UCCA Honors The Heavenly Hundred

February marked the 5th anniversary of the culmination of dramatic civil developments in Ukraine during the Revolution of Dignity. To commemorate this historic date, on February 8th, UCCA and its Washington public affairs bureau, the Ukrainian National Information Service, hosted a half-day conference on Capitol Hill to honor the Heavenly Hundred – the brave heroes who gave their lives in defense of Ukraine.

UNIS Director Michael Sawkiw Jr. opened the conference highlighting the heroism of the Ukrainian nation by stating: “The Ukrainian people became the active frontline of defense for not only their own freedom, but the freedom of the entire trans-Atlantic alliance.” The Rev. Robert Hitchens, pastor of the Ukrainian Catholic National Shrine of the Holy Family, provided an invocation for the event which concluded with the singing of “Eternal Memory.” In moderating the first panel “Witnesses to History”, UCCA President Andrew Futey underscored the uniqueness of the Revolution of Dignity and the dramatic reforms efforts that have taken place in Ukraine since the revolution, siting the Ministry of Health under the leadership of Acting Minister of Health Ulana Suprun. The first panel discussion featured presentations by Marta Farion, president of the Kyiv Mohyla Foundation of America, and Irene Chalupa, editor at StopFake. Ms. Farion spoke of the Ukrainian community’s motivation to assist their brethren in Ukraine and cited the values of the Heavenly Hundred, who selfishly gave of themselves so others may live in freedom. Ms. Chalupa examined the near “mythological” nature of the Heavenly Hundred and their contribution to the building of a revived nation whose dignity would not be tarnished again.

The event’s keynote speakers, Ukraine’s Ambassador to the US, Valeriy Chaly and president of the National Endowment for Democracy, Carl Gershman, spoke to the Revolution of Dignity’s historical significance in advancing Ukrainian statehood.

Following the keynote addresses, Dr. Phillip Karber, president of the Potomac Foundation; and Askold Krushelnycky, correspondent at the Kyiv Post, presented remarks on the “Aftermath to Sacrifice” panel. Having both traveled to Ukraine since the Revolution of Dignity and spending time on the frontline, underscored the courage and commitment of Ukraine’s soldiers who are defending against Russian aggression.

Interspersed between the two panel discussions were poignant remarks by several members of Congress, including Andy Harris (R-MD) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) - co-chairs of the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus, and Brendan Boyle (D-PA). The closing remarks were delivered by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State George Kent who provided a balanced assessment of the Revolution of Dignity and the West’s support of Ukraine since the revolution.

UCCA Supports #MedReform in Ukraine

The Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), the largest representative organization of Americans of Ukrainian descent, is deeply troubled by the ruling of the Regional Administrative Court in Kyiv earlier today, which bans Dr. Ulana Suprun from carrying out her duties as Acting Minister of Health of Ukraine.

Since Dr. Suprun’s appointment as Acting Minister, the Ministry of Health has initiated a series of reforms that have led to qualitative changes in Ukraine’s health care system. 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.

As recently as December 12, these reforms were cited in a European Parliament resolution commending Ukraine’s reform efforts. Since the government’s approval of Dr. Suprun’s health care reform package in late 2016, which reinforced the country’s overall reform agenda, the Ministry of Health has implemented a host of reforms that not only improve the quality of medical services, but also address the entrenched problem of corruption in the medical field. Some initiatives that launched by Ukraine’s Ministry of Health under the leadership of Dr. Suprun include:

- Program of accessible medicines;
- Overcoming corruption schemes by implementing transparency in the procurement of medicines;
- Reforming the primary link, raising the level of salaries of doctors;
- Introducing new requirements for the quality of medical personnel training; and,
- Deploying a cardiology center network.

“At the heart of Dr. Suprun’s work is providing the citizens of Ukraine with quality medical services and medicine. Doing so in a transparent manner in an effort to tackle corrupt practices, ought to be at the heart of Ukraine’s reform efforts,” commented UCCA’s President, Andriy Futey.

UCCA recognizes the significant accomplishments of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, and encourages Ukraine to continue down the path of reform, as exemplified by the work of the Acting Minister of Health, Dr. Ulana Suprun.
On the fifth anniversary of Russia’s covert invasion of Ukraine, President Poroshenko traveled to the United States to address the United Nations General Assembly at its 67th Plenary Meeting on “The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine” During his remarks on February 20th, representatives of UCCA member organizations UAYA, UAV and CUSUR, as well UCCA branch representatives from Yonkers and New York City, were seated alongside WFUWO, UNWLA and Crimean Tatar representatives to hear Poroshenko urge the international community to pressure Moscow to release all Ukrainian hostages and POWs, deprive Russia of their veto right in the UN Security Council, and underscore that the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine is a challenge not only for Ukraine, but for the entire democratic world.

As part of his working visit, President Poroshenko also commemorated Heavenly Hundred Remembrance Day, attending a memorial service at St. Andrew Memorial Church located within the Metropolia Center Complex of the UOC of the USA in South Bound Brook, NJ; and traveled to Philadelphia to receive the International Statesman Award of the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia.

UCCA Congratulates new Metropolitan-Archbishop

Following the Vatican Information Service’s announcement on February 18th, that the Holy Father appointed Most Rev. Borys Gudziak as Archbishop of Philadelphia for Ukrainians and Metropolitan for the Ukrainian Catholic Church in USA, UCCA sent a letter of congratulations to the new Metropolitan Archbishop.

In congratulating Archbishop Gudziak on his appointment and “return home” UCCA wished Him good health, peace of mind, and hope for close cooperation in praise of God and for the good of the Ukrainian community.