Japan’s Foreign Minister’s Commendation awarded to Professor Toshinori Munakata

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan announced on July 12th, 2012, that Dr. Toshinori (Tosh) Munakata, Professor Emeritus of the Computer and Information Science Department at Cleveland State University in Cleveland, Ohio has been awarded the Foreign Minister’s Commendation. This honor is conferred on individuals and groups, each year, for outstanding efforts and valuable contributions to mutual understanding and friendly relations with Japan. This year, Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs chose to award this prestigious Commendation to only 62 individuals and 18 organizations worldwide.

In receiving this highly coveted award, Professor Munakata is recognized for his significant achievements in information science and numerous efforts and accomplishments in promoting mutual understanding between Japan and the United States.

Professor Munakata has contributed greatly to the field of information science in both the United States and Japan. On three separate occasions, he was awarded the University Merit Award for Excellence in Research by Cleveland State University. He was also awarded the College Legacy Award in Research in 2007. In Newsweek Japan’s special 25th anniversary issue published in May 2011, the magazine selected Dr. Munakata as one of 25 Japanese people who “changed the world.”

During his career, Professor Munakata published a graduate level artificial intelligence textbook that covers new fundamental aspects of the field. His textbook has received excellent evaluations and is used in classrooms worldwide. Professor Munakata has also promoted the development of information science by serving as Editor of two influential and widely known computer science journals: IEEE Expert (now IEEE Intelligent Systems) and Communications of the ACM.

Professor Munakata has also been instrumental in linking information science studies in the United States and Japan. Through the influential journals that he edited, Professor Munakata introduced the achievements of many Japanese researchers to an international audience. He also facilitated the publishing of journal articles translated from English to Japanese and contributed greatly to clarity of the Japanese text. Professor Munakata also supported the development of information science in Japan by giving informative lectures and taking part in joint projects.

Because of his many valuable contributions to both the field of information science and to enhancing relations between the United States and Japan, Professor Toshinori Munakata will be honored at an awards ceremony later this year.