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# UCCA BULLETIN

January 2015 ... Our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year



## COMMUNITY RALLIES AND SUCCESSFULLY ADVOCATES SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

The Ukraine Freedom Support Act of 2014 was passed in the U.S. Senate in the late hours of December 13th. With the unanimous consent vote, the bill was signed by President Obama on December 18<sup>th</sup>.

The achievement of this huge success was no easy feat, however. The Ukrainian American community vigorously began its advocacy campaign to assist Ukraine in early 2014. Beginning in February, UNIS sponsored the first of four “Ukrainian Days” advocacy events in Congress to express the concerns of the community. While the event focused on the plight of Ukrainians and their right to live in a free and democratic society away from the pressures and blackmail of Putin’s Russia, the seeds were sown for a year filled with Ukraine-related hearings, bills, and resolutions on Capitol Hill. Ukraine’s biggest proponent on Capitol Hill was the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFR), under the chairmanship of Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ). The chairman and his committee held numerous hearings on Ukraine, each resulting in an opportunity for senators to express their opinions about U.S.-policy towards Ukraine. Sen. Menendez understood his constituency and had met earlier with representatives from the UCCA and held several community meetings with Ukrainian Americans from New Jersey. His support, along with the Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Sen. Bob Corker (R-TN), led to the eventual introduction of the Ukraine Freedom Support Act, S2828, in the United States Senate.

Following the successful second “Ukrainian Day” event in July, Rep. Jim Gerlach (R-PA), co-chair of the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus introduced HR5190, the Ukraine Security Assistance Act of 2014. The apex of efforts for the Ukraine Freedom Support Act of 2014 transpired during the month of September. In conjunction with the visit of President Poroshenko in Washington to meet President Obama, UNIS sponsored its third “Ukrainian Day” advocacy event. Community representatives coordinated their efforts and met with their representatives in Congress to express the need for defensive military assistance to Ukraine. Thousands also attended the rally and called for the U.S. to come to the aid of its strategic partner and offer Ukraine the necessary defensive weapons to fend off Russian aggression. As the two presidents discussed the war in Ukraine, the SFR Committee acted promptly on the need for assistance and unanimously voted to support the bill and bring it to the Senate floor for a vote. Soon after Congress’ return to session following the mid-term elections, Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), co-chair of the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus, introduced HR5782, an analogous House bill to the Senate-version.

One final effort was placed by the community to again travel to Washington in mid-November to participate in the 4<sup>th</sup> unprecedented UNIS-sponsored “Ukrainian Days” advocacy event. Assisting in UNIS’ efforts to advocate the Ukrainian community’s position was the *Ad Hoc Committee for Ukraine*, which was established as a temporary conglomeration of Ukrainian community and non-Ukrainian organizations. The purpose of the Ad Hoc Committee was to advocate for military assistance to Ukraine. The endeavors of the united Ukrainian community paid off, and the Senate version of the Ukraine Freedom Support Act passed in a hotline vote on December 11.

The UCCA sincerely thanks the diligent efforts of the Ukrainian community for their painstaking and outspoken advocacy of support for Ukraine. We also are grateful to all the Senators and Members of Congress whose efforts were paramount during the process to legislate assistance to Ukraine. Thank you!!

## UCCA SPEAKS AT UN HOLODOMOR CONFERENCE

On December 9<sup>th</sup>, the Ukrainian Mission to the UN hosted a special conference dedicated to the 81<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Holodomor. The Conference, which was held at the Dag Hammarskjold Library, opened with remarks by Ambassador Yuri Sergeyev, Ukraine’s Permanent Representative to the UN who reminded those in attendance that the Holodomor was an act of genocide against the Ukrainian nation.

Following his remarks, UCCA President, Tamara Olexy, was invited to speak. Ms. Olexy underscored the fact that “...today we are gathered here to mark the 81<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Holodomor – on the same day that the text of the “Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide” was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly 66 years ago... The countless victims of the Holodomor are a grim reminder of the deadly nature of the struggle between Russian imperialism and the independent-minded Ukrainian nation... The Holodomor is but one example of Russia’s ongoing campaign to enslave Ukraine... Yet the Ukrainian people’s endurance during the horrors of the Holodomor 81 years ago, their bravery during the Maidan last year, and their steadfast fortitude during the present day struggle in Eastern Ukraine are all testimonies of the commitment of the Ukrainian people to live with dignity in a democratic and sovereign nation.”



Additional speakers included Rabbi David Lincoln, former spiritual leader of the Park Avenue Synagogue in New York City; and, Professor Walter Zarycky.

Conference participants then had an opportunity to view excerpts of the well-known film “Harvest of Despair”, followed by a solemn musical performance by Maksym Lozynskyj and Ksenia Kaczurak. A special performance was also given by “Kolaydnyky” [carolers] from Ukraine.

## UCCA EXECUTIVE BOARD SETS PLANS FOR 2015

At the last Board meeting of 2014, the UCCA Executive Board discussed various projects for the upcoming year and an ambitious plan was approved. Considerable focus was placed on commemorating the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, which officially was established on May 4, 1940. Plans include preparing an exhibit of the work of the UCCA as well as publishing a book about the UCCA. Plans were also discussed about the UCCA's continued cooperation with the National Holodomor Committee and its anticipated unveiling of the Holodomor memorial in our nation's capital in 2015. Discussions also included: revitalizing several of the UCCA's Branches and establishing new Branches in areas where no branch exists; fundraising for the Ukrainian National Fund and the Ukrainian National Information Service (UNIS); and revamping the UCCA website to make it more user-friendly. Additional plans for 2015 include: expanding upon our successful "Ukrainian Days" advocacy program; meeting with and establishing working relationships with the new members of Congress; and appropriately marking the various important historical anniversaries (see below) in our community.

### 2015 IMPORTANT ANNIVERSARIES

The UCCA Executive Board would like to inform our Branches, members and the greater Ukrainian American community that during 2015, there are several important anniversaries to mark, including:

May 24<sup>th</sup> – 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UCCA

July 15<sup>th</sup> – 1000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Volodymyr Velykyi (Volodymyr the Great)

July 16<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sovereignty of Ukraine

September 4<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Vasyl Stus' death  
200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Mykhailo Verbytsky, composer of Ukraine's national anthem

UCCA urges our community to appropriately mark these important historical dates. UCCA official statements will be available in a timely manner on our website at [www.ucca.org](http://www.ucca.org) for your use.

## UCCA BESTOWS THE SHEVCHENKO FREEDOM AWARD

On December 6<sup>th</sup>, the UCCA Executive Board awarded its highest accolade, The Shevchenko Freedom Award, posthumously to maestro Andrij Dobriansky. The UCCA honored maestro Dobriansky for his years of success as an opera singer at the Metropolitan Opera and his many years of dedicated service to the Ukrainian American community.



*Dobriansky Family with UCCA Executive Board members*

On behalf of the Dobriansky family, Andrij Dobriansky thanked the UCCA Executive Board for the honor and said his father, who instilled patriotism to his children, would have been proud to be a recipient of the Shevchenko Freedom Award.

## UCCA REVITALIZING SYRACUSE, NY BRANCH

On November 8<sup>th</sup> a "Working Group" was formed to revitalize the UCCA Syracuse, NY Branch.



Marie Duplak, UCCA Executive Secretary, and Michael Sawkiw, Jr., Director of UNIS, traveled to Syracuse to provide an overview of UCCA/UNIS activities.

## AD MEMORIUM

It is with great sorrow that the UCCA informs its members and the greater Ukrainian American community of the passing of long-time UCCA Board Members **MARIA LOZYNSKYJ** and **MYROSLAW SHMIGEL**. Mrs. Lozynskyj served for many years as President of the WADFFU, and Mr. Shmigel was founder of the UAYA in the U.S. and long-time president of the UCCA NYC Branch. Their enormous contribution and tireless efforts on behalf of our community will be profoundly missed. The UCCA Executive Board extends its most heartfelt condolences to the Lozynskyj and Shmigel families. *Vichanaya Pamyat!*