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## 2023 High School Essay Contest



Eilis Brannigan

The 2023 KCC-JEE High School Essay Contest had many strong applicants this year. Judges selected Eilis Brannigan from Ardmore, Pennsylvania as this year's winner. Her essay discussed her love of Studio Ghibli movies and her desire to explore different temples and shrines in Japan as a result of falling in love with the countryside and waterfalls depicted in these movies.

This summer Eilis will accompany the previous three contest winners (Payten Shimizu, 2022; Josephine Kwok, 2021; and Jaden Martinez, 2020) who had to defer the award due to Covid. The four winners will attend the Kyoto Japanese Language School for four weeks this summer and receive room and board with a homestay.

Many thanks to this year's judges: Elizabeth Hartung-Cole and former essay winners Zachary Sebek and Verence Espinoza. The committee is excited about the opportunity to highlight the KCC-JEE High School Essay Contest and several former winners at our Annual Meeting in September.

To read the winning essay, please visit our website at <https://www.kccjee.org/high-school-essay-contest>



Payten Shimizu



Josephine Kwok



Jaden Martinez



### 2023 Annual Meeting

Please join us for the KCC-JEE 2023 Annual Meeting on **September 8th at 7 p.m. CST/ September 9th at 9 a.m. Japan Time**. Along with the regular program and committee updates, this year we will celebrate the winners of the High School Essay Contest Program.

It will be held virtually through Zoom. We will send an invitation in early August with an online registration. We look forward to seeing you!

## Gottschalk Teacher of English

Our two new Gottschalk Teachers arrived safely and are beginning their teaching assignments at Kobe College High School. We wish them the best as they embark on their wonderful journey in delightful Okadayama!



Ebony Givens

“I am Ebony Givens and I graduated from the University of California at Santa Barbara in 2022 with double majors in Japanese and Linguistics and double minors in TESOL and Translation Studies. I am excited to use what I know from my own language learning and TESOL classes to help students learn. I am also looking forward to meeting all the faculty at KCHS!”

“Hello, my name is Stephanie Hoelker. I have lived many places, but I come from Ohio in the United States. I love science, singing, salamanders, and creating digital art. I am so excited to return to Japan and to become part of the KCC community!”



Stephanie Hoelker

## Bryant and Alberta Drake Guest Professorship



The 2023-2024 Bryant Drake Guest Professor is Dr. Mei-Jung Yang. Dr. Yang earned her MA in Fine Arts from Taipei National University for the Arts in 2006 and has undertaken specialized training in the Martha Graham technique/methodology from Ross Parkes, a former Associate Artistic Director of the Martha Graham Dance Company. Since 1994, Dr Yang has been teaching performing arts at various institutions including Adelaide College of the Arts, Taipei Municipal Zhong-zheng Senior High School, The Hong Kong Academy for the Performing Arts, Mongolian University of Arts and Culture (Exchange Faculty), and University of Indiana. She also brings a depth of performance experience to her teaching.

## Graduate Fellowship Program



Lillian Tsay

Our graduate fellowship application for the 2023-2024 cycle has completed. We had many qualified applicants, so we are certain we will find a great candidate for the next school year.

Our current graduate fellow, Lillian Tsay, is currently being hosted at Waseda University in Tokyo. In 2022, she won an Association for Asian Studies (AAS) Northeast Asia Council Best Graduate Student Paper Prize.



Cindi SturtzSreetharan & Dylan Hallingstad O'Brien

Cindi SturtzSreetharan was in Japan in February and met with last year's grad fellow, Dylan Hallingstad O'Brien. Dylan is doing great in Japan and finishing up his fellowship project.



## Internship Program

We have had a minor setback in our ability to offer the Internship program this summer. The committee will be working on a new package for the Intern students and proposing it to KC with the hope of launching the program again in the summer 2024. We will have more information about this new package in our Fall 2023 newsletter.



## KCC Room

Do you know that there is a room on KC Campus called ‘The KCC Room?’ It is a student lounge that was completed with the gift (\$100,000) from KCC in 2000 to celebrate KC’s 125th anniversary.

The plaque states:



Toyoko Kodama & Dr. Ken li

The KCC Room  
This tablet commemorates the gift of  
Kobe College Corporation  
to celebrate the 125th anniversary of  
Kobe College  
October 2000  
“Women leaders for the new  
millennium”



Under the plaque is a list of KCC supporters from 1875 to 2000.

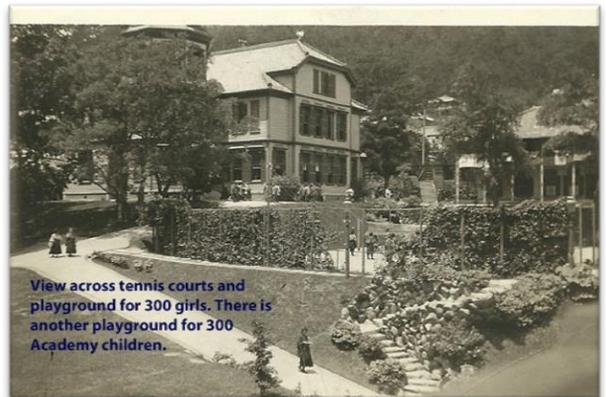
(Written by Yuki Ohigashi/ Photos by Toyoko Kodama)

## Make your gift today!

Your donation helps sustain our programs that enable cultural exchange between students, teachers and scholars in the US and Japan, including those at Kobe College.

Donate at

<https://www.kccjee.org/support>



*From Archive: View across tennis court*



## KC Alumna Spotlight: Masako Yamauchi



Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Pexton and  
Mrs. Pexton's mother  
Concert at Plymouth Church

Two years after graduating from Kobe College, I received the Larson/Suehiro Internship in Music. Dr. Larson was a former president of KCC and was my church music, choir and orchestra teacher at KC. This scholarship enabled me to live in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for 5 months in 1989. During that time, I lived with the family of Rev. Thomas Pexton, a board member of KCC. I became good friends with the Pexton family and am still friends with his daughter Elizabeth, a former missionary teacher at KCHS.

Under Music Director Charles Sullivan, I studied liturgy and choir conducting. He also arranged lessons for me in organ, voice, and piano. At Plymouth Church UCC in Milwaukee, I played the organ, conducted the choir, and sang in the choir for Plymouth Church services, which I found very enriching.

During my stay, I also had an opportunity to attend and perform at the KCC Annual Meeting at The Palmer House in Chicago. I very much enjoyed talking with the members of KCC and getting to know my alma mater.

Other great experiences during my music internship included attending a workshop at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, and singing in "The Play of St. Nicolas" (music by Benjamin Britten) at St. John's Cathedral in Milwaukee.

For my last recital at St. Joseph's Convent, Mr. Bower (KCC president at that time) and his wife were able to attend. I was grateful they were there to hear what I had accomplished with the support of the Larson/Suehiro Internship in Music.

At that time, I never imagined that I would have a daughter and that she would follow the same path at KC. My daughter, Mana Yamauchi, also received the Hannah Gulick Suehiro Music Scholarship and now has a career similar to mine as a pianist and church organist.

Finally, I never imagined I would have the honor of becoming a KCC-JEE representative member of the Board of Trustees of KC. I am grateful for all God has given me. I will take God's mysterious plan for me seriously and do my best for the development of Kobe College. I will be happy if I can bring KCC-JEE and KC closer together.



At the recital with Mr. and Mrs.  
Peter Bower (KCC President)



## Kobe College Inspires a Lifetime of Service

### Rev. Elizabeth Pexton

In 1985, I was sitting in my Japanese language class at Beloit College in Beloit, Wisconsin, when an alumna arrived. Her name was Beulah Scott. She asked if anyone in this class of three students wanted to go teach in Japan. I said I was interested, and my life changed forever.

It turned out, Beulah Scott was on the Board of Kobe College Corporation! In the summer of 1986, two months after graduating from college, I headed to Kobe Jogakuin as a missionary English teacher for three years.

During my time at Kobe Jogakuin, the chaplain in Kobe College was Rev. Hiroshi Shigeru. He attended seminary with my father, Rev. Tom Pexton, at Oberlin College in the 1950s. Also, we discovered a Kobe College alumna in Milwaukee where we lived, Mrs. Kyoko Morris. It was a small world!



My three years at Kobe Jogakuin were transformative and one of the best chapters of my life. Teaching in the Junior and Senior High School, I was amazed at the gifted and joyful students. I helped with the English clubs and the soccer team. The soccer team gave me a nickname of “Peku-chan.” I loved being with all of them. Now, all these years later, I learned that the current head of the High School English Department did student teaching with me, Ms. Yuko Inagaki. Also, the new President of the Kobe College Corporation is my former student, Dr. Yuki Ohigashi. I am so very proud of them. Former head of the High School English Department, Mrs. Junko Ozawa, also visited me in Denver.

During my time in Japan, my parents became involved in the Kobe College Corporation. From 1988-1991, my father served on the Board. He and my mother, Connie Pexton, helped arrange a church music internship for Kobe College music graduates at my parents’ church in Milwaukee, Plymouth United Church of Christ. The first year, Masako (Imamura) Yamauchi came to my parents’ church, and she helped lead the choir and played the organ and piano. She also lived with my parents. I was still in Japan, so she used my room! When she returned to Japan, I was still there, and I had the honor of attending her wedding. Masako and I have stayed friends all these years. Her children Manna and Kei visited us, and they saw my parents before my parents’ deaths in 2013 and 2018.

The year after Masako Yamauchi did her church music internship, Masako Nakamura Bacon came to my parents’ church, too. This Masako and I reconnected years later as she married and lives in Lincoln, Nebraska teaching organ and serving a church. Her son, Bennett, is also a musician. A month before the Covid Pandemic, they drove to our home in Denver, and I gave him my French horn. This was the same horn I took with me to Japan and played in a morning chapel service. It is wonderful to see our Masakos making such a beautiful difference in the world.

As you can see, my ties with Kobe College brought me together with people in magnificent ways. I met incredible people. Besides my responsibilities at the school, I had two key activities in the community. First,



I worked with another missionary on justice for the people of the outcast minority, the burakumin. Second, I played on a wheelchair basketball team with a church friend. The team jokingly said I could play because my “disability” was the Japanese language.

All these experiences were formative to my call. I am an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. My place of ministry is as a hospital chaplain at Denver Health Medical Center in Denver, Colorado. We are a “safety net” hospital in the inner city. We help people who are on the margins of society. I thank Kobe College and everyone I met for laying a foundation for me to minister to many people from all walks of life.



## Congratulations!

### 2022- 2023 Hannah Gulick Suehiro Scholarship

It is with great pleasure that we announce this year’s winner of the Hannah Gulick Suehiro Undergraduate/Graduate School scholarship, which is awarded each year to a talented Kobe College music student. Ms. Mizuki Hanatani, piano major, and Ms. Yuki Ban, violin major, are the winners for the undergraduate scholarship. Ms. Sayuri Kozu, a second year piano major in the Graduate School of Music, is the graduate winner. We are so proud of their accomplishments and wish them a very successful career in music. Congratulations to all!



(L to R): Mizuki Hanatani, Yuki Ban,  
Sayuri Kozu

## Call for memories for Kay (Kaoru) Sugiura

In remembrance of Kaoru (Kay) Sugiura, we will be creating a special edition of the KCC-JEE newsletter. Please email [albennett222@gmail.com](mailto:albennett222@gmail.com) by May 31st with any memories that you would like to share.



## In Memoriam: Georgine Corbitt



Georgine Corbitt was a reliable and committed KCC Board member with a generous heart. Georgine and her husband, George, were at every annual meeting, especially during the long years when it was held at Garrett Seminary at Northwestern. She gave extra attention and care to all her Board responsibilities and was never afraid to tackle any problems that arose. She gave generously without expectation for recognition.

It was helpful for me as the President of the Board to have such a reliable and positive member of the board.

In her personal life, Georgine was an active artist and she often brought samples of her work to share privately with us at board meetings. She was a pioneer. She was a part of the Congregational Church and part of the roots of KC.

During our time serving on the Board together, we were pushed fairly hard to keep the high school teacher positions filled at KCHS with well-motivated and qualified young teachers. Our focus was completely on Kobe Jogakuin before the days of seeking more exchange programs for American students to study in Japan. It was during the great economic expansion years in Japan that Martha Farley, in Chicago, started the homestay program for KCHS and Mildred Follet and Georgine Corbitt were always faithful hosts. I will remember Georgine fondly. (Written by Pat Gottschalk)

When Doug and I attended our first KCC event, the annual meeting of 1985, he had his usual trepidations about entering a group of people totally unknown to him. How would he manage to talk to anyone? Not to worry, the Corbitt's were there. As we headed into dinner after the introductions and business, he was cut off by George and Georgine and led to a table of members who had all been at Oberlin at some time. The memories that were shared were not just about the town and the school but about Doug's parents whom everyone seemed to know and to have some anecdote to tell. By the time it became time to leave, Doug knew that he had found a community of warm and like-minded folk at KCC, thanks to the quick moves of George and Georgine.

My real friendship with Georgine came when I was nominated to service on the KCC board where she already served. She was always full of smiles and ready laughter. She was not talkative but extended her opinion when it was needed. I think she gravitated towards me because she knew I was in art history. Whenever the board meeting ended with enough time before our trains left for Indiana or the Chicago suburbs, we would head to the Art Institute to enjoy time discussing our favorite paintings.

Because she loved to draw, she took classes and worked on art projects of her own. I often saw her with a sketch book. When she got a small planographic press that would print cards, all of us on the board were all graced with her drawings of animals and nature. Her sweet and determined nature showed in the way she pressed on to do her own work in a field she loved. (Written by Marjorie Kinsey)

# KCC – JEE

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Kobe College Corporation-Japan Education Exchange

Spring 2023 Newsletter    Volume 20

