

PRESS RELEASE

Japanese Emperor Presents the Highest Civilian Honor to Former Ambassador Howard Baker

April 29, 2008

(Tokyo, Japan/April 29, 2008) Emperor Akihito today awarded Japan's highest honor for civilians to former Ambassador Howard Baker. In an announcement from the Cabinet office, Government of Japan, the Emperor bestowed the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Paulownia Flowers, the country's highest honor for civilians, to the senior statesman for his service to Japan.

On May 22nd, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States, Ryozi Kato, will present the decoration to Ambassador Baker at a reception in Washington, D.C.

"With my deepest gratitude, I thank His Majesty, Emperor Akihito, for this honor. My diplomatic service in Japan and continued friendship with many there has been one of the highlights of my career," said Ambassador Baker. "Our countries share many important interests and it is my hope that the bonds between the United States and Japan continue to grow."

The former senator, who currently serves as Senior Counsel at Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC, was appointed the 26th U.S. Ambassador to Japan by President George W. Bush and served in that role from 2001 to 2005. The appointment was yet another milestone in a public service career that began in 1966, when Senator Baker became the first Republican popularly elected to the U.S. Senate from Tennessee. Senator Baker gained national recognition in 1973 as Vice Chairman of the Senate Watergate Committee. Three years later, he was keynote speaker at the Republican National Convention and was a 1980 candidate for the Republican presidential nomination. He concluded his Senate career in 1985 after two terms as Majority Leader (1981 to 1985) and two terms as Minority Leader (1977 to 1981). He was President Reagan's Chief of Staff from February 1987 to July 1988.

In addition to the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Paulownia Flowers, Senator Baker was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1984, the United State's highest civilian award, and the Jefferson Award for Greatest Public Service Performed by an Elected or Appointed Official, which he received in 1982.