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On Tuesday, November 3, 2015, the Government of Japan announced that Sister Margit Maria Nagy, CDP, Ph.D., Professor of History at Our Lady of the Lake University, is the recipient of “the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon”. She was presented with this award in recognition of her esteemed service in the promotion of the mutual understanding between Japan and the United States of America. She is among the 89 individual recipients worldwide who were awarded this prestigious decoration by the Government of Japan.

Sister Nagy was born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1942 and came to the United States (San Antonio, Texas) as World War II Displaced Persons (DPs) with her immediate family. She became interested in modern Japanese history when she was a university student at Our Lady of the Lake. She received a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Grant in 1976 to do dissertation research in Japan and was affiliated with Waseda University. As a Fulbright Visiting Professor in 1984-1985, she conducted postdoctoral research at the University of Tokyo School of Law. Since receiving her doctorate in History from the University of Washington, she has taught at Our Lady of the Lake University, a Catholic liberal arts and sciences institution sponsored by the Sisters of Divine Providence, of which she is a member. Sister Nagy has been serving as the Head of the History Program since 2004. She is also a founding member of the Japan America Society of San Antonio and served as its second President for two years from 1987.

Sister Nagy has a history of numerous achievements for promoting Japan-U.S. relations in San Antonio. First, she has raised interest in and understanding of Japan’s modern history. She established a course in modern Japanese history at Our Lady of the Lake University in 1984 and still continues to teach about Japan and Asia there. She has also presented lectures and courses on Japan at Saint Mary’s University and Saint Thomas University to offer opportunities for students throughout Texas to learn about Japan’s history. Sister Nagy has written numerous research papers on Japan’s society during the Taisho and Meiji Period, the Great Kanto Earthquake, and the changing role and status of women in modern Japan and has-presented her research at conferences and symposiums. Recent examples are “Dr. Shiga Shigetaka’s Monument to the Alamo Heroes and the Fulbright Experience” at the Southwest Fulbright Symposium (2014) and “The Steadfast Christians of Nagasaki from Meiji Persecution to Showa Bombing” at the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Southwest Conference on Asia Studies (2011). She has written articles for local newspapers such as “Japan’s Tribute to the Alamo Heroes” (2014), “Keep Sister City Ties Relevant” (2013) and “Taisho Chic” (2005). Her booklets include “Women Who

Inspire: Kumamoto Women from the Meiji Era” (1999) and “Remembering the Alamo Japanese-style: Shigetaka Shiga’s Monument as Tribute to the Alamo Heroes” (1989).

Second, after serving the City of San Antonio as a volunteer with Japanese expertise, Sister Nagy was involved in establishing the Japan America Society of San Antonio (JASSA) in 1985 and has been volunteering for the society since then. While serving as the second president of the society from 1987 to 1989, she made efforts to strengthen the base of the organization by involving the members in large-scale events such as the Japanese monument at the Alamo anniversary commemorations and various San Antonio-Kumamoto sister-city relationship events. Even after serving as president, she contributed to U.S.–Japan relations as a core member of JASSA, by initiating the Japan Information Center, a free telephone service for the general public to answer questions related to Japan, and by organizing business-related lecture events. Her hard work led to the stable development of the society.

Third, Sister Nagy recognized the importance of the Japanese monument in the Alamo Convent Courtyard as a tangible symbol of the friendship between the U.S. and Japan. The monument was presented by Waseda University Professor Shigetaka Shiga in 1914 to recognize the common values of selfless courage and loyalty exemplified by both Texans in the battle of the Alamo and Japanese in the battle of Nagashino. She initiated and chaired a Japanese Monument Committee in 1985 and organized “The Rededication of the Friendship at the Japanese Monument at the Alamo” event in 1986. At this official Texas Sesquicentennial event, the Musashino City Junior Ambassadors Friendship Mission led by the current International Friendship Association brought the portrait of Professor Shiga to the Alamo as a goodwill gesture from Dr. Shiga’s descendants. In 1989 Sister Nagy organized the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration of the monument, which descendants of Professor Shiga, representatives of Japanese media and representatives of Rotary Clubs in Okazaki and Shinshiro City attended. Last year, she coordinated the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration, which was hosted by the Texas General Land Office and the Alamo, and cosponsored by numerous organizations in Texas, including the Texas Japan America Societies and Our Lady of the Lake University. Representatives of the 1986 Junior Ambassador delegation and Shinshiro City attended the November 5, 2014 event. She also gave numerous presentations on the Shiga monument, and coordinated the Cherry Seed Presentation Ceremony in 1993 and Cherry Tree Planting Ceremony in 1995 with the attendance of the Rotary Club of Shinshiro City and Horai Junior High School.

Finally, Sister Nagy has been involved in sister-city events since the San Antonio-Kumamoto relationship’s inception and has contributed tirelessly to its stable development. Right after the agreement was made in 1987, she helped host a number of delegations from Kumamoto City including a Mayor, Councilmen, a Kumamoto City Wings of Friendship Citizens’ Delegation and the Kumamoto Youth Baseball Team. She coordinated volunteers including some 75 faculty, staff and students of Our Lady of the Lake University, to assist Kumamoto City staff and artisans with the Kumamoto City Fair held in San Antonio in 1989. She delivered the keynote speech for

the opening ceremony of the Kumamoto City Cultural and Women's Center in 1990 and in 1997 spoke on "U.S. Social Welfare Services for Senior Citizens" during the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Sister City Wings of Friendship visit to Kumamoto. Sister Nagy also initiated and coordinated Our Lady of the Lake University's participation in the Sister City Kumamoto Student Exchange with Kumamoto University of Commerce from 1990 to 2002. She helped produce the bilingual (English-Japanese) booklet, "Women Who Inspire: Kumamoto Women from the Meiji Era" for the 1999 Kumamoto-San Antonio Women's Leadership Conference, for which she was a member of the steering committee and a moderator.

Sister Nagy is well known in the Japanese community in San Antonio for her fluent Japanese and her modest and polite personality. Her tireless dedication to the promotion of the friendship between the U.S. and Japan has always been admired by the people of San Antonio.