

August 17, 2020

I was deeply saddened when I heard the news about Governor James Thompson Saturday morning.

Although I did not know him personally, I have heard much about his achievements as the longest serving Governor of the State of Illinois, Chairman of Winston & Strawn, and as Chairman of the Midwest U.S.-Japan Association.

Few have achieved so much as Governor Thompson did for Japan's close partnership with Illinois and the Midwest. His eight trade and investment missions to Japan, the most by any governor at the time. The number of Japanese companies in Illinois doubled and their employment tripled. He became the first governor to open two state offices in Japan in Osaka and Tokyo. His superb leadership as head of the Midwest U.S.-Japan Association beginning in 2003 made each conference a remarkable success and brought Japan and the entire Midwest closer together as never before. In recognition of the Governor Thompson's significant contribution, His Majesty the Emperor of Japan conferred upon him the prestigious Decoration, The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star, and spoke with him at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo.

The Governor is held in the highest esteem in Japan for his remarkable contribution and for his tremendous friendship. On behalf of the Government and people of Japan, Mrs. Jayne Thompson and her family have my heartfelt condolences.

With sincerest sympathy,

Kenichi Okada  
Consul-General of Japan in Chicago