



Record-setting solo circumnavigation for 8th time at age 77

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NEWS RELEASE

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Saito Wins Naomi Uemura Award As Nation's Top Adventurer in 2011

TOKYO – Japanese single-handed sailor Minoru Saito, 78, has been named recipient of the Naomi Uemura Adventure Award for 2011, out of a field of 207 Japanese nominees for the vaunted annual award in honor of the world-renown Japanese alpinist.

The award, which includes a 1 million yen cash prize, was announced at a press conference today at Meiji University in Tokyo. Saito was cited for successfully completing his eighth solo circumnavigation in 2011 at age 77, as well as for his nearly 40-year sailing career that includes the non-stop solo circumnavigation he completed in 2005 at age 71, a Guinness Book world record.

The award is given annually by the Naomi Uemura Foundation and the city of Toyooka, Hyogo Prefecture, the birthplace of Uemura, who in the 1970s became a household name to a nation often transfixed by his dramatic exploits focused on mountain climbing and solo polar ice treks. In 1984 Uemura tragically disappeared in an attempt to become the first person to make a solo mid-winter ascent of Alaska's Mt. McKinley. His body was never recovered.

An all-volunteer international group comprising over 200 persons in Japan and seven other countries supported Saito on his 3-year, 45,000-km eighth solo circumnavigation.

Hunter Brumfield, co-chair of the organization, thanked the Uemura Naomi Foundation and the City of Toyooka, saying that “this is a truly great honor and one that Saito-san recognizes is not just wonderful encouragement for himself, but for any person, of any age, who sails or may have dreams of sailing.”

[Photo]



Saito greets supporters after his arrival in Yokohama at the end of his 3-year, 45,000-km circumnavigation in September.