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## **HOWARD L. CHAPMAN WINS SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL'S VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD**

WASHINGTON, DC – Howard L. Chapman from Fort Wayne Sister Cities International, Inc. (FWSCI) has won Sister Cities International's (SCI) 2016 Volunteer of the Year Award. The Volunteer of the Year Annual Award honors an exemplary volunteer for contributions to the sister city movement and recognizes the leadership and talent that benefit local sister city programs and the larger sister city network.

In 1975, Howard Chapman was asked by Fort Wayne's mayor to develop a U.S. Bicentennial project to help celebrate the city's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday. Around that same time, Chapman visited his brother in Seattle and saw a Japanese shrine that had been a gift from Seattle's sister city, Kobe, Japan. This experience inspired Howard to establish FWSCI and to begin the search for a sister city. Howard formed a small committee of Fort Wayne citizens who visited cities in Germany, Bulgaria, and Japan. As good fortune would have it, a Japanese visitor appeared at the Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce one-day asking about sister cities. He was referred to Chapman and revealed that Takaoka, Japan was looking for a sister city. In 1977, agreements were signed and Takaoka became Fort Wayne's first sister city.

Since creating the organization, Chapman served as its president for many years. Since 1976, Fort Wayne has added Gera, Germany; Plock, Poland; and Taizhou, China as sister cities and, in late 2015, Mawlamyine, Myanmar became Fort Wayne's Friendship City.

In 2002, Howard and his wife Betsy created the Chapman Exchange Students Scholarship Program and endowed it with nearly \$1 million. Every year, the endowment generates over \$30,000 which is used for scholarships for students ages 14-21 to travel from Fort Wayne to any of their sister cities and for students to travel to Fort Wayne from any of their sister cities. To date, scholarships totaling \$238,000 have been awarded to 163 students. Moreover, the program has inspired several of their sister cities to finance their own student exchanges so that the total number of student exchanges is nearly twice the number financed by the Chapman Fund.

Chapman continues to serve as a board member emeritus and participates in board retreats where he provides the history of the organization to new board members. Over the years, he has recruited many board members who would later serve as president of the board and provide much needed leadership to the organization.

In 2013 and 2014, Chapman published "The Wisdom of Howard" and "Snapshots." Both books included columns he had written for the local newspaper, many of which helped inform the public about sister cities. A large number of the columns were devoted to topics involving travel to our sister cities. The books are filled with photographs of official delegations and mayors. Some of Howard's friendships created during these sister city trips now reach into a third generation.

SCI's Annual Awards are awarded in several categories including Best Overall, Innovation (Arts and Culture, Economic Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and Youth and Education), and Volunteer of the Year. Award winners will be honored at the Lou Wozar Diplomatic Awards Dinner on Saturday, July 16 during SCI's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in Washington, DC.

SCI's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration will include an [Annual Conference](#) and [Youth Leadership Summit](#) in Washington, DC July 13-16, 2016. The celebration will bring together hundreds of the most influential global leaders in diplomacy,

foreign affairs, policy, business, and innovation. Elected and municipal officials, business leaders, youth delegates, and citizen diplomats will discuss this year's theme "Peace through People," building on President Eisenhower's initial vision of creating a more peaceful world by building global relationships.

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### **About Sister Cities International**

Founded as a Presidential Initiative by Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956, Sister Cities International serves as the national membership organization for 570 member communities with 2,300 partnerships in 150 countries on six continents. The sister city network unites tens of thousands of citizen diplomats and volunteers who work tirelessly to promote the organizations' mission of creating world peace and understanding through economic development, youth and education, arts and culture, and humanitarian assistance.

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