

# Obuchi Scholarship Program Marks 10th Anniversary



The East-West Center marked the 10th anniversary of the Obuchi Okinawa Education and Research Program and the golden anniversary of the Center at a series of events in Okinawa in June.

During the past decade, the Obuchi program brought 49 Okinawan students and scholars to the Center to engage in multilateral educational and research activities. The program, supported jointly by the East-West Center and the Japan Foundation, serves as an important educational link between Okinawa and the United States and as a means to help advance Okinawa's future.

“The program's impact can be seen in the changes in the participants' lives as a result of this experience and what they have brought back to Okinawa from that experience,” said EWC President Charles E. Morrison at the 10th anniversary program. “The most important early result is to acquire an international outlook and a network of friends and professional colleagues from around the region and world. These enable and empower the Obuchi students and fellows, whose fuller impact is yet to be measured.”

The program included welcome remarks by Governor Hirokazu Nakaima of Okinawa Prefecture and Chōkō Takayama, president of the

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EWC Alumni-Okinawa Chapter. The Honorable Yuko Obuchi, member of the Lower House of the Diet in Japan and daughter of former Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi, also presented a keynote address.

A highlight of the 10th anniversary events included a symposium organized by Obuchi program participants that brought together Obuchi fellows from different years to reflect on their experience and discuss Okinawa-related issues. Robert Nakasone, EWC Obuchi program coordinator, shared the history of Okinawan participation at the Center, which was initially very strong in the 1960s, and was later revitalized with the establishment of the Obuchi program.

Named in honor of former Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan, the Obuchi program was announced when President Bill Clinton visited Okinawa in 2000. “It was at President Clinton's initiative that it was named after his friend and fellow leader,” noted EWC President Morrison in his address. “This reflected the President's awareness of Mr. Obuchi's deep and special affection for Okinawa.”

The Obuchi program's 10th anniversary was also celebrated in Honolulu with a public forum on the theme “Okinawa Now” held at the East-West Center in March. Featured presenters included Tomohiro Yara, Okinawa Times editorial writer and award-winning author of “Alliance on the Sand,” together with experts from the University of the Ryukyus in Okinawa, who spoke on the current U.S. military base issue live via videoconference. Other panel discussions focused on Okinawa's tourism industry, pop culture, and youth identity in flux.



The Honorable Yuko Obuchi, member of the Japanese Diet and daughter of former Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi greets the conference participants.



EWC Obuchi Program Coordinator Robert Nakasone



U.S. Ambassador to Japan John Roos at the Obuchi program celebrations in Okinawa.



(Front row, L to R) Obuchi Coordinator Robert Nakasone, Ambassador Gotaro Ogawa, EWC President Charles E. Morrison, and EWCA Okinawa Chapter President Choko Takayama with Obuchi program alumni and other members of the EWCA Okinawa Chapter.