

For Immediate Release**ACCJ 2008 Person of the Year:
Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer**

December 11, 2008— In recognition of his contribution to the U.S. - Japan economic relationship, the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) presented U.S. Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer with its 2008 Person of the Year on December 10 in a ceremony in Tokyo.

Sworn in as the 27th U.S. Ambassador to Japan on April 1st, 2005, Ambassador Schieffer has been a resolute advocate for the U.S. - Japan bilateral relationship.

"The only real threat that I see to our future is the danger that both Japan and the United States could revert to a protectionist past," said Ambassador Schieffer. "Japan's future prosperity is dependent upon engaging the rest of the world... If 'Japan passing' occurs in the future it will not be in my judgment because this or that American was elected President. Japan will only be passed if Japan believes that it has no role to play in the international community..."

Ambassador Schieffer also added, "We both (Americans and Japanese) know that our two peoples with very different cultures, very different languages, and very different histories, can live together in peace and harmony if they look to the future rather than dwelling on the mistakes of the past."

Of Ambassador Schieffer's selection as the ACCJ's 2008 Person of the Year, ACCJ President Allan Smith said, "The ACCJ wholeheartedly agrees with the ambassador's sentiment that together, no two countries in this region share a better combination of economic power, common interests, and shared values... The United States and Japan can advance the kinds of policies and measures, both bilaterally and globally, that Asia and the world need to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The ACCJ applauds Ambassador Schieffer's leadership in promoting the U.S. - Japan relationship at such a critical time in the development of the global economy."

The full text of the ambassador's speech is available at the following link, <http://tokyo.usembassy.gov/e/p/tp-20081210-71.html> on the U.S. Embassy website, <http://japan.usembassy.gov/>.

About the ACCJ Person of the Year Award

The ACCJ inaugurated a program in 1996 to annually recognize an individual who has made a major contribution to enhancing U.S. - Japan economic relations.

Past Recipients

2007	Professor Heizo Takenaka, Director of Keio University's Global Security Research Institute
2006	Mr. Hiroshi Okuda, Senior Advisor and Member of the Board, Toyota Motor Corporation
2005	Mr. Taizo Nishimuro, Chairman & CEO, Tokyo Stock Exchange; Advisor to the Board, Toshiba Corporation
2004	Hon. Howard H. Baker Jr., 26 th US Ambassador to Japan
2003	Mr. Yuzaburo Mogi, President & CEO, Kikkoman
2002	Mr. Masamoto Yashiro, Chairman & CEO, Shinsei Bank Ltd.
2001	Mr. Yoshihiko Miyauchi, Chairman, Orix Corporation; Vice Chairman, Keizai Doyukai; Chair, Council for Regulatory Reform
2000	Hon. Thomas S. Foley, 25 th US Ambassador to Japan
1999	Dr. Kazuo Inamori, the Founder and Chairman emeritus of DDI Corporation and Kyocera Corporation
1998	Mr. Hideo Ishihara, Chairman, Goldman Sachs Japan
1997	Mr. Yotaro Kobayashi, Chairman and CEO, Fuji Xerox Company, Ltd.
1996	Hon. Walter Mondale, 24 th US Ambassador to Japan

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About the ACCJ

The American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) was established in 1948 by representatives of 40 American companies. Marking its 60th anniversary in 2008, the ACCJ has grown into one of the most influential business organizations in Japan. Consisting mainly of executives from American companies, currently the ACCJ has members representing 1,300 companies with offices in Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka. Working closely with the governments of the United States and Japan, business organizations, and others, the ACCJ promotes activities that help achieve its mission of further developing commerce between the United States and Japan, promoting the interests of U.S. companies and members, and improving the international business environment in Japan. Over 50 committees representing various industries play the ACCJ's central role in making policy recommendations through advocacy tools such as the Business White Paper and holding over 500 events and seminars annually on public policy and economic trends. The ACCJ is also committed to promoting charitable events and other CSR activities.

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