

# Nashville Bar Journal

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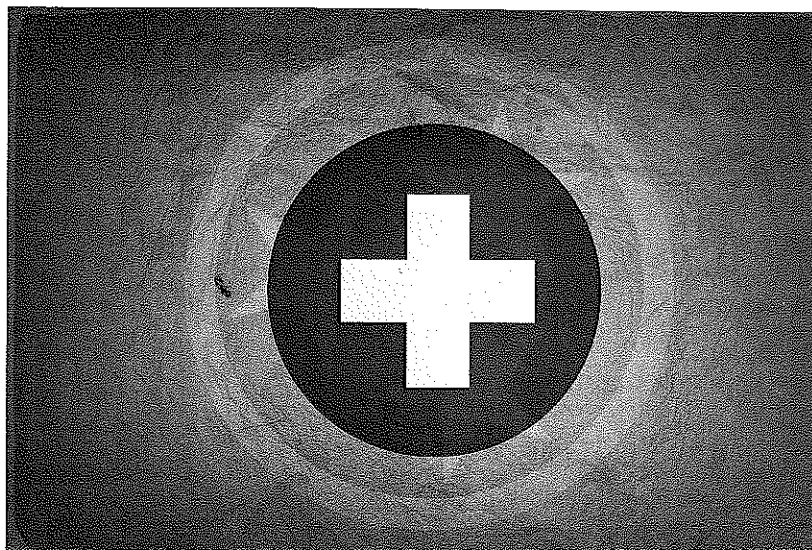
*180<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the  
Nashville Bar Association*

**Nashville Rises Up for Japan**  
Tracy Kane

**LAW DAY LUNCHEON REGISTRATION**

**Bill & Phil's Gadget of the Month:  
The Tablet War**  
Bill Ramsey and Phillip Hampton

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## Nashville Rises Up for Japan

by Tracy Kane

Blizzards, earthquakes, fires, floods, volcanoes, and tsunamis. The past fifteen months seem to have devastated much of the globe whether in Chile, Haiti, Iceland, New Zealand, Pakistan, and Russia not to mention Nashville and, now, Japan. This list does not even include the many man-made disasters, wars and revolutions over the same period. You might think that we would all be suffering from compassion fatigue or accepting these events as a new kind of normal, but you don't, at least not in Nashville.

Instead, in the face of the devastation unfolding in Japan you see a community rushing to gather resources and funds. You hear people sharing their personal stories of connection with Japan – stories about generosity, help from a stranger or making long lost connections. The previously scheduled Cherry Blossom Festival, organized to celebrate the friendship between Tennessee and Japan, was quickly recast as the Cherry Blossom Japan Relief Event and Solidarity Walk. The Tennessee Tomodachi Fund (tomodachi means friendship in Japanese) was established in less than a week with dozens of individuals and local businesses donating to it. Those in the music and television industry responded by creating public service announcements to encourage giving to the American

Red Cross for Japan relief. It is as though to many Nashvillians the devastation in Japan thousands of miles away feels as if it happened to a neighbor, a neighbor who just happens to live half a world away.

That neighborly feeling was formed over the decades as Japanese businesses brought their firms to Middle Tennessee. They brought their families and became invested themselves in the success of our region. We are now one extended family feeling the pain, grief and fear for friends and loved ones.

The economic and cultural ties between Middle Tennessee and Japan have been strong for more than thirty years. Japan is Tennessee's fourth largest trading partner only behind Canada, Mexico, and China. In 2010 alone, Tennessee exported \$1.3 billion worth of goods and services to Japan, an amount that has been increasing for the past five years.<sup>1</sup> According to the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, there are over 160 Japanese companies with more than \$13 billion total investments in Tennessee and that

employ approximately 41,168 Tennesseans. These investments make Japan the largest foreign investor nation in Tennessee. Beyond business, there are many cultural, academic and strategic exchanges that regularly take place with our museums, art galleries, educational institutions, and governmental organs.

The importance of the Tennessee-Japan relationship was perhaps most evident in 2008, when the Japanese government decided to move its Consulate-General for the Southern U.S. region from New Orleans to Nashville, the first for Nashville, and passing over Atlanta and other great Southern cities in doing so. These are just some of the tangible, more obvious connections between Tennessee and Japan, but it does not begin to capture the affection so many Middle Tennesseans feel for a country that is both geographically and culturally far away from us.

The Nashville Bar Association, with its active Sister Cities Committee, has long understood and embraced the idea that personal connection and friendship create bonds that are stronger than political winds. Sister Cities of Nashville, a non-profit organization, develops city partnerships and promotes peace through mutual understanding and respect that results from educational, cultural, professional and civic exchanges among individuals in Nashville and our Sister Cities. In the past few years, with the cooperation of the Mayor's office, the Consul General of Japan, area businesses and non-profits, Sister Cities of Nashville has seen a new friendship blossom with the city of Kamakura in Japan.

It took amazing foresight and courage to not only learn the lessons of World War I – that penalizing and marginalizing the vanquished only produced more conflict (a lesson we might try to remember today), but to implement new policies after World War II, including Sister Cities programs, that would make new friends of our old enemies. Certainly the people of both Tennessee and Japan have prospered because of it.

While relations between our two countries became somewhat strained over the past decade over strategic alliances, military installations, financial policies, etc., relations between Tennessee and Japan flourished because of the individual relationships that exist. Now, during these times of hardship and distress, the bonds of friendship provide hope and comfort whether through personal messages or financial support. The people of Tennessee, despite having been through our own devastating flood less than a year ago, have given generously to help the Japanese people. In the face of such devastating force, it is perhaps consolation to know that friendship is also a powerful force. ■



*Tracy Kane is an attorney with Dodson, Parker, Behm & Capparella, PC, specializing in estate planning and business law. She is a graduate of Vanderbilt University Law School and former law clerk to the Honorable Richard Dinkins on the Tennessee Court of Appeals. She is currently the President of the Sister Cities of Nashville Board.*

(Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. International Trade Data.

**The Tennessee Tomodachi Fund**  
Established by the Japan-American Society of Tennessee for Earthquake and Tsunami Relief. 100% of donations received will be directed to relief agencies inside Japan.

Donations may be made online at [www.jastn.com](http://www.jastn.com). Donations may also be made at any **First Tennessee Bank**. Contributions will be directed in full, without bank processing fees, to the Tennessee Tomodachi Fund through a special account. 100% of donations received will then be directed in a timely manner by JAST to relief efforts implemented by recognized and reputable Japanese relief organizations engaged in the affected areas now and during the process of recovery ahead.