

Dr. Mirja P. Hanson

Dr. Hanson was raised in Japan where her parents, Pentti and Pirkko Karikoski, were missionaries from Finland for 34 years. She grew up speaking Finnish and Japanese and learned English while attending the American School in Japan from second grade through high school graduation.

Dr. Hanson has been a community and organizational development consultant, facilitator and trainer for the past 35 years. She has provided strategic planning, multiple-stakeholder mediation, inter-sector partnerships and other organization development services in three different positions:

For the first decade, she was employed by the Institute of Cultural Affairs, an international development NGO. She worked in Osaka, Japan, Kansas City and Minneapolis, where she was co-director of Midwest operations.

For the next ten years, Dr. Hanson was in public service with the State of Minnesota as Conference Director of the Minnesota World Trade Center; Transition Director for the Metropolitan Council; the State's Quality Program Coordinator; and Senior Consultant with the Management Analysis Division.

For the past 15 years, Dr. Hanson has been in private practice assisting over 200 public, private and non-profit clients with a focus on environment, transportation, affordable housing and education issues. Recent clients include the U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Steel, 3M Corporation, over 25 state agencies including three Governors' Cabinets, forest policy initiatives in Minnesota and Tennessee, United Nations Sustainable Development Program and Habitat for Humanity.

Throughout her career, community service has been a consistent priority.

Dr. Hanson was President and Founding Member of the International Association of Facilitators and the Global Facilitator Service Corp. She is Emeritus Board Member of Simpson Housing Services, a non-profit organization serving homelessness needs in the Twin Cities.

Dr. Hanson has actively supported Japan-Minnesota relations since the early 80's as Board Member of the Japan American Society and its President for 4 years. She continues to volunteer in many other roles including class correspondent for the Tokyo American School and Board planning facilitator for the Japan America Society and the St. Paul Nagasaki Sister City Committee.

Ms. Hanson holds a Doctorate in Education Leadership from the University of St. Thomas, an MBA from the Carlson School at the University of Minnesota and a BA from Metropolitan State University. She is an adjunct instructor at the University of St. Thomas and guest lecturer at the several universities on the topics of leadership ethics, conflict resolution and citizen participation. Dr. Hanson is the author of *Clues to Achieving Consensus* and a chapter contributor to several books about civil society and collaborative decision making.

Dr. Hanson lives in Minnesota with her husband Sam Hanson, partner of Briggs and Morgan Law Firm and recently retired Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court. Their six children, spouses, partners and six grandchildren all live in the Twin Cities after births or extended residencies in Texas, both US coasts, Brazil, Portugal, Jamaica, Venezuela, Mexico, Guatemala, India and Ghana.