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2023 KCC-JEE Annual Meeting Recap

This year's annual meeting was held on Friday, September 8 on Zoom. It was attended by members, guests from Kobe College, and many of our program participants. The Board business included the re-election of Chiaki Nakajima as the VP for Development. As we remembered our friends who passed away in the last year, a song that was made in honor of Kay Sugiura was shared. You can read more about it in this newsletter.

The Essay Contest was the featured special program. We greatly enjoyed hearing from our past winners as well as recent winners who spent a month in Kyoto this past July. It was wonderful to hear how much the award has meant to them. You may watch a recorded video of the annual meeting as well as some of the videos that were shared during the special program of the Essay Contest on our website at www.kccjee.org/video-gallery. Please contact the office, office@kccjee.org to obtain the password.



This fall at our Annual Meeting, the committee created a thirty-minute presentation to highlight the Essay Contest and featured a guest speaker, our first essay contest winner from 1995, Andrew Oberg. Dr. Oberg is currently a professor in the Humanities Department at Kochi University in Japan. He spoke about how his experiences years ago as an essay winner helped shape his future. Then Peyton Shimizu and Josephine Kwok, recent essay contest winners, answered questions posed by committee member Elizabeth Hartung-Cole. Other former essay winners also gave testimonials about how this experience influenced their present lives. Lastly, Pat Gottschalk, former KCC-JEE president, discussed the origins of this successful program which she helped create. Many thanks to all who participated and helped organize this event.



2024 Annual Meeting

Friday, September 20th
at 7 pm (CDT)

Saturday, September 21st
at 9 am (Japan Time)

What Are They Doing Now?

Hear how KCC-JEE Programs have changed the lives of our Winners!

At this year's annual meeting, we will highlight the accomplishments of past participants of each of our programs. In their own words, we will have an opportunity to hear how KCC-JEE awards have made a lasting impact on their lives and work.



High School Essay Contest

The 2023-2024 KCC-JEE High School Essay Contest (now in its 29th year) is up and running. The committee welcomes to the team Brant Dykehouse, our former office administrator and currently a psychotherapist and intercultural trainer.



Josephine, Payten, Eilis

This summer, KCC-JEE sent three students to Japan to study at the Kyoto Japanese Language School. The students, Payten Shimizu, was the 2022 winner, and Josephine Kwok was the 2020 winner. Both waited patiently until it was safe to travel due to COVID. They joined the 2023 winner, Eilis Frances Brannigan. You can read their reflections on their summer in Kyoto on our [website](#).

The next contest writing prompt is:

We now live in a world where you can meet people living in Japan and learn important things about Japanese culture just by going on YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and other social media platforms. Some people might argue that there is no real need to travel.

What do you think you would gain out of physically going to Japan that social media would not give you, and what can you share with others once you return that will deepen international understanding for others?

Look for information about our upcoming contest on our website: www.kccjee.org

Graduate Fellowship

Our 2023-2024 KCC-JEE Graduate Fellowship awardee is John Ostermiller, a Ph.D. candidate in Anthropology at University of Nevada-Reno. His research project is titled, “Between Piety and Popularity: Cultural Code-Switching and Muslim Migrant Communities in Japan.” He will be based at the University of Shizuoka and will investigate how a diverse community of Muslim migrants in Shizuoka, Japan work, worship, and thrive in Japanese society.



New recruitment for the 2024-2025 Graduate Fellow will begin in December 2023.

WE HAVE MOVED



We are happy to announce that we
officially changed our address to:

**5 Revere Drive
Suite 200 - #0024
Northbrook, IL 60062**



Exciting Events for Gottschalk Teachers

The Gottschalk teachers at Kobe College High School were especially busy this summer and early autumn preparing for the fall term's classes, working with English Club students for the Cultural Festival and traveling with their students to various English contests and school trips.

We thank all the Gottschalk teachers for their dedication to providing KCHS students with a high-quality education at this nationally recognized high school!

Here are some of their adventures!

From Ms. Ebony Givens (began teaching at KCHS April 2023):

"I went on a school trip to the Onaruto Bridge and the Otsuka Art Museum with the J1 girls. The wind was quite strong and loud on the bridge, so it was kind of scary, but the view was very pretty. I was amazed by how large the Otsuka Art Museum was and how many paintings it contained. I enjoyed looking at the replicas and hope to be able to come again to see floors I did not have time to explore. I am extremely grateful that I was given the opportunity to go and be with the students!"



From Ms. Jocelyn Newman (began teaching at KCHS April 2022):

"In August, the SESS girls had a great time joining the Scenario Reading Contest for the Hanshin ESS Union where they performed "A Christmas Carol." During the Cultural Festival, they also won an award for their performance of "Lion King." And just recently, KCHS students went on school trips. I was incredibly lucky to go with S3 to Arima Onsen. I ate prize-winning gelato, enjoyed the views, and even tried "Lucky Cider" (I got Takoyaki-flavored ramune!). It was truly special because this will be the last trip for Red girls, and I am glad I was able to be part of this memorable occasion."



KCC-JEE Internship Program

The past couple of years have been difficult for the Internship program. As many of you know, we had to pause the program in 2019 because of visa issues. Rockford University kindly offered to look into the possibility of offering the visa through them, but after some research, it was not a plausible option. Therefore, we will not be continuing the Internship program at this time. If you have any questions or ideas on how to continue the program, please contact the KCC-JEE office. Thank you!

Make your gift today!

Your donation helps to 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>

A Memorable Experience

Written by Abbi Mayland

Every other year, 24 KCHS students experience American culture and English language immersion during a 3-week trip to Minnesota. Part of this valuable experience is a weekend homestay arranged by KCC-JEE with local families. This is the second time that my family and I have had the pleasure of hosting Kobe College High School students in our home.



Mille Lacs Lake
Brainerd, MN

The first time we hosted, we ended up bringing our two KCHS students to my in-laws' cabin up north. We spent a good portion of the weekend swimming and boating in the lake, but we also made time to go to the Mille Lacs Indian Museum and Trading Post to learn more about the history and life of the Ojibwe people in Minnesota.

This summer, we stayed in the Twin Cities and explored some of the sites around town. Since our student had expressed an interest in sampling many American meats, we decided to barbeque in our backyard for dinner.



Indian Mounds Regional Park
Saint Paul, IN

At the end of the English summer camp, the students put on a talent show that the host families are invited to attend. This year, the Kobe College students put on a dance and light show to a medley of popular anime songs. It was fun to see and very apparent that the KC students are good at collaborating to create something great.

Hosting has been such a wonderful experience for my family! We have enjoyed learning more about Japanese culture and sharing ours with KCHS students. We cannot wait to host again in the future!

From Archive:

1875 Talcott & Dudley

Eliza Talcott & Julia Dudley arrived in Kobe City in 1873. In 1875 they opened a small school, "The Kobe Home," which in 1892 took the name Kobe College.





Memories for Kay (Kaoru) Sugiura

Mary Oliver. THE SUMMER DAY

*Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?*

*I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
Into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
How to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,*

*Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
With your one wild and precious life?*



Kay (Kaoru) Sugiura
Her bio is on page 11

A Life Ends, and a Song is Born

Written by: Pat Gottschalk

Over her 81 years, Kay Sugiura lived a life rich in family, accomplishment, and kindness to others. When she died unexpectedly on Jan. 1, 2023, the news devastated her hundreds, perhaps thousands, of friends in several corners of the world.

Some of those friends were in the Twin Cities of Minnesota, about 400 miles from Kay and Go's home in the Chicago area. Like everyone else, they were stunned and deeply saddened to learn of her death. In time, they resolved to create a lasting memorial, a choral song, as a mark of their friendship. But what is it that caused a group of Minnesotans to feel such deep ties of friendship to Kay?

The link, of course, is KCC-JEE. For about three decades, beginning in the 1980s, it seemed like Minnesota was KCC-JEE's second headquarters. (During that period, about a third of the KCC-JEE board were Chicago-area residents, another third Minnesota residents, and the remainder from all over North America.) Minnesota has played a strong role in the actual work of KCC-JEE. Hundreds of high school and college students have experienced Minnesota beauty through homestay programs. Minnesota women have taught English at Kobe College High School. Minnesota businesses have hosted many KC college students as interns. Educational symposia were held in Minnesota for about a decade. Minnesota high school students have learned Japanese language through a KCC-JEE-sponsored faculty member at a suburban high school. Other Minnesota high school students have traveled to Japan, and to Kobe College, as winners of the KCC-JEE essay contest. Two long-tenured board presidents came from Minnesota.

During all this time, 400 miles away, Kay and Go were both important leaders of KCC/JEE when the organization was headquartered in Chicago, and in its suburbs. So, it is little wonder that Minnesotans involved in the organization's mission came to feel a strong bond of friendship with the Sugiuras. Little



wonder that they felt compelled to create a permanent memorial to honor Kay. Little wonder that it took the form of a musical composition since music was a central theme throughout Kay's 81 years. (The Minnesotans are Sue Doffing, Pat Gottschalk, Marnie Jorenby, Dick Niemiec, David Therkelsen, Tom and Julie Weisbecker, all of whom had decades of involvement with KCC-JEE.)

But how does a small group go about getting a piece of music composed? None of them had ever done such a thing before. There was no timeline, no budget, no theme, no preconceived style of music. Just a blank slate. Let's have Pat Gottschalk, who led the creative aspects of the project, pick up the story from here: "I listened to singers who create their own song, and asked myself, 'how did their style represent Kay's music style?' Lucky for me that I, like Kay, have been a lifelong choir singer. I turned to my choir director, Dr. Randy Buikema, for advice. Randy, an enthusiastic and well-connected musician, suggested Charlie Betz, whom I had met but did not know well."

An inspiration for Pat, and later for Charlie, was Mary Oliver's poem, *Wild and Precious*, and its famous final line: "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" Charlie gave the project form and direction toward a four-part choral piece that quickly expanded that one line from Oliver's poem into a full set of lyrics.

"Charlie had the emotional depth and virtuosity required for creating our composition," Pat said. "He conferred with Randy and soon the piece was taking shape. I watched and answered questions as Charlie sought to understand the energy of Kay and why we wanted so much to honor her with music." "Amid interruptions and time to think, the composition continued to move forward. The first recorded version had individual instruments 'singing' the choir parts; it was hard to imagine what it would be like with real voices. But then it advanced to four professional singers hired to record the piece; then it was possible to really 'hear' the music."



Here is what composer Charles Betz had to say about the work: "It has been a great honor writing this piece in memory of Kay. It can be difficult for a composer, or any creative person, to try to understand and empathize in the face of such loss, and of course I never had the pleasure of meeting or spending time with her. But in my own personal philosophy, all is connected, and I did my best to listen within me to the heart of that place where perhaps I might hear just an echo of her voice."

"I had heard the Mary Oliver poem, "The Summer Day," before with its legendary line 'Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?' - it has great meaning for my sister and her family. I also have long held an idea for a song, 'A brief and precious moment,' and I always have liked the way those words sound together, and so the main idea was born: 'we are wild and brief and precious.'

"I woke up on a Saturday morning and thought about how transient life is and yet how dear to us. Themes of small in the large emerged, looking to nature - raindrops in the storm, petals from the flower, feathers from the raven, sparks from the fire, rivers into the ocean. The text - the poem - just flowed and was mostly done in a couple of hours. The music took longer, but seemed to have its own clear direction, inspired by the words and their imagery.



“Loss is hard. My own mother left this earth 16 years now. The loss is always there. But I offer this in hopes that in a very small way it can provide some solace in honoring the memory of a person dear to you, and in the knowing that there is a broader community that is supporting, sharing, and caring in this time. “There are many who assisted in this creation, and they are credited at the end of the video, but I would acknowledge Dr. Randal Buikema as the conductor who gave life to these musical ideas, and also provided me with invaluable feedback as the piece evolved over the summer.

Here is a link to Wild and Precious: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eOvH8a_IizI

Performance note: The recording with four singers is the version the Minnesota group presented to Go and his family in August and that was also played at the KCC-JEE annual meeting in September. The world-premiere public performance of Wild and Precious will occur on March 9, 2024, in Minneapolis when Dr. Buikema’s Crescendo Chorus will perform the full piece with string quartet.

A Day of Remembrance

From: Yukae Saeki (Kobe College Archive)



It had been raining the entire morning of February 24, 2023, the day of the memorial service for our friend Kaoru Sugiura.

Kaoru Sugiura, honorary trustee of Kobe College Corporation - Japan Education Exchange (KCC-JEE) and the 77th graduate of Kobe College High School, passed away suddenly on January 1, 2023. Kaoru had devoted herself to supporting many of Kobe College’s International Programs in Chicago for many years and had been a faithful servant of God. To commemorate Kaoru and to express gratitude to her, a memorial service was held at Searle Chapel on February 24 at 10:30. About 60 people, including the bereaved family and people related to Kaoru, filled the chapel. The pulpits were decorated with a photo of Kaoru and flowers.

Following the prelude, they sang Hymn No. 363 together. Rev. Dr. Keiichi Nakano, Senior Chaplain and President, read from the Bible (II Corinthians 4:7-18), and gave the prayer. Then, Rev. Dr. Ken Ii, Chancellor, gave the ceremony address as follows:

“I never dreamed that such an event would be added to my calendar, nor would we hold a memorial service for Kaoru at this Searle Chapel on Kobe College campus, where she loved and got married 56 years ago. She served her neighbors till the end, and she valued contact with the people around her. She had a variety of contacts and was always quick to reach out. It was a way of life that embodied the spirit of NON SIBI, but for Kaoru, it was not a special way of life, but an everyday life. Kaoru had received God's love. We are grateful for her important encounter with us, and with the hope of reunion, we would like to pray and thank Kaoru for her peace in heaven and comfort for her bereaved family.”

Next, former Chancellor Kazuko Matsuzawa offered her condolences. “Kaoru connected me, as the Chancellor, with KCC-JEE and alumni, set up an annual reunion in the United States, and took me to Rockford University every time. As a graduate, she was working behind the scenes to connect Kobe College and KCC-JEE. She was at the center of people who are far away and devoted to Kobe College. I am encouraged by remembering Kaoru.”



Professor Emeritus Kotoko Saito sang a “Jesus Loves Me” solo, and her singing voice reverberated in Searle Chapel from the second floor.

The bereaved family began to greet the people who attended. First, Yuka Sugiura stood in front of the microphone. She could not get the words out. Choked with tears, she began to talk about her memories of Kaoru in English. At that time, hymns were heard in the Chapel, which was like humming and talking to Yuka gently, and it seemed to be encouraging her. When the story continued, the hymns were no longer heard.

Misa Sugiura served as a missionary teacher at the Junior and Senior High School of Kobe College for three years from 1992. She spoke about Kaoru as a mother in Japanese. Her mother, who was not smoothly accepted in the United States, tried to help her children become Americans as much as possible, citing the example of American-style Christmas. Misa came to understand her Japanese mother who lived for others. Finally, Go Sugiura spoke about Kaoru's personality in Japanese with humor. For Kaoru, Kobe College is the home of her heart and the base of her soul, and when the topic of Kobe College came up, she talked about it with enthusiasm. Taking care of people was her purpose in life, and she continued warm thoughtfulness, advice, and small kindnesses all the time. “No one listens to me, only the KC students listen to me,” Kaoru would at times complain.

The service ended with the singing of Hymn No. 29 and Benediction by Senior Chaplain Dr. Nakano. After the service, the congregation visited the bereaved family one after another and talked. The flower basket displayed on the pulpit was a calm hue based on modest light blue that seemed to express Kaoru's personality.

At the Memorial Service for Kaoru Sugiura

From: Natsuko (Yoshimura) Furuya

Sixty-nine years ago, Kaoru Sakata Sugiura became a J1 student of Kobe College Junior High School (when I was already an S3 student). My recollection of her was that she was very courteous (as all KCHS students walked from our classrooms through the covered corridor to the auditorium every morning for the morning service, she bowed to us seniors) and she always kept her back straight and held her head high. Many years later, Kay told me that she remembered me well from those days as I somehow was always a “class representative” and had to carry the big attendance file to the daily service. KCHS had and still has wonderful, wonderful teachers.

There is a five-year time span between my six years at KCHS and Kay's, but we had exactly the same teachers for the same subjects (Dean & Bible class: Gempei Ninomiya; English: Angie Crew, Murakami sensei, Kato Tamio sensei; Geography: Head teacher Rikitaro Yamada; Physics: Katsube sensei; Biology: Seto sensei). It was so funny that both Kaoru and I remembered all these teachers by their nicknames but could not remember their full names!

Two years later, Kaoru, many other KCHS students, and a few KC College students (including Kyoko Miyazaki Kodama – Toyoko's mother) and I were at the same summer camp which was managed by the



Kobe YMCA using many college students from Kwansei Gakuin and Konan universities in Yoshima (a small island very close to Shodoshima in the Inland Sea. Kay was a very happy camper and Kyoko and I were very happy counselors. We enjoyed wonderful simple food, swimming and exploring the small island during the day, and singing around the campfire in the evening. Kaoru was really in her element! Her eyes were bright and shining.

Many, many friends of Kaoru-san are sharing their beautiful memories of her today so I will limit my memories of her to our Kobe College Okadayama life.

I miss you. Go-san, thank you for your 二人三脚 -work together as a couple- with Kaoru's happy, happy life.

Remembering Kay

From: Abbi Mayland

I first met Kay shortly after I had joined the Internship Committee. Kay and Go were going to be driving to Minneapolis to speak with a representative at Daikin, and they wanted to know if I would like to come along. When we got there, I learned first-hand from Kay and Go how to approach and work with potential internship sites. The Sugiuras even brought the representative from Daikin and me out for dinner that night. It was so great to get to know Kay, her love of KC, and her generosity.

When my son was born, Kay and Go sent us a beautiful card and gift. I had mentioned to Kay that I was singing songs and reading books in Japanese to my son to practice and to expose him to Japanese. Kay was excited that I was doing this, so she sent me a couple of singing and sound board books all in Japanese. I was touched that she had sent such a thoughtful and fun gift.

A Warm and Generous Soul

From: Sue Doffing

It is with fond memories I remember and eulogize Kay Sugiura today. Kay had many attributes which I learned and admired starting over 40 years ago.

Kay was very passionate about the connection she maintained with her high school, KCHS. She always felt and exemplified what so many past and present students feel about the school, very proud with fond memories. She also had humorous stories of her participation in fun-loving activities in her years of attendance at school in Nishinomiya, Japan, (which she revealed in tender moments of discussions).

Her passion continued through her support of Kobe College High School students and teachers in the many programs that Kobe College Corporation-Japan Education Exchange, or KCC-JEE, had over the years. She not only chaired some of those programs but actively participated in most of them. She was always concerned and continually would challenge the purpose and clarity of those programs to ensure all cultural criteria were held and met to the highest standards. She never spared words and voiced her concerns and then would give her approval.



Harvey Playing with the Song Books



Kay was actively involved in the Gottschalk teacher exchange program, student exchange (both high school and college students), the Internship program, the Music program, and the Minnesota exchange program to some extent. She always maintained her enthusiasm and would hold the commitment of all participants of those programs to the highest standards. She would personally coach the applicants, committee members and participants for clarity and understanding. Kay always maintained a warm and true understanding of the programs and saw the need to balance everyone's expectations for their success.

With the love of music being a big part of Kay's life, through involvement in church and personally, she was very enthused when the KC Music Department wanted to have students and alumnus perform at specific locations in the United States. Again, helping to find prestigious locations in Chicago to perform and the coordination of publicity, housing and transportation, she brought her high standards and follow-through to the successful performances.

Go and Kay both were the gracious hosts of so many gatherings at their beautiful home. Whether hosting guests from abroad or opening their door to large contingencies of KCC-JEE members, they always showed their sincere welcoming by presenting everyone with formal and informal greetings the traditional and massive array of Japanese food. Kay was the center of her kitchen with all the preparations but utilized the skills of family members and KCC alumni to present guests with delicious, beautiful buffets. Again, she always exemplified strong coordination skills. Guests never left their home hungry!

Kay's passion, enthusiasm and willingness to serve in any capacity in the KCC-JEE organization and family was commendable, appreciated and well received by committees and Board members. Sometimes she would work faster on projects than anticipated and we would have to slow her down, but her intentions and desire to serve were always there. Kay will remain in the hearts of us all with the fond memories of a warm and generous soul.

Peace

The Face of KCC-JEE

From: Angie Gaspar

I am forever grateful to Kay for welcoming me on the KCC-JEE board so many years ago, as she was a board member at the time. I was just learning more about the organization and she took me under her wing – what she was known to do – and helped get me acclimated to the organization.

I have fond memories of Kay hosting big dinners at her house, which appeared to be a complete breeze for her. Fifty people taking over your house? No problem! Whenever I host gatherings, I am reminded to be the kind of host Kay was, making sure everyone is happy but also having time to mingle and socialize – truly a gift!

Kay was the face of KCC-JEE. I worked on the internship committee that she chaired and saw her in action in coordinating, leading, and always supporting people whether hosts, site coordinators, or interns, making sure that it was a good fit and the most valuable experience for the Kobe College students. Indeed, her love and dedication to serving others is admirable. She will be greatly missed but her legacy will go on in all the communities she reached.



Kaoru Sugiura (09/15/1941 – 01/01/2023)

Kaoru was born to Kazuo and Mie Sakata on September 15, 1941, in Osaka, Japan, into a household of doting aunts and grandmothers (her father and uncles had been conscripted to fight in the war). She showed an early affinity for music; instead of randomly smashing the keys on the piano like most babies, she liked to press the keys one by one to make melodies.



Kay attended Kobe College High School, studied voice at the Tokyo University of the Arts, and won a scholarship to study opera at Hamburg University of Music and Theater in Germany. While in Germany, she met Go Sugiura, who had been sent by both of their parents to see if they would make a good marriage match. Four days later, he proposed. They were married in Japan and moved to the U.S. in 1967.

In her years here, she and Go raised three children: Misa, Yuka, and Ken. The early years were tough, both financially and with Go working long hours and often away on business. Kay never complained and did her best to fill her family's life with music, beauty, and good food. One of her great joys was singing in the choir at First Presbyterian Church, which she continued to do for nearly 60 years.

As her children grew up and left home, Kay continued to serve others by working at Washburne Junior High School as an ESL tutor; volunteering at Evanston Hospital; coordinating homestay programs, internships, and teacher recruitment for Kobe College Corporation; hosting students and mentoring alumni from her high school alma mater; providing care for elderly Japanese friends; participating in various programs at First Presbyterian; and cooking delicious meals for her friends and acquaintances.

Kay loved gardening, going for walks in the forest preserve (often with Tatum, her neighbors' dog), travel, and of course, music. In addition to singing in the choir, she was a longtime piano accompanist for the First Presbyterian children's ministry and had recently joined two community choruses. She had

season tickets to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Lyric Opera and liked to discuss the quality of each performance on the way home in the car with Go. After Go's retirement, she and Go were able to travel extensively around Europe and the United States. Her last trip fulfilled a long-held dream to visit Glacier National Park with her children and grandchildren. She had other trips planned to Japan, Italy, and the Florida Keys.



KCC – JEE

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