

Japanese Cherry Trees “Sakura” Presented to the UW and the Arboretum: Centennial Commemoration of Japan’s historical gift of Sakura Trees to the United States May 20, 2014

On May 20, 2014, a beautiful sunny day, 32 cherry trees, or “Sakura” in Japanese, to celebrate the centennial commemoration of Japan’s historical gift of Sakura trees to the United States, were presented by the people of Japan to the University of Washington and the Washington Park Arboretum. In the spirit of true partnership, the planting of these trees is a celebration of the strong ties of the last centennial as we come together to look forward to the next.

In honor of the 1912 gift of Sakura trees, the Embassy and the Consulates General of Japan in the United States, with marvelous community support, have taken initiative to plant Sakura trees throughout the country since 2012. Here in Washington, such trees have been planted at Jefferson Park in Seattle, Everett Community College, Point Defiance Park in Tacoma, and Percival Landing in Olympia.

The addition of 32 trees planted around the UW Drumheller Fountain and Rainier Vista, as well as on Azalea Way and in the Japanese Garden at the Arboretum, symbolizes the longstanding friendship between Japan and the United States, including the thriving Japanese and Japanese American communities at the UW and across Washington State, as well as the many sister relationships Washington and Japan nurture.

The May 20 celebration was a great success with the participation of Dr. Michael Young, President of the University of Washington, Mr. Masahiro Omura, Consul General of Japan in Seattle, Mr. Craig Trueblood, President of the Arboretum Foundation, Mr. Christopher Williams, Superintendent of City of Seattle Parks and Recreations, Mr. Scott Oki, Japanese American philanthropist, and the bright smiles of many members of the community.

The new trees symbolize in many ways the renewed growth of our partnership and the amazing opportunities that lie ahead. It is our hope that all Washingtonians will enjoy the beauty of Sakura for the next 100 years and beyond.

