"It’s not just another social event; it’s an intellectual event of international stature; and to be part of the Kyoto Prize adds depth to San Diego beyond promoting the sun and beaches.”

~ Ron Roberts, Chair of the Kyoto Symposium Organization

Notable Past Laureates

Advanced Technology
Sydney Brenner, Molecular Biologist (1990)
Alan Carras Kay, Computer Scientist (2004)

Isamu Akasaki, Semiconductor Scientist (2009)

Shinya Yamanaka, Stem Cell Scientist (2010)

Basic Science
Jane Goodall, Primatologist (1988)
Mario Renato Capecchi, Molecular Geneticist (1996)

Walter Munk, Oceanographer (1999)

Peter & Rosemary Grant, Evolutionary Biologists (2009)

Rashid Sunyaev, Astrophysicist (2013)

Arts and Philosophy
Akira Kurosawa, Film Director (1990)

Roy Lichtenstein, Expressionist Painter (1994)


"It is a privilege to host this prestigious event. Gala support funds the Scholarships and encourages these students to pursue a college education in the fields of the Kyoto Prize categories: Advanced Technology, Basic Sciences, and Arts and Philosophy. To date, the Kyoto Symposium Organization has awarded more than half-a-million dollars in scholarships.”

~ Ian Campbell, General and Artistic Director, San Diego Opera, and Master of Ceremonies, Kyoto Prize Symposium Gala

“The Kyoto Prize Symposium Scholarships create stronger relationships and understanding between the U.S., Japan and Mexico. By rallying our community around this worthy cause, I believe the Kyoto Prize Symposium will become an enduring legacy for our region.”

~ Malin Burnham, Founding chairman of Kyoto Symposium Organization

“The annual Kyoto Prize ceremonies in Japan rank among the world’s most auspicious events for recognizing outstanding human achievement. The Kyoto Prize Symposium is an undeniably important indicator of San Diego’s rising prominence on the world stage.”

~ The Hon. Ron Roberts, President, the San Diego Foundation

”Considered among the world’s leading awards for lifetime achievement”

~ Elizabeth Malloy, San Diego Transcript

"It’s an icon that represents the entrepreneurial spirit that characterizes San Diego”

~ Jessie Knight, EVP, Sempra Energy – San Diego Magazine

"The Kyoto Prize Symposium shines the international spotlight on San Diego and reaps long-term benefits for the community.”

~ San Diego Magazine, April, 2006

Celebrating Outstanding Lifetime Achievement
San Diego's Kyoto Prize Symposium is a three-day celebration of the lives and works of those receiving the Kyoto Prize, Japan’s highest private award for lifetime achievement. The Kyoto Symposium Organization is a California nonprofit corporation dedicated to promoting education and expanding the mission throughout North America of the Inamori Foundation, which awards the Kyoto Prizes.

The Symposium lectures by the Kyoto Prize Laureates are hosted by San Diego's major universities and are open to the public at no charge. This prestigious event provides an opportunity for an international audience to learn about the achievements of the Laureates and to discuss the relationship between their esteemed work and the common quest for peace and harmony among peoples, cultures, and nations.

Dr. Inamori has become an esteemed friend and a source of inspiration to the San Diego community. His mission is consistent with Dr. Inamori's belief that there is no higher calling than to work for the greater good of all humankind.

"It has been my lifelong belief that a human being has no higher calling than to strive for the greater good of humanity and the world. In keeping with this conviction, I have decided on this occasion to create the Kyoto Prize as a means of recognizing persons who have made outstanding contributions to the progress of science, the advancement of civilization, and the enrichment and elevation of the human spirit." Dr. Inamori has become an esteemed friend and a source of inspiration to the San Diego community. Dr. Inamori attends each year's Kyoto Symposium in San Diego.

President Bob Brower, Ph.D.
Point Loma Nazarene University

We are inspired and motivated by the great work of the Laureates. The Inamori Foundation's belief is based on the belief that scientific development and spiritual depth also resonate deeply with Point Loma Nazarene University. We are honored to pursue a better future for our world in partnership with our fellow host universities, the Kyoto Prize Laureates, and the Inamori Foundation.

Student Testimonials –

Ian Goodfellow, Recipient
2004 Kyoto Scholarship for Advanced Technology

"I received the Kyoto Scholarship in 2004, and I graduated from Yale in 2010. I am grateful to the Kyoto Foundation for awarding me the scholarship, and my involvement in public interest work since receiving the scholarship has remained unchanged. At Yale, I participated in a number of civic-oriented activities. I was a co-director of the Yale Hunger and Homelessness Action Project (WHAP), an umbrella organization that works to alleviate hunger and homelessness in the New Haven community through direct service, advocacy, fundraising, and awareness campaigns."

Dr. Inamori attends each year's Kyoto Symposium in San Diego.