Yüichi Fujimoto died 21 September 2010 after a short illness. The news of his death got quickly around the world. The traditional Buddhist funeral ceremony (Otsuya) was held at the Tokuou-ji Temple, established in the fifteenth century. Drs. Canan and Andersen contributed dozens of messages of condolence from the ozone community that were presented at the ceremonial hall.

Fujimoto Yuichi-san was born in 1933 in Tokyo. After graduating from the Engineering Department of the University of Tokyo, he worked at Hitachi Ltd. until the late 1980s. At Hitachi, he was given an opportunity to play active parts in overseas assignments around the world, in part due to his considerable language skills and amiable personality. In the late 1980s, Yuichi Fujimoto emerged from manager of the Planning Department of the Japan Electrical Manufacturers’ Association (JEMA) to become a leading force in stratospheric ozone protection in Japan and worldwide. In just a dozen years he transformed Japanese industry and set them on the road to comprehensive thinking on the environment.

Fujimoto Yuichi-san was deeply embedded in the Montreal Protocol Technology and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP) and the Solvent Technical Options Committee (STOC), the Industry Cooperative for Ozone Layer Protection (ICOLP), the Japan Industry Cooperative for Ozone Layer Protection (JICOP) the Global Pathfinder Meetings, the PFC Semiconductor Partnership, the Thailand Partnership for CFC phaseout in refrigerators, Vietnam Pledge, the projects donating patented technology to public domain, and so much more. He helped organized technology cooperation projects in China, Hong Kong (before reunification with China), Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, the Philippines, Vietnam, and many other countries. From 1993 until 2002, he was Senior Expert Member of the Montreal Protocol Technology and Economic Assessment Panel.

One of his most distinguished accomplishments was the phaseout of CFCs from refrigerators in Thailand in 1996, which occurred only one year later than in most developed countries. Another extraordinary accomplishment was organizing in 1995 forty-three multinational companies from Canada, Germany, Japan, Korea, Sweden, Taiwan, the UK and the USA to pledge to avoid the use of ODSs in Vietnam.

With Japanese colleagues and government he helped organize the annual month-long training in Japan of developing country ozone officers and experts that silently professionalized this cadre and helped build community. He was deeply involved in many publications on how the ozone layer was miraculously rescued from certain destruction. For UNEP he helped author “Technologies to Protect the Ozone Layer: Case Studies on the Japanese Experience” highlighting the leadership of 19 Japanese
companies. With Tsutomu Odagiri he organized and edited the translation into Japanese of Ozone Connections, Expert Networks in Global Environmental Governance by Drs. Penelope Canan and Nancy Reichman.

He led by his example of good will and an openness to cooperation that was legendary. He was famous for success with diplomacy and grace. His stories and photos were about remarkable children, delightful grandchildren, and a loving wife. He cared deeply for his family, his wife, two sons and daughter, and six grandchildren. He basked in the knowledge that he had lived a good life.

He earned many awards including the US EPA Stratospheric Protection Award in 1993, the US EPA Best-of-the-Best Ozone Award in 1997, and United Nations Environment Programme TEAP Champion Award in 2007. He was always proud to explain how so many of his colleagues helped him achieve what he had done.

Yuichi Fujimoto among the TEAP members at the 20th Anniversary of the Montreal Protocol Award Ceremony, Montreal, Canada, September 2007

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“Yuichi, we promised each other that we would be together watching the final recovery of the stratospheric ozone layer and the extinction of the ozone hole. The most regrettable event occurred on 21 of September, and we became not to realize our dream of being together then. We share this dream with members of Japanese Ozone Association and so many others dedicated to global environment protection. May you rest in peace watching the activities of your comrades from now until our dream becomes true.”

Tsutomu Odagiri, Senior Managing Director
Japan Industrial Conference on Cleaning

“Fujimoto Yuichi-san was easily among the ten most important people in the world protecting the stratospheric ozone layer. He was energetic, right thinking, persistent and persuasive. He tied the world together in ways no one could imagine. I will miss him and I will remember all he did to make the world and my life better. He will always be an inspiration.”

Dr. Stephen O. Andersen, Co-Chair
Montreal Protocol Technical and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP)
“My daughter, Lily, loves Fujimoto-san as “family” in Japan. She appreciates what he has done and that she owes him a lot for making the planet safe to share with her children. She knows him as a hero and as the face of Japan’s enormous contribution to the world of providing industrial leadership in saving the stratospheric ozone layer.”

Penelope Canan, Professor of Sociology and Ozone Scholar
University of Central Florida USA

“How terrible! We were family and friends and we shared the joys of protecting the earth for future generations even as we celebrated the lives of each other’s children and grandchildren. One of my daughters had the advantage of Fujimoto’s hospitality when she was in Japan for a short while and I got to know his daughter when she worked in Kenya. Fujimoto-san was always cheerful, always silently effective.

Madhava Sarma, First Executive Secretary
Ozone Secretariat, India

“Yuichí was a unique and exceptional person, and a powerful advocate of industry leadership in environmental protection. I’ll miss Yuichí and his cheeky sense of fun and zest for life.”

Dr Helen Tope, Co-Chair
TEAP Medical Technical Options Committee (MTOC), Australia

“Fujimoto-san was a remarkable host, a serene presence in TEAP, and a person who knew how to enjoy life; be it dancing salsa in Washington or surprising us by going alone to the markets of Nairobi and mingling bravely, while we cuddled in the safety of the hotel. The memories remain, and his family and friends are proud of his accomplishments.”

Jose Pons, Co-Chair
TEAP, Venezuela

“It is very sad to say “so long” to Yuichí Fujimoto whose life is a profound example of what humans can do to protect Earth and is an inspiration to us all.”

Marco Gonzales, Executive Secretary
Ozone Secretariat, Nairobi, Kenya

“No words I can express… how so sad I am! Great man, humble, wise, easy going and plain brilliant. I have been fortunate to be his friend and enjoy his company and his love for my country Brazil made us even closer. Love and prayers go to Yuichí and his family, God bless Yuichí!”

Dr. Suely Carvalho, Director of Climate and Ozone Layer Protection
UN Development Programme (UNDP), Brazil
“So many happy memories, a terrific colleague, and a generous friend to so many people around the world. I am deeply saddened, but will always remember his wonderful legacy.

Sally Rand
US Environmental Protection Agency

“The news of Yuichi Fujimoto’s passing is indeed sad news. As a major leading light in STOC/TEAP circles, he was most highly respected by all for his wisdom and vigour in battling against ozone-depletion.”

Brian Ellis, Retired
TEAP Solvent TOC, Cyprus

“A smiling pathfinder and a quiet trail setter who took a path of public service not travelled by many. He set in motion a cleaning revolution with an incredible solvent called ‘enthusiasm’. His outstanding initiatives with developing countries remain immortal in the pages of case studies and guidelines of OzonAction.”

Rajendra Shende, Head of OzonAction
United Nations Environment Programme, France

“We have always respected Mr. Yuichi Fujimoto who was an unprecedented Japanese pioneer in protecting the stratospheric ozone layer. His devotion and achievements are really worthy of being remembered as the National Treasure in Japan.”

Masaaki Yamabe, Co-Chair
TEAP Chemicals Technical Options committee (CTOC), Japan

“Beyond Fujimoto Yuichi-san’s inspiring exemplary commitment, I will also remember his love for Opéra and Classical music. It was one of the favorite conversations subjects, each time we had the opportunity to meet. Gibran Khalil Gibran might have been thinking of Yuichi Fujimoto when he wrote: ‘And when you have reached the mountain top, then you shall begin to climb. And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance.’ May he rest in peace!”

Samira de Gobert, OzonAction Information
UNEP DTIE, Paris

Yuichi was always a true gentleman. While it's been many years since he and I were last together, I carry fond memories of our travels, meetings, dinners and parties. May he have everlasting peace.

Art FitzGerald, Retired
Northern Telecom, Canada