



## The Alliance Working in America in Portland, OR 2022 (TAWA PDX 2022)

### Speaker Biographies

#### Plenary Session:

#### Steve Bloom, CEO, Portland Japanese Garden



Under Steve Bloom's leadership, Portland Japanese Garden in Oregon, U.S. A. has seen strong institutional growth. He oversaw the completion of a \$37 million expansion of the Garden and its facilities designed by renowned architect Kengo Kuma, created a curatorial department, expanded and improved programs in culture, art, and education, established an International Japanese Garden Training Center, formed an International Advisory Board, and has dramatically increased national and international visibility and recognition.

In 2015, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced it was awarding the Foreign Minister's Commendations in Honor of the 70th anniversary of the End of World War II. The award was given to individuals and groups with outstanding achievements in the promotion of friendship between Japan and the United States. Bloom was awarded this prestigious recognition along with only 27 other individuals.

Bloom was a 2008-09 Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellow in Japan, sponsored by Hitachi, and concurrently served as Visiting Scholar at Tokyo University of Agriculture. Following his fellowship in Japan, Bloom led an effort to create the North American Japanese Garden Association (NAJGA) of which he served as its Founding Board President. Presented by Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, Bloom is the recent recipient of the "2017 Portland Award" recognizing greatest overall contribution to the promotion of Portland's visitor industry. This year, on the occasion of its 100th Anniversary, the Garden Society of Japan bestowed Honorary Membership to Bloom in recognition of outstanding achievements in the promotion of Japanese Gardens worldwide.



### **Dr. Satohiro Akimoto, Chairman and President, Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA**



Dr. Satohiro Akimoto is Chairman of the Board and President of Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA. He joined the organization in January 2019 and brings with him experience in the areas of business, research, intellectual dialogue, and student exchanges between Japan and the United States.

Dr. Akimoto's career has included roles at Mitsubishi Corporation, Mitsubishi International Corporation, Hughes Electronics, DirecTV Japan, Massachusetts Corporation for Educational Telecommunications, Japan Society, Keidanren USA, and Mt. Fuji Dialogue.

On top of his responsibilities at Sasakawa USA, Dr. Akimoto is a contributing writer for *The Japan Times*, associate fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in the UK, a contributing commentator for the Okazaki Institute in Japan, and a Japan Advisory Committee member of the Salzburg Global Seminar in Austria.

Dr. Akimoto received a PhD in Sociology and a MA in East Asian Studies from Harvard University, as well as a BA in Law from Keio University. He also received a certificate in Russian studies from Leningrad State University (currently St. Petersburg State University). In addition, Dr. Akimoto studied at London University in the UK and at Georgetown University.

### **Governor Kate Brown, State of Oregon**



Kate Brown is Oregon's 38th Governor, with nearly 30 years of experience advocating for working families and ensuring that every voice is heard in our democracy. As Governor, she dramatically expanded access to the ballot box with the nation's first automatic voter registration program, made historic investments in education, transportation, and affordable housing, and expanded the Oregon Health Plan to reach 94 percent of adults and all Oregon children so they have access to the quality health care they deserve.

Governor Brown is striving to protect the health and safety of all Oregonians, and build a safe and strong Oregon that works for everyone. And, as our nation grapples with the impacts of systemic racism, Governor Brown is committed to centering racial justice in a new vision for community safety, in the state budget and in her administration's agenda.



Governor Brown came to Oregon to attend Lewis and Clark's Northwestern School of Law, where she received her law degree and Certificate in Environmental Law. With her husband Dan, Brown raised Dan's son and daughter in SE Portland. When Governor Brown is not busy at the Capitol in Salem, you will find her playing out in nature with her dog, Jory.

### **Consul-General Masaki Shiga, Consular Office of Japan in Portland**



Born in 1960 in Tokyo, Japan, Consul-General Masaki Shiga graduated from Hitotsubashi University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics in 1982 and went on to join the Bank of Yokohama, Ltd. He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA), Economic Affairs Bureau in 1985, beginning an extensive period of service in Japan's diplomatic arena. This has included service as Deputy Director, Overseas Establishments Division, Minister's Secretariat, MOFA, Tokyo; and Principal Deputy Director, Climate Change Division, International Cooperation Bureau, MOFA, Tokyo. He also served as Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Japan in Uganda, Counsellor at the Embassies of Japan in Austria and Switzerland, and Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Japan in Botswana, before taking his current post in 2020.

### **Katherine Monahan, Director, Office of Japanese Affairs, U.S. Department of State**



Katherine (Kemy) Monahan is Director of the Office of Japanese Affairs at the U.S. Department of State. A career member of the Senior Foreign Service, she has served eleven tours on three continents over 27 years, in positions with the Department of State, Treasury, USAID, the World Bank and UNICEF. She served as Deputy Financial Attache at the U.S. embassy in Tokyo, studied law at the University of Tokyo, worked as an Economic Analyst with the Yasuda Fire & Marine Research Institute in Tokyo, and participated in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program in Fukui Prefecture, Japan. Her previous positions include Director in State's Bureau of International Organizations, Economic Counselor in embassy Mexico, Senior Development Counselor at the U.S. Mission to the European Union, Deputy Executive Director of the Secretary's Global Health Initiative, Economic Privatization Officer in embassy Warsaw, Advisor to the World Bank and Senior Advisor at UNICEF. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Ms. Monahan was an attorney. She is an honors graduate of the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and the University of California, Hastings College of Law (JD) and speaks Spanish, Japanese and some Polish.



## Session One: “Agricultural Innovation and Trade in the Age of Climate Disruption”

### Panelists:

#### Ron Pernick, CEO, Clean Edge



Ron Pernick is cofounder and managing director of Clean Edge, Inc., where he oversees the development and production of the company’s thematic stock indexes tracking clean energy, transportation, water, and the grid. Financial products tracking the firm’s energy-transition and sustainable-infrastructure indexes exceed \$4 billion in assets under management (as of March 2022). Ron is also the co-author of two books on clean-tech business and innovation, *Clean Tech Nation* (HarperCollins, 2012) and *The Clean Tech Revolution* (HarperCollins, 2007).

Ron co-authored the first report to identify the business and financial opportunities of clean technology (*Clean Tech: Profits & Potential*, 2001) and has since helped to popularize the term and advance the sector. He has taught MBA-level courses at Portland State University and New College and is a regular speaker at industry events. Prior to Clean Edge, Ron worked in the high-tech and telecommunications sectors, including with such early internet pioneers as Global Network Navigator, Internet In A Box, Preview Travel, and the WELL. He holds a BA from Michigan State University, including a year of international studies at Konan University in Kobe, Japan.

#### Darren Padget, Chairman, U.S. Wheat Associates



Darren Padget is a fourth-generation farmer who owns and operates Padget Ranches in Grass Valley, Oregon. The family business has been in operation since 1910, with a dryland wheat and summer fallow rotation that currently produces registered and certified seed on 3,400 acres (1,375 hectares) annually. Darren is the Chairman of U.S. Wheat Associates, the export market development organization for the U.S. wheat industry, a Commissioner on the Oregon Wheat Commission and a member of the Board of the Wheat Marketing Center. He has also previously served on the Mid-Columbia Producers Board of Directors, of which he was an officer for 10 years.



**Moderator:**

**Marianna Grossman, Founder and Managing Partner, Minerva Ventures**



Marianna Grossman is Founder and Managing Partner of Minerva Ventures, LLC, which invests and advises on solutions for a resilient future – bringing people and institutions together across sectors to collaborate, invent, fund, and implement solutions that enhance sustainability and reverse climate change. She is also a Senior Advisor and Consultant for Sustainability to USAsia Venture Partners. Marianna led Sustainable Silicon Valley for seven years, after roles in the automotive, computer, and semiconductor industries. Service includes President, Transportation Choices for Sustainable Communities; California’s Climate Adaptation Action Plan Technical Advisory Group; national Sustainable and Resilient Resources Roundtable; international Balaton Group; Environmental Entrepreneurs; and climate action councils for the cities of Palo Alto and Mountain View. Degrees: BA cum laude and with distinction in Policy Studies, Dartmouth College and MBA from Yale School of Management.



## Session Two: “Weaving the Common Threads: New Creative Dynamics in U.S.–Japan Partnership”

### Panelists:

**John C. Jay, President and Executive Creative Director of GX, President of Global Creative, UNIQLO**



John C Jay serves as President of Global Creative for Uniqlo and its parent company, Fast Retailing, while living and working in Tokyo, Portland and NYC. His work also takes him regularly to many of the world’s leading cities like London, Paris, Milan and Shanghai, where he connects with regional management, local cultural institutions, and leaders of the creative communities.

Jay has pursued a diverse creative career, moving fluidly across disciplines and cultures. He started his career in NYC in journalism as an editorial art director, then to lifestyle/fashion marketing as Creative Director for Bloomingdales in New York, and onto 21 years at the iconic creative agency, Wieden + Kennedy. There, Jay was a partner and Global Creative Director. He was Co-Creative Director on the Nike account amongst many other global brands. During this time, Jay founded Wieden + Kennedy Tokyo, Shanghai and New Delhi. In Tokyo, Jay helped launch Uniqlo’s first brand campaign after opening its first store in Tokyo in 1999. He also founded the agency’s first independent visual music label. In 2014, Jay joined Uniqlo’s Founder and Chairman to help the brand evolve into a truly global brand of leadership and influence.

Jay is an inductee at the Art Directors Club Hall of Fame. He was also named one of the top ten “Most influential art directors in the past 50 Years” by Graphic Design USA magazine. *Crash Magazine* in Paris recently said, “John C Jay is arguably one of the most influential design forces in the world.”

In his personal time, Jay oversees his creative consultancy, Studio J in Portland and his Art J Foundation, sponsors the Jay Scholarship Fund at the Ohio State University. He also serves on the International Advisory Board for Portland Japanese Garden.



### **Takeshi Ted Homma, Founder & CEO, Homma Group Inc.**



Ted was born into a family with fifteen generations of experience in the building trades in Japan, specializing in carpentry in the construction of shrines and temples. He attended Chuo University in Tokyo where he founded an internet startup “Yellnet,” which he sold in 2002.

Following the sale, he joined Sony Corporation in 2003 that resulted in a relocation to California in 2008 serving as new Business Development and Strategy Manager in San Diego and Silicon Valley. After four years with Sony in California, Ted joined Rakuten Corporation as the Executive Officer for Global Digital Content. He left Rakuten in 2016 to found HOMMA, Inc with the vision to bring innovation to the smart home market through reimagining the residential home construction and how smart technology is applied to how people live and work.

Ted’s decades of entrepreneurial experience and significant literacy in technology across the international arena drive Homma’s goal to revolutionize the residential smart home market, while creating a beacon of ideas for smart placemaking.

Ted lives in both Portland and San Jose, with his wife and five children.

### **Nobutaka Ide, President & CEO, WACOM Inc.**



Nobutaka (Nobu) Ide started his career at Sharp Corporation in 1995. During the course of 18 years at the company, Nobu played key roles in new business incubation, office equipment marketing and mobile phone businesses.

He joined Wacom in 2013 as General Manager in charge of technology marketing for the Component Business Unit, where he led efforts to reinforce Wacom’s leadership position in digital pen solutions integrated with mobile products by various IT brands, such as tablets and smartphones.

As Executive Director and EVP in charge of Technology Solution Business Unit and Platforms & Applications Business Unit, Nobu Ide drove collaborations with key industry partners across the globe.

In April, 2018, Nobu assumed the role of Representative Director, President & CEO and opened a new chapter of Wacom. In February, 2021, he was appointed Representative Director of Connected Ink Village as a general incorporated association.



Nobu is an avid reader with extensive interests, where one of his favorite authors include Yukio Mishima. He also relishes and writes poem as well as enjoys playing musical instruments, and loves Tchaikovsky and SION. Being a passionate believer in the potential of “New Human Expression and Learning,” Nobu also spends time in creative collaborations with his daughter, performing as a professional dancer, in his leisure time.

**Moderator:**

**Željka Carol Kekez, Founder and Principal, PLACE**



Željka Carol Kekez is an award-winning business strategist and an urban designer, professor, author, curator, and explorer. Carol is a founding partner of an innovative design studio, PLACE, embracing the idea of a better world through synergies between nature, art, philanthropy, and placemaking. PLACE has been recognized for design excellence by the American Society of Landscape Architects, World Landscape Architecture, and the internationally acclaimed Architecture MasterPrize.

Carol regularly hosts Japanese delegations and pop-up gatherings at PLACE and has led a Portland-team in interactive public-private partnerships ‘We Build Green Cities’ to reinvigorate Japan’s declining rural communities. Since her first visit to the country for Mizbering’s Inspire Forum with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport & Tourism (MLITT), she continues to serve as a *machizukuri* steward with the Inclusive Play Forum and a current collaboration on a placemaking concept to reimagine the Hiroshima’s downtown representing a new chapter of the Peace Memorial city. Carol’s notable engagements with Japan’s creatives include “Where Art and Science Fall in Love” and the World River Story, a social sculpture project to improve the state of the world rivers. The efforts led to Portland’s Willamette River recognition as the first North American waterway in the World River Story campaign.

Though her responsibilities and interests take her all over the world - Austria, France, Honduras, Cambodia, Colombia, China, and Japan - while in Portland, Carol is actively involved with professional and community service endeavors including the Architecture Foundation of Oregon (afo), the Halprin Landscape Conservancy, the Oregon China Council’s Climate Summit, and jurying professional and academic design competitions. Carol is an avid mentor serving her ultimate passion engaging future generations of designers at Portland State University School of Architecture.