

## PRESIDENT ZELENSKY METS WITH LEADERS OF THE UKRAINIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

On Monday, September 23, 2019, at the start of his official working visit to the United States to participate in the 74<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly, Ukraine's newly elected President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, met with the Ukrainian American community.

Organized by UCCA, and held at the Ukrainian Institute of America (UIA), the event was attended dozens of leaders of the Ukrainian American community. As UIA's President, Kathy Nalywajko welcomed President Zelenskyy and all the guests to the Ukrainian Institute and introduced UCCA President Andriy Futey. During his briefing opening remarks, Futey urged the newly-elected President to safeguard Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and promote Ukrainian cultural and language. Underscoring, "We are for the following principles: Together with you to assure the further strategic course of Ukraine to NATO and the European Union. Russia's temporarily illegally annexed Crimea and the temporarily occupied regions of Donetsk and Luhansk have been, are and will continue to be an indivisible part of independent Ukraine. Together we will make every effort to return these lands to Ukraine's control, including by strengthening the international coalition to support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.



President Zelenskyy opened his remarks by thanking the community for being Ukraine's best diplomats, stating, "You defend our sovereignty, our territorial integrity here, in the United States, and throughout the world. We are very thankful to you." Understanding his audience, and in an effort to be forthright, President Zelenskyy put aside his prepared remarks and took questions from the audience.

Over the course of a short Q&A exchange, community leaders raised a wide range of issues, including US-Ukraine bilateral relations, the conflict in eastern Ukraine, the illegal occupation of Crimea, and recognition of the Holodomor as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian nation. In response to the question of what he anticipated from his upcoming meeting with President Trump, Zelenskyy stated, "I think we will have a meaningful, substantive meeting," underscoring that he hoped President Trump would provide unequivocal support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Zelensky also stressed that he would like to achieve greater transparency in President Trump's policy because Ukraine needs the support of the United States. In addressing his policy to resolve the armed conflict in Donbas and return Crimea, President Zelensky emphasized that he would use diplomacy and hoped that a meeting in the Normandy format would take place in the near future. "We want to leave this meeting with certain results on specific terms of ending the war and returning our territories. We believe in this, we want this and we will try to do it all," the Head of State said.

The topic of dual citizenship was also raised, to which President Zelensky responded that plans were under way to grant Ukrainian citizenship to ethnic Ukrainians living outside of Ukraine, but understandably with some caveats.

## 125 YEARS OF THE ORGANIZED UKRAINIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY IS CELEBRATED

On September 21<sup>st</sup>, UCCA co-hosted a Ukrainian Historical Encounters Series special event dedicated to *Commemorating the 125th Anniversary of the Organized Ukrainian American Community* at the Princeton Club in New York City.

The full-day event celebrated the many accomplishments of the Ukrainian American community. The program began with a conference that took a fresh look at Ukrainian American community life, spanning from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, by hosting six panel discussions and a working luncheon. The forum brought together key hromada leaders to discuss the historical significance of our work as well as delve into the prospects for continued success. In total, over two dozen featured speakers addressed the proceedings. *Videos can be viewed on UCCA's FB page.*

Following the conference, guests were entertained by the Dumka Chorus of NY, under the director of Vasyl Hrechynsky, who performed a melody of songs.



The celebration concluded with an evening banquet during which Ukraine's outgoing Ambassador to the USA, Valeriy Chaly, spoke on the efficacy of the Ukrainian American community and Herman Pirchner, President of the American Foreign Policy Council, recounted the critical work of the community. Metropolitan Archbishop Borys Gudziak of the UGCC delivered a moving benediction, and Rev. Mykhailo Cherenkov of Ukraine's Evangelical Christian Baptist community delivered a final prayer at the end of the banquet.

## UCCA ATTENDS UWC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On September 6-8, the Ukrainian World Congress (UWC) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Berlin, Germany. Participants from over 20 countries gathered at Berlin's City Hall to reviewed UWC's work since November 2018 and developed an action plan for the next year; while supporting the Ukrainian community's efforts in Germany to garner their government's support of the current situation in Ukraine, including: the importance of consolidating action in the war with Russian hybrid aggression.



Over three days participants had the opportunity to hear reports from President Paul Grod and UWC leadership, and to discuss topical issues for Ukrainians in the diaspora during six round tables: "Development, coordination and structuring of Ukrainian communities in the world", "Means of cooperation between Ukraine and the diaspora under new circumstances. Defending the interests of Ukraine globally - on the path to the EU and NATO", "Shaping the self-identification of Ukrainian youth in the diaspora", "Substantial extension of the rights of Ukrainians living outside Ukraine - creating favorable conditions for their return and strengthening relations with Ukraine", "Unifying role of Ukrainian churches and the importance of their recognition in ecumenical structures", "UWC strategy for international recognition of the Holodomor as genocide of the Ukrainian people." During the meeting delegates resolutely condemned the Russian Federation for its hybrid war against Ukraine and illegal imprisonment of Ukrainian political prisoners, and called upon the international community to continue supporting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, significantly strengthen sanctions against the Russian Federation for violating the international order, and to increase lethal weapons and military support to Ukraine. The UWC AGM welcomed Ukraine's strategic course toward European and Euro-Atlantic integration and called upon the European Union and NATO to expedite Ukraine's full membership.

On September 9, 2019, UWC's leadership held its first Ukrainian Day in Berlin during which a series of meetings took place with members of the German Bundestag and government officials to discuss continued support for Ukraine in the struggle against Russian aggression.

## PRESIDENT ZELENSKYI ADDRESSED THE UNITED NATIONS

On September 25<sup>th</sup>, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addressed the 74<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly. In his 15-minute speech, Zelenskyy reminded the world of the ongoing war in Ukraine, underscoring that war is the biggest threat to human civilization. He called for international support for Ukraine "five years into war with Russia," which has resulted in more than 13,000 deaths. Holding up a bullet, President Zelenskyy relayed the story of a Ukrainian soloist with the Paris Opera, who was killed in the war, stating "... it [the bullet] costs only \$10... And this is, unfortunately, the price of a human life on our planet. There are thousands of such stories. There are millions of such bullets."

"From this highest world rostrum, we always hear the calls for fair changes, righteous promises, and new initiatives. It is high time to ensure that those calls are backed up by deeds because in a modern world, where human life costs just 10 dollars, words are not enough," he stated.

Ukraine's President recalled that the UN was established nearly 75 years ago to maintain and strengthen international peace and security. "But what should we do when the very fundamentals of international security are endangered? Since each war today – in Ukraine, Syria, Libya, Yemen, or anywhere else in the world, no matter the number of casualties – is the biggest threat to the civilization as a whole. That's because in 2019, human beings, homo sapiens, still prefer to solve conflicts by murdering their own kind." [*to listen to President Zelenskyy's speech please visit UCCA's Facebook page*]

## AD MEMORIAM

It is with great sadness that UCCA's Executive Board learned of the recent passing of three remarkable individuals – Professor Dmytro Shtohryn, Ambassador William Miller, and Professor Mark von Hagen.

A long-time member of UCCA, Professor Shtohryn's commitment to the field of Ukrainian studies was unparalleled - establishing Ukrainian Studies as a discipline at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Ambassador Miller served as the United States' second ambassador to Ukraine and continued his support for Ukraine's democratic development until his passing. Professor von Hagen was a brilliant scholar whose legacy includes the fundraising for and establishment of the Ukrainian Studies Program at Columbia University.

*May they rest in peace! Vichnaya Pamyiat!*