

***TOAST BY THOMAS D'AQUINO
FAREWELL RECEPTION IN HONOUR OF
AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN KANJI YAMANOUCI
OTTAWA
JULY 8, 2026***

Dear friend, Ambassador Yamanouchi, distinguished guests, chers amis.

I am honoured to present a farewell toast to Ambassador Yamanouchi on this memorable occasion - words from my heart to my very special friend - Kanji-san.

Kanji-san, you have heard the glowing tributes from Canadian leaders who have saluted your outstanding career in the service of Japan. We have also listened with great interest to the insights about your life and career that you have so generously shared with us.

ARIGATŌ - thank you for demonstrating to me, and to all who have come to know you, what it means to serve as an exemplary Ambassador - one who represents his country with dignity, integrity and pride; one who works tirelessly to build bridges in support of an ever-expanding relationship.

ARIGATŌ for respecting our history and traditions - for taking such a deep interest in Canada and Canadians. You have written about Canada - about our history, our politics, our economics. I had the privilege of reading an English translation of your work. I was mightily impressed! I know that you are now working on a new book which will offer insights on the world as you see it in these troubled times. I hope you will share that wisdom with us as well.

ARIGATŌ for connecting the business communities of our two countries with such success. My colleagues, the CEOs at the Business Council of Canada, have appreciated the skill with which you have conducted economic diplomacy leading to ever-growing cooperation in trade, investment and technological exchanges between Japan and Canada.

ARIGATŌ for being a brilliant champion of cultural diplomacy between our two countries. You have promoted important cultural linkages - for example, in support of the 2025 National Arts Centre Orchestra tour to Japan and also the tour of our National Gallery of Canada Distinguished Patrons to Tokyo. As we know, you yourself are a lover of music. How many times have we had the pleasure of hearing your melodies on the grand piano here at the Embassy residence, or your skill at the electric guitar.

One cannot speak of culture without mention of the culinary traditions of Japan. At your table, Ambassador, we have tasted the divine in taste and creativity.

ARIGATŌ for so enthusiastically engaging in the life of our community. When the heritage Village of Rockcliffe Park was designated a National Historic Site last year, you were in the front row applauding. My wife Susan and her heritage advocates are very appreciative.

In conclusion, and on a very personal note, let me say how much I have appreciated our private conversations on the politics of your country and mine, and on the geopolitical challenges Japan and Canada face as trusted partners and allies. Your wisdom and insights have been invaluable.

And, I shall be forever grateful for having invested me in the name of His Majesty, The Emperor of Japan, in the Order of the Rising Sun.

Kanji-san, you have shared friendship and many kindnesses with Susan and me. You will always be welcome to visit with us and your Canadian friends. We hope you will return to us often.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in raising our glasses and toasting our dear friend Ambassador Kanji Yamanouchi. KANPAI!!