



**COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD
NOMINATION FORM**

(All nomination suggestions will be forwarded to the Legacy Committee for consideration.)

Due on or before April 30

Award Nominee:

Name: Yoko Mossner, Executive Director
Company: Japanese Cultural Center, Tea House & Garden of Saginaw, Inc.
Address: 527 Ezra Rust Drive
City: Saginaw State: MI ZIP: 48601
Phone: (989) 759-1648 Email: ymossner@yahoo.com

Award Nominator:

Name: JoAnn Crary, President
Company: Saginaw Future Inc.
Address: 515 N. Washington, Suite 300
City: Saginaw State: MI ZIP: 48607
Phone: (989) 754-8222 ext 235 Email: jcrary@saginawfuture.com

Please provide contact information for individuals who can provide a testimonial for the nominee:

Name: _____
Company: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____
Phone: () Email: _____

Name: _____
Company: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____
Phone: () Email: _____

Return completed form by April 30th:

By email: Nancy@saginawchamber.org

By fax: 989.752.9055

By mail: 515 N. Washington Ave., 3rd Floor, Saginaw, MI 48607

ABOUT THE NOMINEE

Describe the nominee, listing how he/she meets the above criteria.

Yoko Mossner is a Japanese native, born in Toshima, Tokyo in May of 1933. She lived in Tokyo with her parents until they passed when she was eight years old, at which point, she moved to her grandparents home with her older brother and sister. She was six years old when the war started and ten when Tokyo was evacuated in lieu of bombing. The government moved the youngest children to Nagano Prefecture in the mountains to shield them from the activities of the war (Aug 1944 - Oct 1945). After the war, she returned to live with her grandparents and siblings until she finished school, during which time, her grandparents passed away. Upon graduating, she went to vocational school in Yokohama and found a job at an American Army Base. It was there, that she met her husband, Eugene, who was from Saginaw, Michigan. He had been drafted during World War Two and sent to Japan. In 1957, Yoko moved with her husband to Saginaw.

While living in Saginaw for over 50 years, Yoko helped to form and support the sister city relationship between Saginaw and Tokushima, Japan. In 1986, materials were imported from Japan and Japanese carpenters flew in to oversee construction of the Tea House. The Japanese Tea House is highly regarded as one of the ten best tea houses outside of Japan and is the only authentic tea house in the Midwest. Yoko was instrumental in the construction, maintenance and management of the Japanese Cultural Center, Tea House and Gardens. This beautiful facility is a symbol of the Saginaw-Tokushima sister city relationship.

The Japanese Cultural Center & Tea House is a non-profit organization. The City of Saginaw provides a portion of the funds necessary for operations, with the balance coming from program admissions and generous donors. To preserve this cultural gem for our community, the non-profit formed the Tomodachi (Friendship) Society, which receives special invitations to a tea ceremony just for Society members as well as notices of all Cultural Center events.

As a young girl, Yoko loved to read, fold origami, play with her siblings and color. She brought her love for the arts to the Center, which offers occasional classes in traditional Japanese arts including origami, bonsai, calligraphy and language tutoring.

The three-acre garden that surrounds the Cultural Center & Tea House, slopes gently to the shore of Lake Linton. It is a quiet safe-haven to view weeping cherry trees, authentic stone lanterns, hand crafted bamboo gates, an Asian-inspired gazebo and an arching vermilion bridge over a winding stream.

The Gardens & Tea House open April-October, Tuesday-Saturday from noon to 4pm. An authentic tea ceremony is presented on the 2nd Saturday of each month year round (except December). Many people find this an idyllic spot for weddings, small ceremonies and photo shoots.

In November, 2016, Yoko Mossner was selected to receive Japan's Order of the Rising Sun, Silver Rays Award. The award is conferred in the name of Japan's emperor and acknowledges individuals who have made significant contributions to the promotion of the Japanese culture. Mitsuhiro Wada, consul general of Japan in Detroit, held a conferment ceremony honoring Mrs. Mossner for all she has done to advance friendship and goodwill between the U.S. and Japan.



www.SaginawFuture.com

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June 1, 2017

Bob VanDeventer, President
Past Board Chairs
Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce
515 N. Washington, Suite 300
Saginaw, MI 48607

RE: Community Impact Award – Yoko Mossner

Dear Bob and Past Chamber Board Chairs:

It is my pleasure to nominate Mrs. Yoko Mossner, Executive Director of the Japanese Cultural Center, Tea House and Garden for the Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce's Community Impact Award.

Yoko has been in Saginaw since 1957 and for 60 years has exposed our community and region to the Japanese culture and led a relationship between the City of Saginaw and Tokushima, Japan.

While the Japanese Garden came first in 1969, ten years later, the City of Saginaw deeded part of the garden property to Tokushima City and they decided to build the Japanese Tea House. Yoko took the role of co-chair of the fundraising committee and worked very hard to raise funds to build the Tea House. The Japanese Tea House is highly regarded as one of the ten best tea houses outside of Japan and is the only authentic tea house in the Midwest.

Yoko has been instrumental in leading, managing and improving the Japanese Cultural Center, Tea House and Garden and our relationship with Tokushima as a member of the board and in her current position as Cultural Director. She has made a significant impact on the quality of life in Saginaw County through her leadership and individual efforts to ensure that one of Saginaw's finest jewels thrives.

Because of her dedication, commitment and impact, I hope that you agree there is no one more deserving of the Community Impact Award than Mrs. Yoko Mossner. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

JoAnn Crary, CEcD, HLM, FM
President and CEO

515 N. Washington Avenue, 3rd Floor • Saginaw, MI 48607 **P** 989.754.8222 **F** 989.754.1715

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* Executive Committee

** Ex Officio Member

CITY OF SAGINAW



Department of Public Services
1435 S. Washington Ave.
Saginaw, MI 48601-2599
(989) 759-1662 (989) 759-1592 fax

May 25, 2017

Bob VanDeventer, President
Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce
515 N. Washington Avenue
Saginaw, MI 48607

RE: Community Impact Award Nomination

Dear Mr. VanDeventer,

I am writing to support the nomination of Yoko Mossner, Executive Director of the Japanese Cultural Center and Tea House for the 2017 Community Impact Award. It is my great honor and privilege to do so.

Yoko has been a valued asset to the Japanese Cultural Center and Tea House for numerous years and her dedication has made the Center highly regarded and a highlight to the City of Saginaw. She has fostered and supported a relationship with our Sister City Tokushima, Japan. Most recently, Yoko received the Order of the Rising Sun, Silver Rays, which is a national decoration of the Japanese Government which is conferred by the Emperor of Japan. Yoko was instrumental in the creation of the sister-city relationship between Saginaw and Tokushima, Japan, which was established in 1961. Fifty-six years later, Yoko is still committed to this rich and mutually beneficial alliance. Yoko is not only known in this region, but also around the world for her invaluable contributions to promote the exchange of civic and cultural understanding between our cities and countries. As a result of Yoko's passion, drive and commitment, the Japanese Tea House and Cultural Center stands as a symbol of the special friendship and goodwill that Saginaw shares with Tokushima and the citizens of Japan. This has resulted in on-going cultural exchanges and a beautiful friendship.

As a native of Japan, Yoko has enriched our community and enlightened the public on the traditional Japanese traditions. I know of no one more deserving of the Community Impact Award than Yoko Mossner, and it is my pleasure to support her nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phillip Karwat", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Phillip Karwat, PE
Public Service Director
City of Saginaw



5400 North Michigan Road • Saginaw, MI 48604-9780 • 800.748.0423 • 989.752.4275 • Fax: 989.752.4444 • www.glastender.com

May 26, 2017

Mr. Bob VanDeventer, President
Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce
515 N Washington
Saginaw MI 48607

RE: Letter of Support for Yoko Mossner's Community Impact Award Nomination

Dear Bob,

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter in support of Yoko Mossner's nomination for the Community Impact Award. It would be difficult to find someone with a longer and more consistent dedication to improving the quality of life in Saginaw, which Yoko has done through exposing the area to Japanese culture as well as fostering a great relationship with our sister city in Tokushima, Japan.

Saginaw City's sister city relationship began when an agricultural student from Tokushima, Hiroyuki Takagi, stayed in Saginaw at the home of Dr. Sulfridge. Hiroyuki really enjoyed his time in Saginaw and thought there were a lot of similarities between Saginaw and Tokushima, so he was the original person to think of forming a sister city relationship.

Since the earliest discussions of forming a sister city relationship in 1961, Saginaw City had a need for someone to assist in communicating with Tokushima. An attorney in Saginaw named Harvey Walker was friends with Dr. Sulfridge and also friends with another attorney named Eugene Mossner who had a Japanese wife, Yoko Mossner. At that point, the connection was made and Yoko has served as the communication go between ever since.

In addition to handling translations and communications, Yoko has also been instrumental as a trusted adviser to Saginaw City on all things related to Japan.

In 1969, Saginaw City thought of creating a Japanese garden, so the two cities worked together to plan an authentic garden, which was dedicated in 1971.

In 1979 Saginaw City decided to deed part of the garden property to Tokushima City. The mayor of Tokushima thought of building something on the property. There was communication back and forth and they ended up deciding to build an authentic Japanese tea house.

The Tea House project began in 1981, but was slow to get off the ground here in Saginaw due to the need to raise funds for the project. About two years later, Yoko Mossner took the role of co-

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chair of the fundraising committee and worked very hard to raise the funds necessary to build the Tea House. Ground was broke in 1985 with dedication taking place in 1986.

Yoko Mossner has served on the Tea House board since 1985. Saginaw City hired directors for the Tea House, but since they were not from Japan, Yoko's consul remained vital. Yoko became a volunteer director in 1993. About ten years later, when the management of the Cultural Center was turned over from Saginaw City to the Japanese Cultural Center 501(c)3 non-profit organization, Yoko took the official position of Cultural Director, which she still holds today.

Yoko has been tireless in her efforts to promote Japanese culture here in Michigan. She has served a vital role for over 55 years, but she is so humble that she would never acknowledge how important her role has been.

Yoko is a great friend and a wonderfully sweet woman. She and her husband Eugene are both of impeccable moral character, which is also demonstrated in their three grown children. I am blessed to have served quite a few years alongside Yoko on the Tea House Board of Directors. I cannot think of a more deserving candidate for the Community Impact Award.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Todd M. Hall', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Todd M. Hall, CFSP
President

June 02, 2017

Mr. Bob VanDeventer, President
Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce
515 N Washington
Saginaw MI 48607

RE: Letter of Support for Yoko Mossner / Community Impact Award

Dear Mr. VanDeventer,

I write this letter in support of Yoko Mossner's nomination for the Community Impact Award.

Since 1969, Yoko has been a trusted adviser to the City of Saginaw on all things related to Japan. She was instrumental in the creation of the Japanese Gardens, Tea House and Cultural Center. As you know, the Gardens were dedicated in 1971. The Tea House project began in 1981, but was slow to get off the ground due to a lack of funding. Yoko Mossner became co-chair of the fundraising committee of the project in 1983 and worked tirelessly. The Tea House groundbreaking ceremony took place in 1986. Since then, the Tea House has been a tourist and educational strong point of Saginaw. Yoko has served in an instrumental capacity on the Tea House board since 1985. I would go so far to say that it is Yoko's personality and spirit that defines the Tea House.

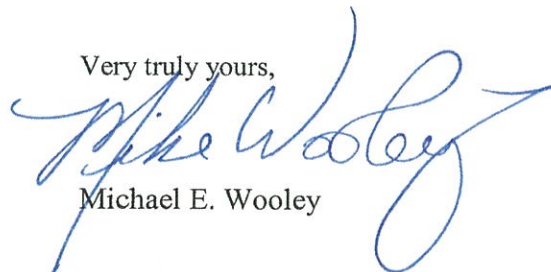
Many individuals have served to maintain Saginaw's sister city relationship with Tokushima, but none so much as Yoko Mossner. She has served as translator, goodwill ambassador and the recognized contact for all matters between Tokushima and the City of Saginaw throughout the several decades of that relationship.

Yoko is a humble, gentle, friendly and highly dedicated proponent of Saginaw. She has served the community for over 55 years. She always makes everyone feel at home. She and her husband Eugene Mossner are highly respected.

I have served for many years beside Yoko as a Tea House board member. I cannot think of a more deserving candidate for the Community Impact Award.

Sincerely,

Very truly yours,



Michael E. Wooley

MEW/mew/15917561