



For immediate release
April 29, 2014

**Conferral of The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star
Upon Governor James R. Thompson
Former Governor of the State of Illinois and
Chairman of the Midwest U.S.-Japan Association**

On April 29, 2014 (Japan Time), the Government of Japan announced the foreign recipients of the 2014 Spring Imperial Decorations. Among the 55 foreign recipients is Governor James R. Thompson, former Governor of the State of Illinois and Chairman of the Midwest U.S.-Japan Association. He will receive The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star in recognition of his significant contributions to the promotion of mutual understanding and the strengthening of economic relations between Japan and the United States. The prestigious decoration is conferred by His Majesty the Emperor of Japan.

DECORATION: The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star

SERVICE: Contributed to the promotion of mutual understanding and the strengthening of economic relations between Japan and the United States

NAME (AGE): James R. Thompson (77)

MAJOR TITLES:

- Former Governor of the State of Illinois
- Chairman of the Midwest U.S.-Japan Association
- Senior Chairman of Winston & Strawn LLP

ADDRESS (NATIONALITY): Chicago, Illinois (USA)

Governor Thompson's achievements regarding Japan are impressive and many. As Governor, he took the initiative to promote trade and investment between Japan and Illinois. He led 8 Illinois missions to Japan, the most by any Governor in the United States, and he had many successful meetings with top Japanese business executives. His leadership achieved a significant expansion of the Japan-Illinois business partnership. Mitsubishi Motors selected Illinois for its large vehicle assembly plant, after Governor Thompson presented his state's key advantages beginning with his first trip to Japan in 1979. During his tenure as Governor, the number of Japanese business facilities in Illinois more than doubled from 260 to 610 and their employment tripled from 12,000 to 38,000. Illinois became the first state with two offices in Japan: Osaka in 1983 and Tokyo in 1987.

Governor Thompson has been serving as the Chairman of the Midwest U.S.-Japan Association since 2003. The annual conferences held in Japan and the U.S. bring together government and business leaders to advance new business ties. Seven Japanese prefectures and nine Midwest states are members. Governor Thompson's exemplary leadership and that of Mr. Yuzaburo Mogi, Chairman of the Japan-Midwest U.S. Association, and Honorary CEO and Chairman of the Board, Kikkoman Corporation, continue to make the conference a tremendous success.

Japan's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Fumio Kishida, has sent a congratulatory message to Governor Thompson that recognizes his outstanding contributions.

Governor Thompson's Career

Governor Thompson received a J.D. from Northwestern University School of Law in 1959. Before being appointed by President Nixon as U.S. Attorney in Chicago (1971-1975), Governor Thompson argued more than 200 cases before the Illinois Supreme Court and argued the landmark Escobedo case in the Supreme Court of the United States. He also served as an Associate Professor at Northwestern University School of Law, an Assistant State's Attorney of Cook County (1959-1964), and an Assistant Attorney General of Illinois (1969-1970).

As Illinois' longest-serving chief executive (14 years), Governor Thompson was noted for his skill in settling difficult labor-management problems, his ability to manage one of the nation's largest public budgets while maintaining one of the nation's highest state bond ratings, and his leadership role among his peers. He served as Chairman of the National Governors' Association, the Midwestern Governors' Conference, the Council of Great Lakes Governors, and the Republican Governors' Association. During his tenure in office, he traveled abroad extensively on behalf of Illinois business interests, meeting with foreign heads of state and leading government officials; he also led numerous trade missions to Japan, Canada, Mexico, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East on behalf of Illinois businesses.

In 1989, President George H.W. Bush appointed Governor Thompson as Chairman of the President's Intelligence Oversight Board, a position he held until 1993. He was a Commissioner of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States (9-11 Commission) by appointment of Speaker Dennis Hastert.

Listed in 1997, 2000, and 2013 by *The National Law Journal* as one of the nation's 100 most influential lawyers, Governor James Thompson served as Chairman of the Executive Committee of Winston & Strawn from 1991 to 2006, as well as Chairman and CEO of the firm from 1993 to 2006. As Chairman, he oversaw the growth of the firm, both domestically and internationally. He presently serves as Senior Chairman.

#####

For further details, please contact:

Bill Christensen
Consulate General of Japan at Chicago
312-280-0410
william.christensen@cg.mofa.go.jp

Ko Hikasa
Consulate General of Japan at Chicago
312-280-0400
ko.hikasa@mofa.go.jp

JAPAN INFORMATION CENTER
CONSULATE GENERAL OF JAPAN AT CHICAGO
737 NORTH MICHIGAN AVENUE • SUITE 1000 • CHICAGO • ILLINOIS 60611
(312) 280-0430
<http://www.chicago.us.emb-japan.go.jp/>