

# Mrs. Miles makes journey to Japan to accept a medal

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Staff Writer

**ROYAL OAK** — When Eleanor Miles describes her latest sojourn to Japan, her bright eyes are full of pride as she recalls accepting an Imperial medal of honor — one of the country's most prestigious awards — on behalf of her husband.

"I was the proudest lady and the saddest lady — sad because Mr. Miles wasn't there to receive it himself," she said. "He was a tremendous man."

Her memories are bittersweet because it was the first trip she's made to Japan alone. Husband Lawrence Delos Miles, an engineer internationally known for developing the technique of value analysis, died last Aug. 1 after a struggle with leukemia. He was 81.

On April 27, Japanese officials told Miles that he would receive the Third Order of Merit with Cordon of Sacred Treasure, an honor bestowed by the Emperor. The medal is awarded to people who have made significant contributions to Japan through their professional careers. Mrs. Miles said it is "very unusual" for an American to receive the honor.

Miles developed the theory of value analysis while he was working for the General Electric Co. The value engineer analyzes functions, establishes their value and finds the cheapest way to fulfill them. Through this technique, Miles saved U.S. and foreign businesses billions during a career that spanned almost 40 years.

The Japanese studied value analysis after World War II, using the theory to cut costs in electronics and the production of automobiles. Miles wrote a book about the technique and was invited to Japan to lecture on the subject. In 1983, Japanese industrial leaders created the Miles Award, an annual honor given to the companies that best integrate value analysis into their management plans. Miles presented the awards himself during a trip to Tokyo that year.

Mrs. Miles, who accompanied her husband on his earlier trips, returned to Tokyo on Oct. 21.

"In Larry's function language, I had a primary function and a secondary function in going to Japan," she said. "The primary function was to receive the Imperial medal of honor, and the



Photo by Meredith Goad

Eleanor Miles holds the Miles Award, created by Japanese industrial leaders for companies which made best use of Miles' techniques.

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secondary function was to attend the 18th annual meeting of the Society of Japanese Value Engineers (SJVE)."

On Oct. 22, she gave a kick-off greeting to 800 people at the SJVE conference. In a ceremony on Oct. 23, Minister Keijiro Murato of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry presented Mrs. Miles the medal and a scroll inscribed with the seal of the Emperor of Japan.

A reception was held in her honor that evening. She said she was treated with all the aplomb normally accorded guests in

Japan. For example, no one could enter the reception room after the guest of honor had arrived, and no one could leave before she left.

"It really is unbelievable the courtesies they give you," she said.

On Oct. 24, she presented the Miles Award to the Hitachi, Fugita, Matsushita and Toshiba companies.

"As I gave out the Miles Award this year, I had the medal (of honor) around my neck," she said.

Mrs. Miles said she thinks her

husband's greatest lifetime accomplishment was the rapport he had with other people.

"He really made people feel that they were somebody, that they could do whatever they wanted to do," she said.

Mrs. Miles plans to carry on her husband's work by acting as executive director of the Lawrence D. Miles Value Foundation in Washington, D.C. She hopes the work will keep her active as well as keep alive the memory of her late companion.

"Larry and I were a team in everything," she said.