

**For Release Immediately
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Ikebana International 18th North and Central American Regional Conference Announces Honorary Chairs

*Japanese Consul-General Mr. Hideo Fukushima and Mrs. Kaori Fukushima to serve as
Honorary Chairs for this highly-anticipated Conference*

Dallas— December 1, 2018 — Today, Patricia O’Reilly, Chair of the Ikebana International 18th North and Central American Regional Conference (18th NCARC), announced that the Consul-General of Japan in Houston, Mr. Hideo Fukushima, and Mrs. Kaori Fukushima will serve as the Honorary Chairs for this highly-anticipated conference to be held in Dallas, October 27 through October 31, 2019.

“We are thrilled that the Consul-General and Mrs. Fukushima have accepted this Honorary Chairmanship as it reinforces the commitment to recognize and share the importance of Japanese cultural awareness in the United States and other North American countries.”

The featured Guest Ikebana Artist for the 18th NCARC is Headmaster Designate Mrs. Senko Ikenobo, who will be coming from Kyoto, Japan, specifically for this event. Other guest artists include: Professor Manabu Noda from Kyoto, Japan, representing the Ikenobo School; Professor Jose Salcedo from San Francisco representing the Ohara School; Master Elaine Jo from Atlanta representing the Ichiyo School; Riji Soho Sakai from San Francisco representing the Sogetsu School; Riji Kika Shibata from Las Vegas representing the Sogetsu School; and Professor Yoshiko LeSage from San Francisco representing the Ikenobo School.

“We are excited to welcome friends from all over the world to the 18th North & Central American Regional Conference hosted by Dallas Chapter 13 and Fort Worth Chapter 38. The Conference will take place Sunday, October 27 – Thursday, October 31, 2019, at the Sheraton Dallas Hotel in the heart of Downtown Dallas and the Arts District!”

Ikebana, the Japanese art of floral design and arrangement, dates to the 7th Century and is one of the most important cultural elements that is uniquely Japanese. Ikebana International (I.I.) founded in 1956 has the objective of promoting mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and other countries through the introduction of Ikebana and other related Japanese

traditional and cultural arts to such countries. The motto of the association is “Friendship through Flowers.”

Members of I.I. live in over 60 countries and areas. Most of them have studied one of the many schools of ikebana. Some of them have never studied ikebana but enjoy observing the art form and learning about it and other Japanese traditional arts. At I.I. meetings all over the world, there are stimulating interactions and sharing of various ikebana schools’ inspirations, styles, philosophy, history, techniques, and other points of difference and common interest as well as educational and entertaining activities relating to other Japanese traditional arts.

The theme and mission for the 18th NCARC is “GROW Ikebana.” The word *ikebana* stems from the Japanese *ikeru* and *hana* which translates to “keep alive,” “arrange flowers,” and “giving life to flowers.” With “GROW Ikebana” we will facilitate cultural exchange and new growth in an amazing art and organization through community outreach by offering education in schools and other community venues and providing opportunities for those who are interested in attending demonstrations and workshops. We will cultivate and perpetuate the Art of Ikebana, the beauty and joy of creation and love for nature.

An exciting program is planned for the 18th NCARC. With over 15 workshops and a full day of demonstrations, there will be something for both the expert and the novice. In addition, an Exhibition of almost 200 ikebana arrangements will be on display during the conference. Both the Demonstrations and the Exhibition will be open to the public.

“We invite you to experience ikebana “Texas-style” at the 18th NCARC!”

For more Information:

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See attached **Summary of 18th NCARC 2018 Events**