

November 3, 2008

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Three British Columbians Awarded Japan's Prestigious Order of the Rising Sun**

On November 3, 2008, an official announcement was made in Tokyo to confer on Dr. Bernard Saint-Jacques, Professor Emeritus, Linguistics, University of British Columbia, and to confer on Mr. John Mark Powles, President of the Canada-Japan Society of British Columbia, Dr. Joseph F. Kess, Emeritus Chair in Japan and Asia-Pacific Relations and Professor Emeritus, Linguistics, University of Victoria, one of Japan's most prestigious honours the "Order of Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon". This award was bestowed on each of the 3 recipients in recognition of their service and dedication to facilitate better understanding between Japan and Canada.

Through his scholarly research, teaching, and writing over a long and prominent career, Dr. Saint-Jacques has advanced greater understanding of the language of Japan and advanced its learning abroad. He has promoted mutual understanding between Japan and Canada to students and colleagues alike as professor and Acting Head of Linguistics Department at UBC and as the Director of the Institute of Language and Culture at Aichi Shukutoku University in Japan. He has been continually active in Japan-related affairs both in the academic world and in the wider community.

All throughout his career, Mr. Powles has been a Canadian who is respected, trusted, and sought after for his expertise on Japan both in the business world and in government. Among his many accomplishments, he has advised Canadian federal, and provincial governments, headed up Canada's Council of Forest Industries in Japan, acted trade advisor on the Japanese Prime Minister's Import Advisory Board, and was the first non-Japanese given an award by the Japanese Ministry of Construction for improving the housing of the Japanese.

The contributions of Dr. Joseph F. Kess to greater understanding of Japan have come through all facets of his professional career. His landmark books on Japanese psycholinguistics, his acknowledged excellence as a teacher, and his leadership at the Center for Asia Pacific Initiatives at the University of Victoria stand out among his many accomplishments that have served to increase awareness and knowledge about Japan in Canada.

In recognition of the outstanding contributions of these Canadians, His Excellency Mr. Hirofumi Nakasone, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan sent a congratulatory note praising their work.

Mr. Seiichi Otsuka, the Consul General of Japan in Vancouver, will host an award ceremony for Dr. Saint-Jacques and Mr. Powles at the Consul General's official residence on Friday November 28<sup>th</sup>, and also host an award ceremony for Dr. Kess at same location on Wednesday December 10<sup>th</sup>.

Members of the media wishing to seek further information or interview recipients should contact Ellen Lee, Consulate General of Japan at 604-684-5868 local 240.