

AMBASSADOR RETURNS TO SERBIA

Honorary Reception for H.E. Djerdj Matkovic Serbian Ambassador to the United States of America

by Milos Rastovic

WASHINGTON, DC - On July 29, 2020, the Serbian-American Leadership Conference (SALC) sponsored a virtual reception to honor His Excellency Djerdj Matkovic, Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to the United States. After serving for five years, he finished his term and will return to Belgrade, Serbia.

The event began with both anthems of the United States and the Republic of Serbia performed on guitar by Nemanja Ostojic, Associate Adjunct Professor of Guitar at the University of Indianapolis. John Buffalini, Treasurer of the SALC and moderator of the event, thanked all participants for celebrating Serbian-American friendship and friendship with H.E. Matkovic. He talked about Ambassador Matkovic and his wife Vera's support of St. Luke Serbian Orthodox Church in Washington, D.C. during the last five years.

Aleksandar Djuricic, President of the SALC, thanked H.E. Matkovic for his support of the SALC from the beginning of the founding of the organization, for successfully serving Serbia and the Serbian-American community, and expressed hope that his successor continues the great work.

Lt. Col. John Cappello, Founder of the Halyard Mission Foundation, congratulated H.E. Matkovic for supporting the Foundation's efforts. On behalf of the Serb National Federation, Milos Rastovic emphasized the successful cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia over the last five years, which included sponsoring Serbian Movie Festivals, promotion of the movie "Tesla Nation" and other cultural events. Milan Varadinovic, Acting Consul at the Consulate General of the Republic of Serbia in Chicago, IL, said that he has known



H.E. Matkovic for 22 years. "He was one of the special people because he supported young apprentices," in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia and encouraged them in their challenging careers.

Rev. Vasilije Vranic of St. Luke Serbian Orthodox Church in Washington, D.C., expressed the opinion of all his parishioners that it was a great privilege to have H.E. Matkovic and his wife, Vera, as members of their Serbian-American community. "We are very grateful for your kindness and generosity of spirit. You and your wife have always supported our community in our joys and celebration and stood with us in troubling turmoil." He also thanked him for everything that he did for the Serbian-American community and for Serbia. Neno Djordjevic of the SALC stressed H.E. Matkovic's support to the St. Sava Academy including helping teachers and children was remarkable.

His Grace Bishop IRINEJ, Eastern American Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church, highlighted the moments which they shared such as His enthronement as Bishop of Eastern Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Pittsburgh in 2016; the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Serbian flag flying over the White House in 2018; H.E. Matkovic's presence at every Liturgy at the St. Luke Serbian Orthodox Church whenever His Grace Bishop IRINEJ was there; and in the Boston celebration of the 800th Anniversary of the Autocephaly of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

On behalf of HRH Crown Prince Alexander Karadjordjevic and Princess Katherine Karadjordjevic, the Honorable Branko Terzic expressed gratitude to H.E. Matkovic for all his professional courtesies when the Royal Family came to Washington, D.C. Branko Mikasinovic, novelist, translator, and Slavist, accentuated in an emotional way that of all the Serbian and Yugoslav ambassa-

dors he has known, H.E. Matkovic was the only one who regularly came to the Serbian Orthodox Church for different occasions either Liturgy, Slava or Diaspora gatherings.

Many other participants at the event, such as Jelena Vranic, Popadija at St. Luke Serbian Orthodox Church, and Milan Visnick, President of the St. Luke Serbian Orthodox Church, also expressed their gratitude to H.E. Matkovic for serving as Serbian Ambassador in Washington, D.C.

The Ambassador thanked all participants at the event. He said that he returns to Belgrade richer because he gained many friendships and met good people in the United States. After this assignment, he plans to retire there. He grew up in Subotica, the northwest part of Serbia, in a multiethnic environment. Later, he moved to Belgrade with his family in 1971. He graduated from the Faculty of Law at the University of Belgrade specializing in international law and international relations. He has been in the diplomatic service for almost 40 years. He served under 11 different Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia in Canada, Zimbabwe, Hungary, and twice in the United States. Serving in the United States as an Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia was the crown jewel of his career. He concluded with the following words: "My entire career was dedicated to representing my country in a humble, but decisive way... If I had to choose a career again, I would choose the same one again."

On behalf of the Serb National Federation, we thank H.E. Matkovic for his service and wish him an enjoyable retirement to spend more time with his family.



EARLY HISTORY OF SERBIAN LODGES IN USA & CANADA, see page 10

Serbian Lovchen Lodge No. 57 of the SOF Srbobran, Douglas, Alaska, celebrating Christmas in 1905