Muslims fast from food and drink during the sunlit hours as a means of learning self-control, gratitude, and compassion for those less fortunate.

Doctors agree that fasting is extremely beneficial for lowering cholesterol levels and for other health benefits. Fasting is a means of purifying the body as well as the spirit, as it gives the body a rest from the continuous task of digesting food.

The evening was an intimate gathering of people from Houston’s International Community on the last evening of Ramadan. Representatives from the City of Houston, University of Houston, Sister Cities, Interfaith Ministries, Higher Impact Ministries, Houston International Trade Development Council, Noyolo Love, Thinkpeace International, the office of Larry Green, the Honorary Khaled Rizk, Consul General of Egypt, and more gathered to celebrate Iftar and the year of Tolerance.



His Excellency Saeed Mubarak Almheiri greeted us and delivered the first inspiring speech of the evening, he spoke about the need for everyone to continue working together towards peace, tolerance, and prosperity. The Rabbi began by blessing everyone and added “ Everyone should use his abilities to seed wherever he comes from with the seeds of tolerance and understanding.”



Iftar is one of the religious observances of Ramadan, and is often done as a community, with Muslim people gathering to break their fast together. The meal is taken just after the call to prayer Maghrib, which is around sunset. Traditionally three dates are eaten to break the fast, in emulation of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad who broke his fast in this manner, but this is not mandatory. Many Muslims believe that feeding someone Iftar as a form of charity is very rewarding and that such was practiced by the Prophet Muhammad.

“Allahuma inni laka sumtu wa ‘ala rizqika aftartu “ - “O Allah! for thy sake I have fasted and now I break the fast with the food that comes from thee.”

Chris Olson, Director of Trade and International Affairs for the City of Houston, closed the evening. “Houston is the most Diverse City in the U.S., but as Mayor Turner often says, it does not matter how diverse you are if you aren’t inclusive. The year of Tolerance is one aspect of that, of how we need to continue building a more tolerant and more inclusive society.”





Filipino American COC Business Forum

Images by IF Chief Photographer Heidi Powell-Prera



In Houston the Filipino community gave Subic Administrator and Chairman, Atty Wilma Eisma a warm welcome and a tour of the city. At City Hall a bridge was made when on behalf of the Filipino American Chamber of Commerce Greater Houston (FACCGH), Loloy Reyes signed an MOU with Subic Administrator and Chairman, Atty Wilma Eisma. Houston — Subic is open to our business! Mabuhay!



Noemi Frias had this to say about the presentation given at ITC “Service, if it comes from the heart and is borne out of one’s love for people— knows no bounds. It stems from one’s desire to help and in the process, get helped. It is the cycle that is spun and fueled by the spirit of volunteerism. The same spirit that has created the foundation of organizations, establishments (even countries) that we now enjoy. Listening to Atty. Wilma “Amy” Eisma (Chairman and Administrator of Subic Metropolitan Authority or SBMA) roll out the plans for Subic, touching base on its history, explaining its operations; citing even the struggles and challenges involved — I couldn’t help but admire her vision, her grit and tenacity in getting the job done. I have seen Subic during its heydays when the Americans were still occupying the base and the US Navy’s 7th fleet was a constant sight. I’ve seen Subic after Mt. Pinatubo erupted and how it struggled to get back on its feet after the catastrophe and after the Americans left. I have seen how volunteers protected and maintained order within Subic during those dark days and I am so proud of what it has now become and I am looking forward to seeing the plans for a much better and brighter Subic come into fruition. Mabuhay!”





For its part, the Filipino American Chamber of Commerce Greater Houston (FACCGH) and the Federation of Philippine American Chambers of Commerce (FPACC) will try its best to help in this accord, in whatever way it can — to open doors and strengthen the bridge that was created these past few days.

Sister Cities of Houston, Texas West Africa Chamber of Commerce and the Caribbean Chamber of Commerce.

For more information about Subic and what it can offer in terms of business, trade, investment, leisure, tourism, retirement etc., check our website at www.faccgh.org



On behalf of FACCGH, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all those who came and attended the Business Forum last night at the ITC. It was a huge success! Your presence made the difference. A big shout out to Mr. Ricardo Arias, Trade Development Manager of the Port of Houston Authority; the Organization of Filipinos in Texas, our sister Chamber from San Antonio, Houston FilAm community leaders and representatives from *International Focus Magazine*, the Houston International Trade Development Council, the

“Promoting entrepreneurship and bridging local and international business opportunities.”





The 26th Annual Japan Festival Houston

Images and article By: Heidi Powell-iF Magazine Heidipp@ifmagazine.net



The 26th annual Japan Festival Houston was held April 13 and 14 in the Japanese Garden in Herman Park. This Houston festival has become one of the most attended in the United States. Japanese culture on display included martial arts exhibitions, tea ceremonies and taiko playing, a percussion instrument similar to a drum, as well as demonstrations and displays of Ikebana flower arrangements, origami, bonsai, and more. Their mission is to provide a quality family event that fosters appreciation of the rich cultural heritage of Japan and contributes to the rich international profile of Houston and its diverse cultural communities.



Japan Festival of Houston, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization, sponsored the Japan Festival Houston to educate and promote the rich cultural heritage of Japan by demonstrating and exhibiting Japanese customs and traditions, both old and new. The Japanese American Chamber of Commerce and the Consulate General of Japan were on hand as co-hosts.

The first presentation in the Japanese Gardens showed visitors a traditional Japanese tea ceremony, an elaborate tradition that included cleansing the utensils, picking out specific bowls and silverware and stirring the tea a certain way. Tea and sweets were then served to visitors.



Around the Reflection Pool were vendor booths with a variety of items such as; food, fans, umbrellas, kimonos and more. Artist Ann Spencer, known as the “Clay Flower Lady,” who has been making flowers for a decade, had one of the most interesting booths. Originally from Laos, she has been coming to the festival for five years. Her most extravagant design was an orchid, about a foot and a half tall, in a range of colors. There were smaller arrangements, a few inches tall, and everything had at least one signature mushroom at the bottom. Her appreciation of nature and her attention to detail were wonderful to experience. Her work is amazing and very affordable right now.

Everywhere one could see visitors in traditional Japanese dress, and there were a lot of individuals dressed as anime characters for the Cosplay Contest which is always a lot of fun for fans. Cosplay is the practice of portraying a fictional character from anime, manga, TV shows, movies, video games, or books.

My favorite part of the festival is the excellent international musicians they bring to Houston. This year was exceptional with The Yano Brothers, Sachet, and Kohei!



The Yano Brothers took the stage and captured us with their first song. Made up of three brothers: eldest brother Michael, middle brother David, and youngest brother Sanshiro, the Yano Brothers is a vocal unit featuring three brothers of Ghanaian and Japanese descent. Melding Japanese lyrics with a lively African rhythm, the trio is known for creating “Jafrican” music born of a fusion of genres. Identified by Mainichi News as the face of a changing Japan in the “Heisei Transformation,” the Yano Brothers have embraced their role by turning their experiences with prejudice and racism into songs. “Even if your countries of birth or eyes or hair or skin color are different, we can understand each other,” go the lyrics to “One Step,” one of their songs. www.yanobrothers.com



SACHET’s performance was beautiful and inspiring. The wind added an extra element to their soulful performance. Yumi Kadota (acoustic piano), Kouzan Shiba (Japanese bamboo flute) and Ayumi Watanabe (viola) Sachet is a musical trio that fuses Japanese and Western musical elements with a distinct harmony... small, perfumed bag ... Borrowing from the French word “Sachet,” phonetically pronounced “Sashie” in Japanese, the trio formed in 2016 aims to deliver music that gently envelopes their audiences. “Sashie” is comprised of three members: “sa” represents pianist Yumi Kadota, “shi” represents shakuhachi player Kohzan Shiba, and “e” represents violist Ayumi Watanabe. sachetyak.wixsite.com/sachet



Kohei kept the crowd moving throughout the day. Singer, songwriter and composer Kohei is an all-around entertainer. The Apollo winner and McDonald’s GospelFest finalist has opened for the likes of Wu Tang Clan’s Raekwon, Lil Mama, Lyle Jennings and Case, and has also been featured on the Steve Harvey Show and Sony’s M-On TV with Japanese Recording Artist The RAMPAGE. Kohei is equally known for his emceeing prowess and is the official host of the East Coast’s largest Japanese street fare — Japan Fest — as well as J-Anime Night. As a IFA United Nations NGO-OCCAM International Ambassador-Singer, Kohei encourages cultural exchange between Japan and the United States. koheisings.com



Japan Festival Houston is co-sponsored by the City of Houston and the Houston Parks and Recreation Department. Top sponsors were the official airline ANA-Inspiration of Japan, The Friedkin Group, Gulf States Toyota & Kuraray. Checks were presented to the Herman Park Conservancy to preserve the Japanese Garden by the Japan Business association of Houston for \$6000, Japan Festival for \$10,000, and JAGH for \$1,000. A full list of sponsors and participating organizations is available on their website. For information on how to be a part of the 27th Annual Japan Festival in 2020 go to houstonjapanfest.org. Remember, the garden is always there to enjoy jgarden.org/gardens.asp?ID=376



Mixer and Art Exhibition Fundraiser for HITDC's 6th Annual Global 7 Awards

By Heidi Powell-Prera, IF Magazine

Hotel Alessandra hosted a fabulous Mixer and Art Exhibition Fundraiser for HIT-DC's 6th Annual Global 7 Awards on May 17, 2019. Thank you to Tiffany Charros, Alessandra's Business Travel Sales Manager and I.F Magazine's Social Director, Sonia Guimbellot, for putting this beautiful evening together.

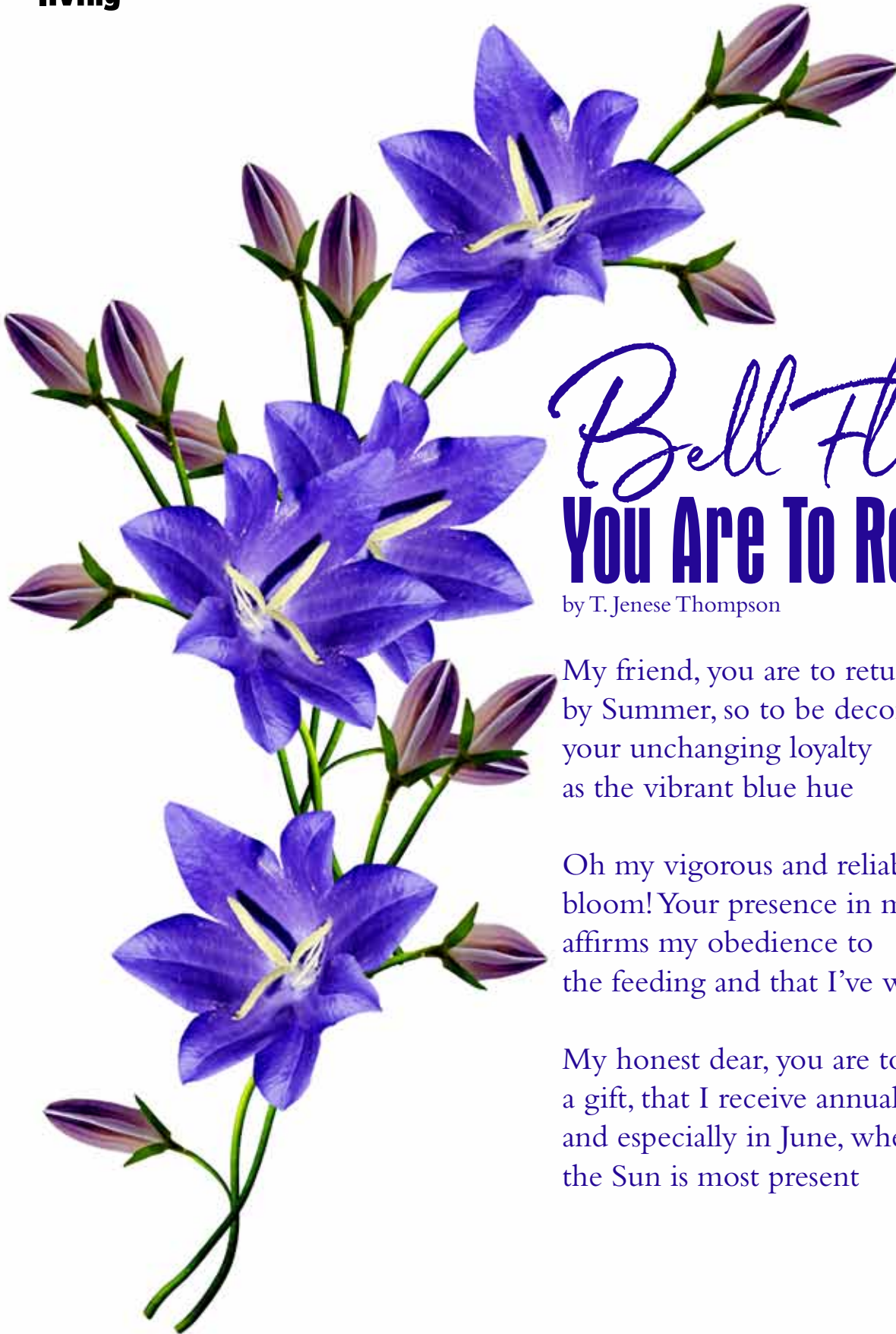
M.I.X. Productions donated 100% of all sales to Global 7 Scholarships with works for purchase by artists La Donna Foto, Heidi Powell-Prera and Diana Persha.

We were happy to have Higham & Associates as part of this splendid evening donating 25% of all gross sales to Global 7 Scholarships with works for purchase by artists Dr. Mohammad Ali Bhatti, Ray Dunlap, Lyn Sullivan, Elizabeth Sosa, Daryl Gannon, Daniel Brents, Gabriel Prusmack, Susan Budge, Charles Jesse Miller II, Jiashan Lang, David Graeve, Laura Spector and Mark Hendrix.

Hotel Alessandra also generously contributed to the silent Auction at the 6th Annual Global 7 Awards held at the Ballroom at Bayou Place on May 24, 2019. M.I.X. Production's artists participated in the silent auction along with prestigious retail establishments LUCHO men's and women's apparel, Casa Italia fine italian design at the Design Center, Caruggi's women's apparel, Beviamo fine wines, Roka Akor Japanese Steakhouse, and more.







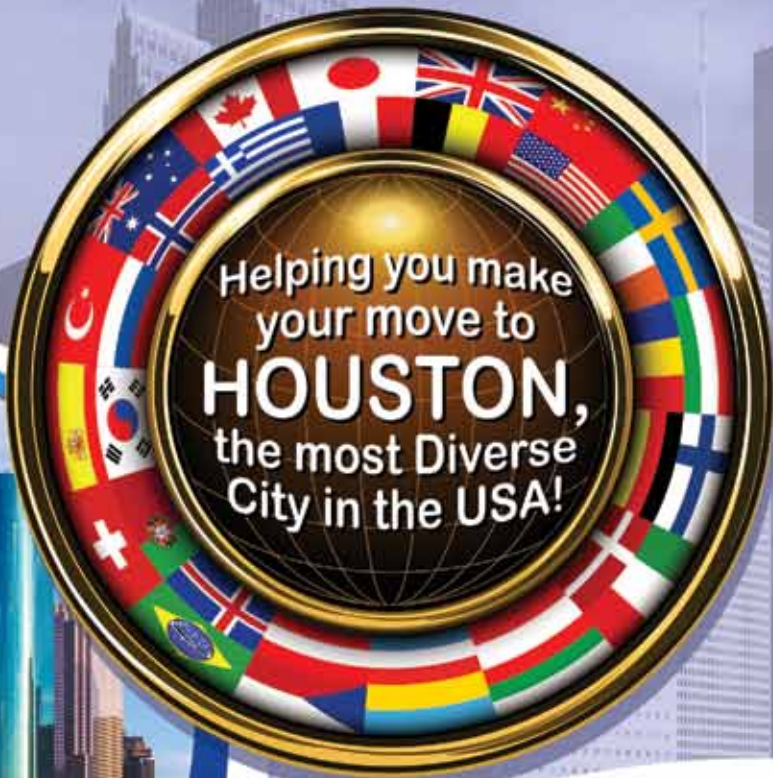
Bell Flower, You Are To Return

by T. Jenese Thompson

My friend, you are to return
by Summer, so to be decor, that is
your unchanging loyalty
as the vibrant blue hue

Oh my vigorous and reliable flower
bloom! Your presence in my garden
affirms my obedience to
the feeding and that I've watered

My honest dear, you are to remain
a gift, that I receive annually
and especially in June, when
the Sun is most present



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By **Liz Schraye** USGLC
President and CEO, U.S. Global Leadership Coalition

ISIS + EBOLA. The Ebola outbreak in eastern Congo is now the second largest in history and the Washington Post Editorial Board is sounding the alarm: “Ebola is like a fire. It keeps burning.”

• **This should keep us up at night:** Adding to the growing violence in the region, ISIS has now claimed credit for an attack that killed or wounded as many as 25 people. The new attack compounds the enormous challenge of containing the year-long outbreak of Ebola in the region with reported cases now surging past 2,000.

MEXICAN STANDOFF. Even as the showdown between Congress and the Administration on tariffs on Mexico is grabbing most of the headlines, the debate over U.S. assistance to the Northern Triangle continues. Here are some quick updates you might have missed:

• **Just before the announcement of the new tariffs,** the Mexican Foreign Minister proposed a U.S. development fund for Central America to **Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan** – highlighting that Mexico and countries in the region had already pledged \$30 billion over the next

5 years for development programs.

• **Following their trip to visit with Guatemalan mothers,** a group of 3 Republican lawmakers – **Reps. Susan Brooks (R-IN), Ann Wagner (R-MO) and Carol Miller (R-WV)** – tell the story of Sandra, a 31-year-old mom in the pages of USA Today. They make the case that “eliminating the root causes of the migration crisis at our border entails standing with these moms.”

• **In an official act of legislative pushback,** House Foreign Affairs Committee leaders Eliot Engel (D-NY) and Michael McCaul (R-TX) introduced legislation to authorize U.S. assistance to Central America – and included language to specifically prevent aid from being “reprogrammed, transferred or rescinded.”

VENEZUELA CRISIS. As the political stalemate in Venezuela persists, some of the U.S. humanitarian assistance designated for the country – which had been halted at the border by the Maduro regime – is now being distributed to Venezuelan refugees in Colombia. This comes after

the Red Cross was finally permitted to begin aid operations in the country after significant U.S. and international pressure.

• **Fact check:** Despite the regime’s insistence that there is no humanitarian crisis in the country, nearly 90% of Venezuelans live in poverty – a percentage that has doubled since 2014 – and families are fleeing the country in record numbers.

• **Nearby in Ecuador:** After being expelled by the former Ecuadoran president 4 years ago, USAID is re-entering the South American country. **USAID Administrator Mark Green** recently opened the new office there as the agency stands up operations to provide assistance Venezuelan refugees. Also back on the scene in Ecuador: the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA).

IVANKA AT THE HAGUE. Speaking at the 2019 Global Entrepreneurship Summit in the Netherlands, Ivanka Trump channeled the importance of engaging women in the developing world: “All too often women’s empowerment is talked about as a social justice issue... It’s also a growth and GDP issue... if you aren’t embracing and leveraging 50% of your population, you’re not going to reach your potential.”

BUDGET ON THE MOVE. The latest intel suggests that the State, Foreign Operations (SFOPS) appropriations bill will likely be on the House floor next week, rolled together with four other appropriations bills – Defense, Labor HHS, Energy & Water, and Legislative Branch. Budget watchers are keeping an eye on any potential amendments that would cut the topline for overseas civilian programs.



CAMPAIGN 2020. Washington Post foreign policy commentator **Josh Rogin** warns Democratic presidential candidates not to shy away from talking about foreign policy on the campaign trail. He writes: “In the 2020 presidential contest, foreign policy will feature more prominently than ever, and Democrats ignore it at their peril.”

- **Split over 2 nights**, what is potentially the largest presidential debate event ever, the first Democratic debate is scheduled for June 26-27 in Miami with slots for 20 candidates. New York Magazine reports that the “largest Democratic fields up until now were in 1972 (15 candidates) and 1976 (16 candidates).”

- **What to watch:** While so far there’s not a dedicated foreign policy-only debate during the primary season, expect foreign policy to be a key topic included in the first debates.

FRAGILITY FOCUS. At a time when half the world’s poor live in fragile or conflict-affected states, Congress is stepping up and passing

new bipartisan legislation, the Global Fragility Act, to help prevent extremism and promote stability in some of the world’s toughest environments.

- **10 Year Plan:** This House bill – championed by Engel and McCaul along with Reps. Smith (D-WA), Wagner (R-MO), Keating (D-MA), and Rooney (R-FL) – requests a 10-year strategy from the Administration to address the root causes of violence and fragility and streamline U.S. stabilization efforts. The action now moves to the Senate.

CHINA FIGHTING AIDS? Taking note of the rise of China in the developing world – including Beijing’s new commitments on global health – former **U.S. AIDS chief Dr. Mark Dybul** and former **Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist** pressed the White House and Congress not to take their own foot off the gas in the fight to end HIV/AIDS around the world.

NEW PLAYERS, FAMILIAR FACES. A number of new foreign affairs confirmations have made it through the Senate: **Kimberly Reed** was confirmed as the U.S. Export-Import Bank’s new president, along with former **Rep. Spencer Bachus (R-AL)** and **Judith Pryor** to the ExIm Board of Directors. Meanwhile, Richard Parker, a former USGLC communications director, was also confirmed as USAID’s Assistant Administrator for Legislative and Public Affairs. Yeah, we’re pretty proud of him, too!

SOME GAVE ALL. As we reflect on the 75th anniversary of D-Day, it’s worth re-reading former U.S. Marine Corps Commandant **General Michael Hagee**’s words on what he learned from participating in ceremonies commemorating the end of World War I and II: “I look to those who have gone before us and shown us why American leadership is just as vital to our world as it is for our country.”

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Interview at OTC with the Global Vice President Gates Corporation Claude Durocher

by Sandra Bernstein, iF Magazine

This year Houston hosted their 50th OTC (Offshore Technology Conference). Engineers, Research Scientists, entrepreneurs, and oil and gas corporations large and small come from all parts of the world to Houston to network and learn about the newest scientific and technological developments in the energy industry that supplies the world. I had the privilege of interviewing the global vice president of the Gates Corporation at their booth, Claude Durocher. He graciously gave me his time just before leaving to catch a plane to the UK.

Sandy: I have been talking with Maria Miller at your home office, she asked me to discuss with you the recently approved Black Gold 10K Choke and Kill hose.

C. Durocher: The real story is the Gates Corporation was founded 108 years ago. For decades we were the global manufacturer of innovative, highly engineered power transmission and fluid power solutions. We have supplied belts and hoses to domestic and foreign companies. We didn't have the high pressure hoses needed for fluid control in oil and gas uses.

In 2016 we were covering about half what the

market needed. So we looked around and found a company that was a step ahead of us in the development of the products needed. Toward the end of 2016, we began discussions with Techflow, a U. K. company with a portfolio of pressure hoses. In 2017, we acquired the assets of Techflow. The acquisition gave us the portfolio for the R and D. They had been fast-tracking the research on the development of high pressure hoses. By merging their projects with our projects, we were able to have a portfolio to reach the market. The Black Gold 10K is the first commercial product to come out of this merger. It is the cornerstone of what we believe will be a larger family of specialty products.



Sandy: My next question is how does one get to be a Global Vice President?

C. Durocher: I am an engineer by degree. I joined the Gates Corporation in 2016. In 2014, the Gates company had taken a hit. The senior officers were looking to revitalize the company. They were looking for someone with extensive oil and gas experience with a global perspective. That is when they came calling. I had just over 25 years experience. So, I came to Gates in 2016. As soon as I joined the company, we began to look at the markets in the U. S., Central and South America, Europe, and Asia. It was the consensus that the international market was where there was real growth potential.

Sandy: What is the advantage, if any, of offshore drilling over drilling on land?

C. Durocher: The exploration and development of oil reservoirs has been going on for 100 years. Many in the industry feel that all the land reserves have been found and exploited. Also, the offshore reservoirs are larger. Of course reaching them requires special equipment, and that is where we come in. If a large reservoir of oil and gas can be found on land, drilling is simpler, more economical, and easier.

Sandy: This hose makes offshore drilling possible?

C. Durocher: The deep water drilling requires pressure hoses of 15,000 PSI or more. This hose is good for drilling on land and shallow waters offshore. We are in the process of developing pressure hoses for deep water drilling of 15,000 PSI and more. By the end of 2019, we should have such a hose available for the market.

Sandy: How many countries is the Gates Corporation in?

C. Durocher: There are Gates facilities in more than 100 countries around the world. There are oil and gas facilities in 12 countries.

Sandy: Is there anything you would add concerning future plans for the Gates Corporation?

C. Durocher: With the consistent research and development of new technology, Gates has an exciting future in the Middle East, Asia, Europe and Latin America.

For more information about the Gates Corporation go to: www.gates.com



The Honorable Hideo Fukushima

Consul-General Consulate General of Japan in Houston

Interview by: **Katia Hadjiyska**

THE

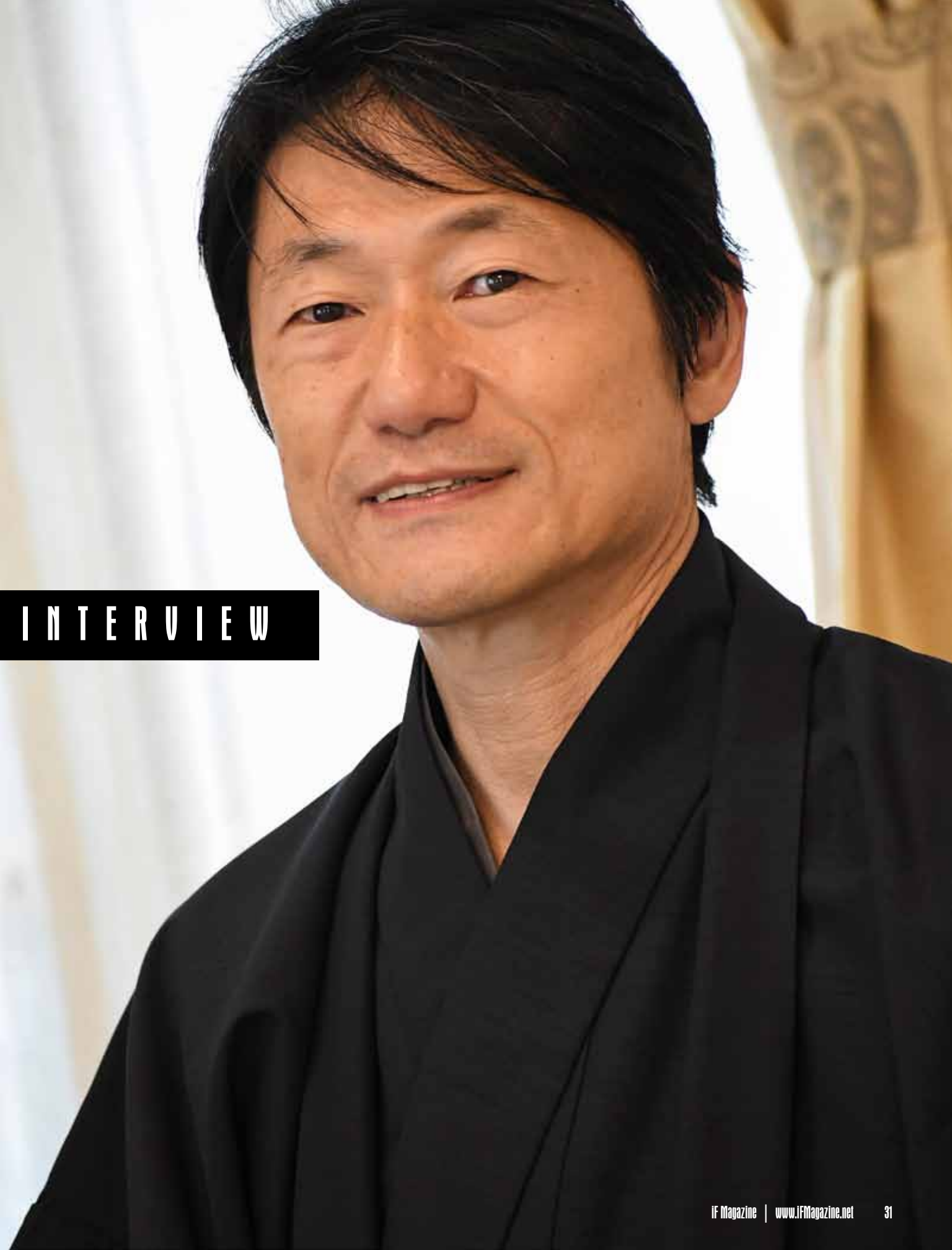


***Katia:** First, tell us about yourself and walk us through your background.*

Hon. Fukushima: During my 34 years in the Japanese Foreign Service, I have been assigned to the United States three times, in addition to other overseas postings such as Rome, Moscow, and Bangkok. The first time I was assigned to the U.S. was in the mid-1980s, when I was attached to the Embassy in Washington D.C. while studying there as a graduate student. That was my first experience abroad, and I found American society and culture to be fascinating. Of course, there were moments of culture-shock. English was difficult, and the portion-sizes of food seemed gigantic. I also remember the euphoria of seeing the Washington Redskins win the Super Bowl. That was a period of heightened political sen-

sitivity for the bilateral relationship. While the vast majority of Americans were friendly to Japan, the issue of “trade friction” between the two nations was such a major part of the discourse. During the Reagan years, there were some harsh reactions to the large trade deficits the U.S. ran with Japan. I saw congressmen and their supporters crush Japanese TV sets in front of the White House. That episode always reminds me just how important diplomacy and management of the bilateral relationship can be.

Around 20 years later, I was again assigned to Washington D.C. as a minister of the Embassy. The political and social landscape that I saw had changed quite significantly during my years away. The Cold War was long over, and Barack Obama had just won the presidency with a message of “yes, we can” and “change”



INTERVIEW

for the American people. Several years had passed since 9/11 and the beginning of the War on Terror, and people seemed ready to turn their attention back to their domestic well-being. As I joined the huge crowd at the National Mall to celebrate President Obama's swearing-in, I felt a real sense of hopefulness in the air. Meanwhile, my wife and I were overjoyed that D.C. again had an MLB team, and became big fans of the Washington Nationals.

Now, a decade later, I have the good fortune of being posted in the United States for a third opportunity, this time, not in the familiar surroundings of Washington D.C., but rather in the wholly different world of Houston, Texas. You might ask which city I like more. Sorry, but I can only answer that question diplomatically, after all that is my line of work. However, I can tell you without a doubt that I love this city. It is so open and welcoming, and its people are friendly and laid-back in spite of the thriving business sector. I see that my fellow expats feel quite comfortable here, since the city nurtures diversity and recognizes it as an important source of dynamism. It should also go without saying that my family and I have become huge fans of the Houston Astros! Both on a personal and professional level. I really feel fortunate to serve as Consul-General of Japan in Houston right now.

Katia: *Tell us about the Consulate General of Japan in Houston. What parts of America are covered by the Consulate and what are the services it provides?*

Hon. Fukushima: TH. E. Fukushima: The Japanese Consulate in Houston covers the Texas-Oklahoma region as one of 18 diplomatic missions that the Japanese government



has in the United States and its territories. You might think that covering only 2 states is no big deal, but Texas alone is almost twice as large as Japan. Honestly, attending events and meetings in major cities around the state and traveling between them takes up most of my working hours.

One of the consulate's major duties is assisting residents of local Japanese communities. This includes our so-called "consular services" of issuing

passports and various other government certificates, as well as ensuring the safety of Japanese nationals in case of a disaster. We are always ready to provide 24/7 email alerts with information on potential dangers in the region and how residents should respond. After Hurricane Harvey, the Houston city government has grown more prepared for extreme weather, and the consulate is grateful for all of their advice and guidance.



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Katia: *What are some past, present and future goals for the Japan's relationship with the U.S.? Tell us about your perspective on ways that U.S.-Japan cooperation may be furthered.*

Hon. Fukushima: An important aspect of our work is strengthening the relationship between Japan and Texas, which has really come to thrive in recent years. According to our provisional numbers, the Japanese population in the state reached 12,000 people in 2018, which is a 16% increase compared to the previous year. That figure looks only at the number of Japanese citizens registered with our office and does not include the 11,000 plus Japanese-Americans who call the state home. The number of Japanese businesses in Texas has also been growing at a substantial pace. Excluding any American subsidiaries, a total of 414 Japanese companies had established themselves here as of 2018, for a 12% increase over the previous year.

Basically, much of this growth stems from a rising awareness in Japan of the terrific business opportunities available in Texas. So many Japanese companies are choosing the state because of its booming economy, business-friendly environment, low cost of living, low taxes, and convenient geographic location. A little over three years ago, the Japanese airlines ANA and JAL joined the American carriers UA and AA in offering direct flights from cities in Texas to Tokyo, and ever since, there has been an increase in the number of major Japanese companies locating in the state. To name a few, the air-conditioning manufacturer Daikin opened a massive factory in Waller; Mitsubishi Heavy Industries moved their North American headquarters to Houston; and Toyota Motor likewise moved their North American headquarters to Dallas.

Katia: *What are some big picture issues facing Japan today? How is the Japanese business community uniquely positioning itself to help Americans who are interested in doing business in Japan?*

Hon. Fukushima: A number of Japanese companies in the region are part of the energy sector; so quite naturally, many have operations in and around Houston. Japan is importing much more energy from the United States than in the past, around a \$4 billion increase in just the last few years. Historically, much of this business focused on oil and petrochemicals, but the LNG sector is also proving to be extremely vibrant. One project that will be a game-changer for both Texas and Japan, is the Freeport LNG export terminal, which is itself a mega-joint-venture between American and Japanese companies. It is expected to begin production later in 2019, and has signed long-term contracts to export LNG to several electric companies in Japan for at least the next 20 years.

Another major project on the horizon is the Texas Central Railroad, which hopes to connect Houston and Dallas via a convenient 90 minute train ride. It plans to utilize Japanese bullet train, or "shinkansen", technology which has earned a perfect safety record in Japan, with no crashes or fatalities during its entire 55 years in operation. Historically, Houston was recognized as an important railroad hub for the American South, and this project has the potential to build on that reputation with cutting-edge technology that can further boost the local economy.

In fact, the Texas Secretary of State's office recently informed me that Japan leads all other nations as the number 1 job creator in Texas, having generated almost 17,000 new jobs in the state over the last 8 years. Japa-

nese companies invested almost \$5 billion in the state's economy during that same period, but that's not the only contribution they have made to the region. These companies are always grateful to the hardworking people of Texas, and try to give back to their communities with programs and activities like STEM education for local kids. People around Texas really value these sorts of activities, and they show how Japanese companies are always trying to assimilate into local communities, becoming socially engaged and "Americanized" in the process.

Katia: *Is there anything we have not discussed that you would like to mention?*

Hon. Fukushima: One of my favorite stories happened about 6 or 7 years ago. At that time, the Space Shuttle Endeavor was being retired and moved from the Johnson Space Center in Houston to a museum in Los Angeles. It was announced that Toyota's powerful Tundra pickup truck, which is manufactured locally in San Antonio, would be used to tow the massive spacecraft. Some people were critical when they learned of this, arguing that such an important symbol of American science and technology should not be led by a "Japanese" truck. But other Texans were strongly supportive of the decision and argued that the Tundra should be considered an "American" truck, because the share of its parts made in the U.S.A. is actually higher than any domestic brand. Over 80% of parts in the Tundra are manufactured in the United States, with 70% being manufactured locally in Texas. When people learned the details of this argument, the Tundra became more popular than ever before in the state, and local Toyota factories now describe themselves fittingly as making American cars with Japanese technology.



Entrepreneur

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I am glad to be of any assistance when it comes to developing such mutually beneficial business relationships, including forging new partnerships with organizations like GHP and the Japanese Business Association of Houston. The city's Mayor Turner, who I admire for his passion and dedication to diversity, has been a very active ally in promoting these relationships, saying that the Japanese community should feel "at home" in the city. Those words typify Houston's spirit of hospitality and openness for which I am deeply grateful.

Another vitally important aspect of our mission is to foster mutual understanding between the people of Japan and Texas. On that score, we are lucky to be located in Houston, where so many people are not just aware of, but also interested in Japanese culture. Just over the last few years, we have seen a wide variety of

Japanese restaurants open their doors for business in the area, including sushi bars, ramen shops, and izakayas. That is certainly a pleasant surprise for us Japanese expats, and we are so glad to see the people of Houston take to our culinary culture.

One event that put this growing popularity on full display was this year's Japan Festival Houston, which was recently held in Hermann Park, home to one of the most authentic Japanese garden in the United States. This was my first time participating in the event, and frankly I was stunned by the size of the crowds. Around 25,000 people attended the 2-day festival, mostly consisting of local people who enjoyed the grand showcase of Japanese culture on display. The event's organizers, including the Japan America Society of Houston and Hermann Park, worked tirelessly to provide everyone

with a vast array of activities and exhibitions centering on traditional and contemporary Japanese culture. I am deeply thankful for everything they did to put together such a lively fun event. As I walked around the festival grounds and saw so many people enjoying themselves, I felt so lucky that I am able to serve in this remarkable city. I know that those memories will be a constant reminder to me of how meaningful the Japan-Texas relationship is to so many people, and also a source of encouragement to develop those bonds of friendship as much as possible.

On that subject, next year will present a golden opportunity for the people of Texas to visit Japan for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. I genuinely hope that many people will come, not just to see the games, but also to see the country and its many sights.

The person-to-person exchanges between Japan and Texas extend over a number of spheres, including academia. There are so many fruitful partnerships between researchers in the two areas, and last fall we saw one such collaboration get its due recognition with the joint conferment of the 2019 Nobel Prize in Medicine to professors from Japan and Texas. Together, Professor Tasuku Honjo of Kyoto University and Professor James Allison of MD Anderson broke new ground in furthering our understanding of cancer and its treatment with work that was truly worthy of this great honor. When I learned that that someone from Texas and someone from Japan had received such global recognition for research that will benefit all mankind, I felt a deep sense of pride.

At the level of our individual citizens, the sister city relationship between Houston and the Japanese city of Chiba has been truly noteworthy. Thanks to the dedication of the City of Houston and organizations like JASH, that relationship has been thriving for over 45 years now. One of its most beautiful aspects is the youth exchange program, where groups of students alternate visiting each other's cities in immersive homestay experiences. Second Lady Karen Pence, who is also an Honorary Vice-Chairwoman for Sister Cities International, spoke to me about her wonderful memories spending time with some of these students when she visited Japan. The mayor of Chiba visited Houston along with the rest of the delegation last time, so we anticipate Mayor Turner will likewise visit Japan soon!

The U.S.-Japan bilateral relationship has long been a key alliance for both countries, and it will doubtlessly continue to be so into the future. The modern form of the alliance was



agreed to about 60 years ago, and it laid the groundwork for the fruitful relations we enjoy today. In the years since then, there have been up and downs, and occasional hiccups as the global geopolitical situation has evolved, but the close ties shared between Japan and the United States have been constant. If you look at opinion polls of the American public in recent years, such as the annual Gallup poll, Japan is consistently among the top 3 nations, alongside Canada and the UK, when people are asked whether they view a country favorably. The proportion of Americans who view Japan in a positive light has hovered above 85% in the last few years, and the proportion of Japanese who view the United States favorably is similar.

These mutual positive perceptions were not achieved overnight, but rather are the product of long-standing efforts to build trust by parties on both sides of the Pacific. Both nations have stood by one another offering aid and support during times of need, such as after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, or the 2011 Great Tsunami in Japan. These memories of beneficence and kindness during moments of national trauma are deeply held in the minds of our citizens, and they help to build long-lasting trust and friendship between our people.

The U.S.-Japan alliance will surely continue to bolster stability and prosperity throughout the globe, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. The bedrock of this steadfast partnership is our body of shared interests and core values with regards to democracy, economic prosperity, the rule of law, and human rights. The current geopolitical situation is one of flux and uncertainty, where threats like terrorism and economic challenges can easily cross borders, but the U.S.-Japan alliance provides a solid foundation of stability from which these problems can be addressed and resolved.

In regards to that, we look forward to President Trump visiting Japan as the first state guest of Emperor Naruhito, who was just enthroned as the new Emperor of Japan on May 1st. It is sure to be an occasion full of deep symbolism with momentous events that will highlight and reaffirm the bonds between our countries. His Majesty Naruhito, as Emperor of Japan, is a symbol of the unity of the nation and its people, and by warmly welcoming the U.S. head of state, he will provide an opportunity for everyone to reflect on the deep friendship that exists between our two nations.

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Marie Lee

President of the Alief International Community Association



Marie Lee's dedication and patriotism has been evidenced and noticed throughout her distinguished career in public service. At a time when women in the workforce was not as commonplace as today, Marie found herself being the first in many and necessarily setting the standard for women to follow.

Marie started her public service career in 1953 working in Pueblo, Colorado as a civilian employee in support of the Army material supply effort as an Artillery repairman. Her sincere efforts in improving both

the speed and efficiency of the Army supply system earned her a promotion into management.

Today Marie is president of the Alief Community Association, Inc. and continues to receive recognition, awards and recently received the Martin Luther King Service Award for community service Alief 2019.

While working in service for veterans, Marie involved herself in many community business and social service activities. Marie holds a Quarterly Networking Breakfast to stim-

ulate business development in the Alief community and organizes the Annual Alief International parade and is a well-recognized participant in the Alief Independent School District meetings. Marie started and continues to head the effort to maintain the Alief Cemetery on Bellaire and secured its recognition as a Texas Historic Cemetery.



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business

Media Moment

A Behind the Scenes Look at the Global 7 Awards



Even though it's now summer, I'd like to reflect on the month of May. So many wonderful things happened in that month, and even in April leading up to it. One of the most significant milestones in CReed Global Media's tenure in the media industry was being honored at the 6th Annual Global 7 Awards. The gala was held on May 24th at The Ballroom at Bayou Place, and the awards were given by the Houston International Trade Development Council (HITDC) and the Global 7 (G7) committee.

CReed Global Media (CGM) and Centrell Reed as CEO (me!) were honored to receive the International Rising Star award. This award recognizes a Houston-based enterprise that provides a service enabling global organizations to thrive in business. Examples include enhancing the international landscape where goods and services help businesses thrive through fair trade, reaching across borders, and strengthening relation-

ships with our partners — that's what good business is all about. The HIT-DC is a vital component to bringing communities together from all backgrounds, similar to how CReed Global Media represents the global landscape in media (and will continue to do so).

The time leading up to the G7 awards was probably the most exciting experience for my team and me as the CEO of CGM. After we were named an honoree, we realized we wanted to capture every moment of this experience, so we jumped on to serve as a media sponsor as well. Many people do not know what it takes to provide media and content globally with on-demand television and music streaming distribution. We work with major partners to ensure those relationships are solidified. From my personal perspective as the Chairwoman of the Houston Entertainment Industry Task Force, there are just so many components that

go into running a successful media company and expanding the entertainment industry here in Houston.

Houston is the fourth largest city and the most diverse city in the United States. As a media sponsor to the G7 Awards, it was vitally important for myself and my team to capture videos with and for each of the honorees. Doing so gave us an opportunity to get to know each of them better. During our pre-awards video sessions at their places of business or at our studios in the Galleria area, we were able to spend time watching and hearing from each honoree and their teams about what they do. These honorees are just phenomenal in their selflessness. I felt as though I was making new friends where we all could use our collective resources to expand international trade, relationships, connections, and communities here in Houston.

I'd like to introduce you to each of



these honorees individually, so you can get a sense for their amazing contributions just like I did. This month, I'll feature three individuals — stay tuned to meet the rest next month! Here are a few of the personal moments I shared with them:

Angelica Garcia Davila is the CEO of AIM Global Logistics, who was honored with the Outstanding Corporate Citizenship award. This award is extremely befitting as AIM Global Logistics has a huge philanthropic arm where they use their expertise in transporting goods from the United States to places like Mexico and Venezuela for those in need. They help find meals, food, clothes, and other necessities for children and families here and abroad. The AIM

team has huge hearts, and we were able to witness them sort, package, and load up boxes of goods to be transported. Several volunteers and team members were present to make it all come together. Their efforts restore dignity and self-worth to communities that may not have anyone reaching out to them. When communities thrive, we all win!

My time with Angelica was special, because we were able to capture the important things she's accomplishing. For Angelica, it's about taking care of her people and people in general. Her office is lined with certifications showing she is a hard worker who does what's needed to align her company with the proper entities to make things happen. It's not about

the limelight — she is simply a phenomenal woman! May the work she does continue, and success follow her wherever she goes.

Dr. Laura Murillo, President of the Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, received the Global Impact Award. She has been president of the Chamber for over 10 years and grown its membership into the thousands. Dr. Murillo is a champion for issues affecting immigration, legal reform, citizenship, and the contribution that Hispanic individuals bring to our Houston economy. My first encounter with her was on the eve of the Hispanic Chamber's annual luncheon, which is a huge fundraising effort for the organization bringing in speakers this year like Gover-

nor Greg Abbott, Mayor Sylvester Turner, and others to touch on the climate of Houston's Hispanic community. Laura and her team of eight rocking women have done an amazing job raising the bar each year, evidenced by the over 1,000 people who attend the luncheon. This event is a poignant display of how Houston should continue to invite the Hispanic community into the conversation and advocate for the rights of all Houstonians.

On the day of our recording session, Laura called me to change locations from the Chamber office to the Hilton Americas Hotel, where the luncheon was being held. As I walked toward her on the second floor of the hotel where she asked to meet, I noticed she was answering several calls (making sure the details were handled). I walked toward her with my producer, ready and poised for the interview. I was thinking how amazing a woman she was to take time out of planning the luncheon to do an interview and video with me and CReed Global Media. When we greeted each other, it probably looked like two schoolgirls — admiring and complimenting outfits, hair, and jewelry. She is poised and professional; I can tell she always is. We chose a non-typical location for the shoot and got right into it.

Her years of being on the radio paid off, because she was ready to answer my first three questions without having anything written down:

1. Describe what the HITDC honor means to you?
2. What's next for the Hispanic Chamber?
3. What is the Chamber's global impact?

Dr. Murillo is very astute, and I'd venture to say she has never met a camera she didn't know! Her time on Telemundo and Univision as well as leading the Chamber helped her knock it all out in one take. We took some quick pictures, and then she asked me the big question: "You will be at the luncheon tomorrow, right?" And I was. We took pictures at the luncheon in support of one another; both looking very first lady-esque, channeling Jackie Kennedy or Michelle Obama. In departing, we both hugged again, exchanging a whispered, "Thank you" — See you at the G7 Awards!!

I will forever be a champion of those who champion good causes for good people, like Dr. Murillo.

The next honoree was **Soledad Tanner**, Founder and CEO of Soledad Tanner Consulting, who was recognized as Outstanding International Consultant. She is an amazing personality who refers to herself (or at least her younger self) as a nerd. Soledad is so bright and sweet, with a great wit and fun-loving demeanor. I enjoyed picking locations to film her interview, looking for an energy that could match her vibrant glow-in-the-dark blue/purple dress (it looked amazing complimented her well). My time with Soledad was more of a photoshoot, since her beau, Gabriel, and my producer Vic took so many pictures; it was great fun!

Soledad helps her clients become financially literate and savvy through her consulting, which provides information on how to know your numbers and grow your business. She has the gift of grasping what numbers mean and how to break them down and apply that knowledge to a company's success. My time with her was

precious. I learned that this is her first award, and her mom from Ecuador and brother from Switzerland were flying in to witness her receiving the honor in person. We shared in each other's moment on stage at the G7 receiving our Congressional Award from United States Congress and Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee.

I hope readers enjoy meeting some of the influential individuals I shared the evening with at the G7 Awards. Don't forget to check in next issue for a behind-the-scenes look at the final three honorees!

Along with my team at CReed Global Media, I support the global community in our work and as a display of our commitment to those we work alongside. We must tell the real stories of every person in this world, because they are interwoven with our stories. We do nothing alone, and we realize that those who came before us made the pathways we are able to walk through now.

This has been a Media Moment written by: Centrell Reed, Founder and Co-CEO of CReed Global Media & Production. Get in touch with Centrell at info@creedglobalmedia.com.



JAPAN

Japan's Contributions . . . Did you Know?

What are your first thoughts when you reflect on Japan? Do you think Japanese cars or electronics, recall movies such as “Spirited Away” (Miyazaki), “Shogun”, or “Memoirs of a Geisha”? Or do you yearn for sushi from your favorite Japanese restaurant?

Japan has made major contributions worldwide to technology, culture, business, food, fashion, and films. This article focuses on a few of the many Japanese contributions to our lifestyle, business, and culture. For example, **did you know?**

1. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE JAPANESE CONTRIBUTIONS TO WESTERN FILM AND MEDIA?

- Japanese animation or anime is popular among both Japanese and Western children and adults. Pokémon animated series is a well-known example.
- Anime influences in movies such as “The Matrix” trilogy with “Ghost in the Shell” can be recognized by similar themes with the relationship between humans and technology, similar use of colors and lighting, and action sequences.
- Western anime-style designs in animation are reflected in the famous example of Nickelodeon’s Emmy awarding winning hit, “Avatar The Last Air Bender.”
- “Star Wars” draws on the Samurai culture, dress, and traditions.

2. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE JAPANESE CONTRIBUTIONS TO MEDICINE?

- Japan is a leading nation in biomedical research, which is the basic research conducted to support the development of knowledge in the field of medicine.

This type of research includes both clinical and pre-clinical research. Examples of Japanese contributions include the “tooth patch”, a strong, ultra-flexible and microscopically thin film to cover teeth to prevent tooth decay and to make teeth appear whiter; gastro-camera (a present-day Esophagogastroduodenoscope); the statin class of drugs; and agar.

3. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE JAPANESE CONTRIBUTIONS TO TECHNOLOGY?

Although there are many key Japanese contributions, below are examples. For more examples refer to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Japanese_inventions_and_discoveries#Electronics

- Robotics: The world’s first android, DER01; the Ninja robot; and the robotic exoskeleton for motion support.
- Electronics: Glass integrated circuit, plastic central processing unit, videocassette recorder, D-pad, motion-sensing controller, flash memory, and Blue laser (the first efficient blue LED).
- Domestic appliances: The bladeless fan and electric rice cooker
- Transport: first purpose-built aircraft carrier, bullet (high-speed) train, electronically-controlled-continuously variable transmission, Kei car, hydrogen car, and more.

4. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE JAPANESE CONTRIBUTIONS TO GARDEN ARCHITECTURE?

- Japanese gardens are greatly influenced by historical and religious background. They are elegant and serene.
- Zen gardens are a primary ex-



ample of their exquisite beauty and calming influence.

5. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE JAPANESE CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY?

- “Japan and the United States collaborate closely on international diplomatic initiatives.” <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/4142.htm>
- Because of their combined global economic and diplomatic impact, the U.S. and Japan also cooperate on development assistance, global health, environmental and resource protection, and women’s empowerment. “The countries also collaborate in science and technology in such areas as brain science, aging, infectious disease, personalized medicine, and international space exploration.” <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/4142.htm>

6. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE DIFFERENCES OF JAPANESE CULTURE?

- Although the Japanese culture is more “Western” than that of other Asian countries, here are a few differences.
- **Importance of relationships:** Individuals are considered in context of their social relationships.
- **Saving face** is one of the most important cultural values expressed by adapting one’s own wishes to the requirements of others and avoiding offending or harming their public image.
- **Importance of silence:** Silence is considered golden and is based on Zen Buddhism that teaches that Truth cannot be described verbally but exists only in silence.
- **Striving for perfection:** Focus is to strive for perfection in even the smallest matters. This value is reflected in usually high level of quality and service and focus on continuous improvement.
- **Attitudes toward religion:** The majority of Japanese people are Shintoist or Buddhist, which

is expressed by focus on harmony between group members and in the lack on interest in politician’s religion and religious beliefs. The growing popularity of Zen Buddhism in the U.S. is expressed by:

- o Flexibility to adapt to changes
 - o Awareness and expectation that everything changes and nothing is permanent
 - o Interpretation and decisions based on the importance of circumstances
 - o Social hierarchy and respect for age
 - o Acceptance of the inevitable
- **More formal:** Tendency to stand at a relatively far distance and use of formal names are examples. They also are more private and do not share personal or private information even with close friends.
 - **Subtle approach:** Because being too direct can be considered rude in the Japanese culture, Japanese tend to have a more subtle approach than the more direct or blunt approach of the American culture.
 - **Collectivist culture:** In contrast to the Western individualistic culture, the Japanese culture is focused on satisfaction and pride in the group or community rather than the individual.

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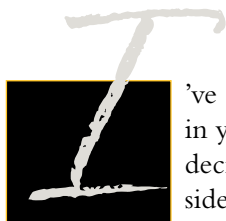
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE



I've been asked many times, what's in your background that led you to decide to launch a magazine? Outside of a few newsletters back in the day as president of a chamber of commerce, absolutely nothing! So the question is, why? Well, on the heels of *iF Magazine's* third year anniversary, I'll need to take you to another place. As some of you may know, I'm also president of the Houston International Trade Development Council which organizes trade missions and forums for Houston-area businesses seeking opportunities abroad. In October 2015, on a trade mission to the People's Republic of China with a group of business professionals and after a long day of meetings, etc., I decided — as any other evening — I'd fall across the bed in the hotel still in my clothes and reflect on the day's events. As I lie with my eyes on the ceiling, a voice came to me as clear as day, it said, "launch a magazine." Now, mind you, I hadn't had a drink, in fact, I don't drink. One might say, and I'd like to think, it was divine intervention!

I immediately thought about a special interest/niche publication or small to mid-sized maga-

zine that is not owned and operated by a large corporation. Thus the launch of *International Focus (iF) Magazine!* My business experience taught me you don't need to know everything about a business to be successful, however, you must surround yourself with people who know. With that, I knew, for me, the four things I needed to be successful in the magazine business were: graphics, photography, writing/editing and sales. I got busy looking for the best I knew and as they say, the rest is history.

Not to blow my own horn, but I brought a tremendous amount of energy to all of these roles and managed to publish monthly issues for each of our three years.

I've owned a trucking company, restaurants, metals recycling centers and found several non-profit organizations. However, by far, the magazine business has been the most challenging and rewarding. I look forward to our drive toward anniversary year four!

And as always, thank you for your readership.

Val Thompson

Publisher & CEO

Val@iFMagazine.net



REASONS

to Consider iF Magazine Advertising

- 1) An ad in iF Magazine gives you both a print and a digital ad with a local and global distribution
- 2) Print magazines inspire readers to take action
- 3) Print is best at increasing brand awareness
- 4) Magazines show the highest returns on your advertising budget
- 5) With print media you are able to direct your ads to a highly targeted audience
- 6) Most adults would rather read a magazine in hard copy than online
- 7) Digital ads come and go: printed ads have staying power

iF you want your ad to reach all of Houston's international and mainstream communities, then you want to advertise your business in the International Focus (iF) Magazine!

Contact:

**Val Thompson at val@iFmagazine.net
or 832-448-0537**

**Heidi Powell-Prera at heidipp@iFmagazine.net
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