

Introductory Comments by Dean Carla Koretsky, WMU College of Arts and Sciences

Hello, my name is Carla Koretsky and I am the Dean of the Western Michigan University College of Arts and Sciences. It is my tremendous pleasure to be here this afternoon to welcome everyone for the celebration of Dr. Jeffrey Angles, recipient of the 2017 Yomuri Prize for Literature in the poetry and haiku section for his book *My International Dateline*.

At Western Michigan University, we pride ourselves on being learner-centered, discovery-driven and globally-engaged. Dr. Angles, a professor in the Department of World Languages and Literatures here in the College of Arts and Sciences, certainly exemplifies these three pillars. His home department is a strong force for the globalization of the learning, discovery and service activities conducted by our students, staff and faculty, and Dr. Angles has certainly made impressive contributions in all of these areas.

Dr. Angles is being honored today for his exceptional scholarly achievement. He is an internationally known expert on contemporary Japanese literature in English translation. His prolific work as an outstanding translator of Japanese poetry and literature has resulted in numerous international prizes and nominations. Impressively, Dr. Angles has also published numerous creative pieces in Japanese, and it is this work that we celebrate today.

I would like to point out that Dr. Angles is not only deeply engaged in research, discovery and creative activities, he is also dedicated to learner success and to globalization of learner-centered programs. In his time at Western, he has been instrumental in growing our Japanese program from a minor to a program that includes not only the minor, but also a major and a teaching minor in Japanese, much to the benefit not only of many undergraduate students here at Western, but also to the benefit of those K12 students who will learn about Japanese language and culture from the graduates of our teaching program.

Dr. Angles is also focused on global-engagement in his service work - both within Western Michigan University and beyond. He has served as the director of the Soga Center at WMU, an interdisciplinary unit designed to promote knowledge of Japan to the WMU community, the city of Kalamazoo and all of southwestern Michigan. The Soga Center brings scholars, artists and writers to our campus to provide engaging lectures, demonstrations and readings about Japan to our students, staff, faculty and members of our broader community.

In this time, when so many in our country - and in many other countries as well - seem to be turning inward and isolationist, refusing to explore and to understand other peoples and cultures, the work of the Soga Center and of faculty like Dr. Angles is more important than ever before. I am deeply proud of faculty like Dr. Angles, who spark curiosity and a passion for learning about our global community in their students and in the members of our community. And I am especially proud to have him as a member of the Western Michigan University College of Arts and Sciences! His work, and the work of his colleagues, is exactly what we need to expose misconceptions and misunderstandings of other peoples and cultures, to fight intolerance and to find positive, collaborative solutions to global challenges. And for

his dedicated work, I offer him my deepest thanks and congratulations on behalf of our entire college.

And now, allow me to introduce Takashi Yoshida, professor of history and the current director of WMU Soga Center.