UCCA Celebrates 80th Anniversary Virtually

On May 26th, never wavering in its commitment to represent the interests of our Ukrainian American community and support the independence of Ukraine, UCCA marked the 80th anniversary of its founding. Although original plans were cancelled due to the Corona Virus, UCCA rose to the challenge, as it has done throughout its history, and adjusted its strategy to celebrate this historic anniversary virtually.

The program began with an opening toast from UCCA’s President Andriy Futey, followed by greetings from Archbishop Daniel of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, and Metropolitan Archbishop Borys Gudziak of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia.

Honoring this historic date were also UCCA’s former Presidents: Tamara Gallo Olexy (2008-2016), Michael Sawkiw, Jr. (2000-2008), Askold Lozynskyj (1992-2000) and Amb. Paula Dobriansky, daughter of the longest serving UCCA President, Amb. Lev Dobriansky (1949-1982).

Also joining in the celebration were Dmytro Kuleba, Ukraine’s Foreign Minister, former President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko, and UWC President Pavlo Grod. Social media posts from President Zelensky and Amb. Yelchenko were also shown. The program can be viewed UCCA’s website, YouTube and Facebook pages.

UCCA’s XXIII Congress Postponed

On May 14th, UCCA held an extraordinary session of UCCA’s National Council, its highest ruling body. The purpose of the meeting, held over the Zoom video and audio conferencing platform for the first time, was to discuss the planned XXIII Congress of Ukrainians in America, UCCA’s quadrennial convention. Scheduled to coincide with U.S. Presidential election years, the XXIII Congress of Ukrainians will elect UCCA’s executive officers and guide UCCA’s plan of action for the next four years.

Presided over by Stefan Kaczaraj, Council Chair & President/CEO of the Ukrainian National Association, the extraordinary session of the National Council ratified a proposal from the Presidium of UCCA’s Executive Committee to schedule the XXIII Congress of Ukrainians in October 2021. This was done in accordance to an opinion from UCCA’s Bylaws committee, authored by committee chair, Bohdan Shandor, President of the Ukrainian American Bar Association.

The decision to schedule a UCCA convention outside of a U.S. Presidential election year was made due to the conditions affecting the U.S. as result of the global pandemic of the novel COVID-19 virus. As the health and well-being of our Ukrainian American community is, and should always be, a priority for our community’s leadership, and at a time when individual states, including the State of New York (wherein the XXIII Congress is to be convened), have closed most if not all businesses, schools, and public facilities, UCCA’s National Council decided that XXIII Congress will not convene in 2020. While there is no clear answer as to when New York and other states will reopen fully, it is the expressed desire of UCCA’s National Council, comprised of delegates representing Ukrainian churches and religious associations, Ukrainian educational institutions, national or central member organizations, and local UCCA chapters, that leading members of the Ukrainian American community will be able to gather in 2021 to once again discuss key political, strategic and social concerns that affect the future of our community and our relations with Ukraine.
Born Anna Muzyka on May 14, 1920, the woman who would be known worldwide as Slava Stetsko became a member of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) at the age of 18, just one year before Soviet and Nazi forces began their joint invasion that is remembered now as the start of World War II. To help fight off that invasion of her Ukrainian homeland, Slava served as an orderly and nurse in the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) until she was captured by the Nazis in 1943.

Following the end of the war, Slava Stetsko was able to complete her university studies in Germany, where she eventually married Yaroslav Stetsko. The two of them would respectively serve as OUN’s Providnyk (leader) as well as serve on and chair the Central Committee of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Peoples (ABN). Slava not only served as president of ABN, but as editor-in-chief of ABN-Correspondence, and various other ABN publications, as well as organizing ABN conferences around the world. An active participant in international anti-communist congresses, Slava was also the co-founder of the European Freedom Council.

Having fought for so many years to see the liberation of her homeland, Slava Stetsko returned to Ukraine following the renewal of its independence. Having spent her whole life fighting for Ukraine’s independence, Slava Stetsko entered Ukrainian political life shortly after her return, fighting to return glory for her native Ukraine until her death in 2003.

The Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), the largest representation of Americans of Ukrainian descent, honors the life and work of a remarkable heroine on this 100th anniversary of her birth.

Slava Ukraini! Heroiiam Slava!

UCCA Continues Support for Crimean Tatars

This May 18th, the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), the representative organization of over 1.5 million Americans of Ukrainian descent, joins with Ukrainian World Congress, the worldwide assembly of Ukrainian organizations representing over 20 million people, and the Government of Ukraine, to pause in a moment of remembrance for the innocent victims of the Sürgün (or “violent expulsion”), the crime of genocide committed by Josef Stalin’s soviet henchmen in 1944.

The Sürgün was an inhuman attempt to rid the Crimean peninsula of its population of approximately 238,000 indigenous people, the Qirim Tatar Millet. 70 years later, Vladimir Putin staged Russia’s military invasion and current illegal occupation of Crimea, and today seeks to erase any semblance of the indigenous Crimean Tatar identity from their homeland, including shutting down the Crimean Tatar Mejlis, replacing Crimean Tatar place names, and further removing opportunities for the Crimean Tatar language and culture to be taught and passed on.

Whatever attempts Russia makes to legitimize the occupation of the peninsula, the fact remains indisputable: Crimea is Ukraine.

On this 76th anniversary of the Deportation-Genocide of the Crimean Tatar people, UCCA continues to voice our support for the Crimean Tatar people in their struggle for their rights, and again calls on the governments of the United States, U.N. and E.U. member states to recognize the Sürgün as an ethnic genocide of the Crimean Tatar people.

UCCA Reminds Ukrainian Officials of Suprun’s Accomplishments

UCCA is responding with alarm to several reports indicating that an investigation of Dr. Ulana Suprun, Ukraine’s former Acting Minister of Health, may soon be launched by Ukrainian authorities.

As Acting Minister, Dr. Suprun initiated a series of reforms at the Ministry of Health that has led to qualitative changes in Ukraine’s health care system. In 2018, those reforms were specifically cited in a European Parliament resolution commending Ukraine’s reform efforts. Under her leadership, the Ministry was the first in Ukraine’s history to offer a comprehensive vision of reform based on understanding and clearly defining problems that plague the health care system.

Dr. Suprun has a long-established record of support not only for Ukraine but for the Ukrainian American community. Prior to her appointment as Acting Minister of Health, she was the Director of Humanitarian Initiatives of the Ukrainian World Congress, and the founder of its “Patriot Defence” project, that continues to provide tactical and emergency medical training to soldiers on the frontlines in Ukraine. Acting Minister Suprun is also the former chair of the UCCA’s Council on Aid to Ukrainians, and is a recipient of the Shevchenko Freedom Award, the highest accolade accorded by the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America.