

# Metropolitan Amfilohije Reposes

PODGORICA, MONTENEGRO - Archbishop of Cetinje, Metropolitan of Montenegro and Exarch of the Holy Throne of Pec, Amfilohije, after having received the Holy Sacrament of Communion, reposed in the Lord in the Clinical Hospital Center of Montenegro, on Friday, October 30, 2020, at 8.20 am, on the eve of the feast of St. Peter of Cetinje.

The earthly remains of Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral were prayerfully met in the Cathedral of Christ's Resurrection in Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro, as they had been previously sent from the Cetinje Monastery, where a Holy Liturgy had been celebrated for the repose of the soul of the Archbishop of blessed memory on October 31. He was buried in the crypt of the Cathedral church of the Resurrection of Christ on November 1, 2020.

The Holy Hierarchal Liturgy with the funeral rite was celebrated by His Holiness Irinej, Serbian Patriarch, with concelebration of Their Eminences Metropolitan Anthony of Borispol and Brovar of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Andon of Elbasan of the Albanian Orthodox Church and Porfirije of Zagreb-Ljubljana. Also celebrating were Their Graces

Bishops Joanikije of Budimlje-Niksic and Administrator of the Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral; Irinej of Backa, Jovan of Sumadija, Atanasije of Milesevo, Grigorije of Dusseldorf and Germany, Joakim of Polog-

Kumanovo, Teodosije of Raska-Prizren, David of Krusevac, Jovan of Slavonia, Sergije of Bihac-Petrovac, Ilarion of Timok, Arsenije of Nis, Dimitrije of Zaholm-Herzegovina, Stefan of Remesiana, Metodije of Dioclea and Bishop Emeritus Atanasije of Zaholm-Herzegovina, as well as numerous priests and hieromonks of the Serbian Orthodox Church and other local Orthodox Churches, in a prayerful participation of thousands of the faithful.

"Aware of the overall health situation, but also of the great respect that the newly appointed Metropolitan enjoyed, we once again call upon all the participants in the funeral rites to observe all prescribed health measures, wear masks and keep distance among themselves," was announced by the Metropolitanate of Montenegro-Littoral.

Source: Website of the Srpska Pravoslavna Crkva spc.rs



†Metropolitan Amfilohije



Although the procession with the Metropolitan's coffin left Cetinje at 1 pm, it arrived at the Podgorica church of the Resurrection of Christ around 2:30 pm because people were waiting on their knees for their pastor and spiritual father all along the way, once again connecting the Holy Throne of Cetinje metropolitans with the Podgorica shrine where the Metropolitan may find his eternal rest.



Divine Liturgy was officiated by Their Graces Bishops Joanikije of Budimlje-Niksic and administrator of the Metropolitanate of Montenegro-Coastlands, Teodosije of Raska-Prizren, Dimitrije of Zaholm-Herzegovina, vicar Bishop Methodius of Diocletia and retired Bishop of Zaholm-Herzegovina Atanasije.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ON PAGE 3



## The Honorable Alex Machaskee: "Don't Be Afraid to Tell People You are a Serbian and a Serbian Orthodox Christian"

Excerpts from an interview by Milos Rastovic

As the Serb National Federation series of interviews with distinguished Serbian-Americans in the United States begins, I had the privilege of interviewing our first guest, the Honorable Alex Machaskee, former Publisher, President and Chief Executive Officer of *The Plain Dealer* (1990 – 2006), one of the country's largest newspapers.

Alex Machaskee is Honorary Consul of the Republic of Serbia in the United States. He served as a Trustee for the Serbian Unity Congress, Executive Chair of the Board of Trustees for St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in New York, past Chairman of International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), Emeritus Board Member of the Cleveland Museum of Art, an Honorary Life Member of the Board of Cleveland Orchestra, and Past Chairman and current Board Member of

the Cleveland Council on World Affairs.

People have always looked to Mr. Machaskee for his leadership skills in whatever capacity he serves. He is a person who initiates new ideas, such as the Serbian Cultural Garden in Cleveland. He is also an accomplished musician. Mr. Machaskee has been presented with numerous awards throughout his career for his commitment and leadership. He has been recognized for his efforts with the Ellis Island Medal of Honor by the National Ethnic Coalition Organization, one of the highest national awards in the United States. He also received honorary degrees of Doctor of Humane Letters from Cleveland State University, the University of Akron, and Heidelberg College. The Northeast Ohio Business Hall of Fame and the Cleveland Journalism Hall of Fame by Cleveland's Press Club inducted him. He is a lifelong member of the Serb National Federation. Currently, he is president of Alex Machaskee and Associates, LLC, specializing in Media/Public Relations, Strategic Planning, International Relations, Marketing, and Event Promotion.

Mr. Machaskee has always been a great role model, both intellectually and as a contributor to the Serbian-American community and the Homeland with a generous heart.

The SNF YouTube series will also include lectures on Serbian history, culture and heritage. The full interview with the Honorable Alex Machaskee is available on the SNF YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/watch?v=pjEuixUsk1k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pjEuixUsk1k) and is pre

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# The Honorable Alex Machaskee

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Alex as a toddler with "Little Baba Milica"

sented in part here:

***How are you and your family doing during the time of COVID-19?***

We are doing okay. On February 4, before the coronavirus, I had a knee replacement, and the last time I checked, I was up to 117 degrees (range of motion), so thank God that part has gone very well. We avoid crowds. We faithfully wear masks all the time. We read a lot. I watch a lot of YouTube Serbian programs. I have a great collection of tamburitza music, so I spend a lot of time with my music. I had 46 years of experience at *The Plain Dealer*. The last 16 years were as publisher before I retired, so I have a lot of notes, diaries, and things that I reflect on.

***I read that you started to learn business strategies at the age of six and earned money by selling popcorn and soft drinks. Is this how you began your successful business career, and what would be your advice to young entrepreneurs?***

Yes, I was six years old. On Sundays, my mother taught me how to make popcorn. I would pop popcorn in the afternoon, bag it, take my red wagon and make numerous trips to the baseball field selling popcorn and cold drinks for the whole day. That was a start. I had other odd jobs in supermarkets and bowling alleys and selling newspapers. I got into the newspaper business by accident. In my first year of high school, I got hurt playing sports. I wasn't allowed to play contact sports after that because the knee injury turned into what they call Osgood Schlatter's disease. Because I like sports a lot, the coach said, "Why don't you go down to the local newspaper and see whether they can use some part-time help." I did it. I put on my father's topcoat and slicked down my hair to look older, and before my 15th birthday, I went down to the local newspaper in Warren, Ohio. They said that they could use somebody on Tuesday and Thursday nights. That is how it started. After a few months, I worked 20 hours per week by adjusting my school schedule. This schedule was pretty much during my sophomore year. I wrote my first story when I was 15 years old. As a sophomore in high school, I was work-

ing 20 hours. As a junior, I was working 30 hours per week. As a senior in high school, I was working 40 hours per week. I was going to the newspaper at seven o'clock in the morning. Then, I'd go to school from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. I took some summer school classes and covered games at night. I managed my senior year and a work-study program. After graduation from high school, I was a general assignment reporter a couple more years at the local newspaper in Warren. In 1960, I moved to Cleveland and switched from the newspaper side to the business side, got my first job in the promotion department. I also started to go to Cleveland State University at night. It took me a number of years to get my business degree specializing in marketing. Still, I worked my way up from working in the public service and promotion department to the circulation and advertising department.

In 1980, I got my best training by being director of labor relations and human resources. At that time, we had 1,500 employees, and ten unions represented two-thirds of them. Some of them were very militant unions. From 1980 to 1985, I saw how well we were managed or mismanaged at *The Plain Dealer*. I always felt that in most labor-management situations, it is more the fault of management than the unions. It does not mean that the unions are always right, but it means you don't take a strike when you should take a strike or when you're not treating your employees fairly. We had some exciting times in that period. I was given the privilege to become Vice President/General Manager in 1985 and Publisher, President and CEO in 1990. This was my career path. My career started before my formal education. I've never regretted that I've helped and supported many attorneys, but thank God I didn't become an attorney. I enjoyed my life as a newspaper person.

You asked me for advice for young entrepreneurs. First and foremost, what is part of our DNA or being Serbian is that you have to have a moral compass, integrity, and be aware that people are watching what you're doing. You have to exude that feeling that you can be trusted. I think that integrity is critical, and exercise good judgment, especially if you're an entrepreneur. You have to show initiative, leadership, good communication skills, be cooperative, have a creative mind, and have administrative ability.

***How did the Serbian heritage influence your childhood and later life?***

Living in Warren, Ohio, we were only 15 miles from a Serbian church at that time. There was no Serbian Church in Warren, but there was Holy Trinity Serbian Church in Youngstown. I would take a bus from my home to Warren's train station and take a half-hour ride by train to Youngstown, and the bus from the train station to the Serbian church every Saturday for Serbian school and half of that day was spent on Serbian tradition, culture, and language, and half of the day was spent on Bible study. I was exposed to our Serbian faith and our Serbian culture, and our Serbian heritage principles. As an aside, one time reversing the trip by bus from the church to the train station, I fell asleep on the train around 5:30 pm. I woke up 30 miles away in Ravenna, Ohio. Later on, they bought me ice cream, put me in a mail car, and sent me back to War-

ren. That was the only "tragedy" from my commute. I also had two uneducated immigrant grandmothers, but they had great wisdom. I had my "Little Baba," my father's mother, who ran a boarding house for coal miners in Pennsylvania... with 25 coal miners, mostly Serbians. In her broken English, she would tell me as a young person: "Alexa, no work, no pork." She meant that if you don't work, you don't eat, which was very sage advice for a young person. I also had my "Big Baba" Marinković. She had a tragic loss of her husband and oldest son within six weeks. She was left with eight children and a 148-acre farm with no indoor plumbing or electricity. She had a kind heart that was enviable. No matter what you would say about some bad person, her famous saying was: "Baš nije tako zlo" (He is not so bad). She always found something good to say about a person. Those are basic principles, along with the Serbian school, to help in developing a moral compass.

***What is the origin of your family and how did Macesic become Machaskee?***

My father was born in this country, but was only able to speak Serbian, surrounded by coal miners. He couldn't speak English well. A teacher asked him his name. He said Djuro, and the teacher responded to "Tačno George" Mačević. However, it came out by the teacher's mistake, to say Machaskee. It sounds Polish, but it should be Mačević or Mešić.

My baba on father's side was from Glinna. The church records there for her and her family were burned when Ustashe burned down the Serbian church in Glinna. My deda, Aleksandar Mačević, was from a small village, Christina. My Baba, Marija, on mother's side, was born on the border near Subotica. She had married stari Srbijanac (old Serb), Jakov Marinkovic, from Aleksandrovac. From my mother's and father's side, I am all Serbian.

***"Who sings, does not have bad thoughts" (Ko peva, zlo ne misli) is a famous Serbian proverb. How was this proverb a leitmotif of your involvement in Serbian music and tamburitza, and life in general?***

I believe in that slogan. At an early age, I was exposed to our music through my father, who played with a tamburitza group for a while, and my Uncle Joe Rajsic from Youngstown, who had Rajsic quintet tamburitza orchestra. I was given my first prim at the age of 12 by the late Joe Grcevic, father of Jerry Grcevic. They gave me my first tambura. In 1960, when I came to Cleveland, I found two Serbian brothers and an Italian, and we formed an orchestra. We took our lessons from Jim Kovacevich, who was an outstanding musician and tambura maker. That was the start of the Continental Strings Tamburitza Orchestra from Cleveland. We were an orchestra for forty years, and played everywhere from New York to Los Angeles.

One of the highlights of our tamburitza career was that we would play half a dozen dates at the Ohio State Fair every year. One year they asked us to do a 40-minute warm-up show for Bob Hope. We four tamburitza musicians played in front of 25,000 people at the grandstand on a Saturday night at The Ohio State Fair. We played music from Serbia, Greece, Russia, Italy, and Spain.

We always finished our performance with "Hava Nagila" because it was almost guaranteed to get a big applause. A nice side of that is when we finished a 40-minute warm-up show, Bob Hope came out and did his program. When he took a break, his wife, Dolores, came out and sang a few songs. While she was at the stage, Bob Hope was backstage as we were. Governor Jim Rhodes said: "Hey Bob, come on over here. I want you to take a picture with the boys." Here we were in our Serbian costumes, having our picture taken with Governor Jim Rhodes and Bob Hope. I must have made 1000 copies of that picture made.

***As Chairman of IOCC, you traveled to Greece, Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia, Tbilisi, Beirut, Damascus, Jerusalem, Amman, Ethiopia, and Cameroon to oversee humanitarian efforts. What did you learn from these trips and especially from your trip to Kosovo and Metohija? Can you tell us more about your support of our monasteries in Kosovo and Metohija?***

I saw the tragedy of bad politics in Kosovo and Metohija. I'm a firm believer that Milosevic, Tudjman, and Izetbegovic were all very bad people. I think that our country (the United States) made many mistakes by misunderstanding a situation there. I was in Kosovo and Metohija a couple of times. You see firsthand unbelievable and terrible conditions in which our Serbian people live. They are not safe to go from point A to point B without being attacked, stoned, or worse. Through the IOCC, we helped many times in Dečani, Gračanica, and Peć. On a personal basis, I remember one time that there was a school that needed a new roof. I got two of my Jewish friends and me. We paid \$10,000 to put a new roof on that school. In the case of IOCC, it helped in many ways, such as soup kitchens and to develop a winery in Dečani by paying for these huge vats that would help in the production of wine. The most memorable thing that I saw firsthand was the wife of a priest in Kosovo and Metohija who was responsible for six soup kitchens providing meals for 2,300 people daily. A number of those people were paraplegic or shut-ins; 2,300 meals would be delivered to their homes, and this was all run by the farm to support this. The provisions were all being made thanks to the leadership of this strong Protinica of a Serbian priest in Kosovo and Metohija. It is tragic, and it's still tragic today because there is no freedom.

***As an Honorary Consul of the Republic of Serbia, how did you work to develop the relationship between the United States and Serbia?***

In my role as the publisher at *The Plain Dealer*, I hosted many Serbian delegations to meet with the Governor, either with Governor Strickland or Governor Kasich. Sometimes the delegations were not the best prepared, and they wanted to talk about the last 60 or 70 years. I remember one time, the governor said to me: "I know what Ohio can do for Serbia, but I'm not sure what Serbia can do for Ohio." The ideas were not well formulated. There were opportunities. When Boris Tadić, President of Serbia, came to Cleveland, I had a reception for him with 200 people, and a private dinner for almost 100 people. I arranged a luncheon for president Tadić with 45 Chief

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Executive Officers of major companies in Cleveland. Some were interested in building a plant there, and some were interested in establishing a distribution center in Serbia. Unfortunately, the follow up from the Serbian side lacked a lot. Because of not having the follow-up, it did not come to fruition.

I also had the Governor of Ohio and the Ohio Supreme Court Justice offer to send six attorneys to Serbia to help them implement judicial reforms. Unfortunately, there was no follow up from Serbia, President Tadić got voted out of office, the Governor of Ohio got voted out of office, and the Ohio Supreme Court Justice died. This was an ample missed opportunity.

Other ways that we have tried to help was with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Alexander and Her Royal Highness Katherine. They asked me if I would help put on a fundraiser in Cleveland to help orphanages in Serbia. We had dinner at *The Plain Dealer*. Among our Jewish, Italian, and Greek friends, and the Serbian community, we raised \$250,000. Before the event, Sam Miller, my close late friend, said to me: "Alex, is it okay that I give \$10,000 at the dinner?" I said it would be magnificent. At the dinner, Sam's wife said that they should not give \$10,000, but \$25,000.

We've also supported musical and dance groups in Cleveland. On several occasions, we've had the Mile Nikolic tamburitza orchestra from Novi Sad. I'm helping to raise funds for the Serbian Cultural Garden with our annual Serbian Golf Outing each July. When the Serbian monastery Hilandar burned, I had a benefit in Cleveland, and Legende played a benefit concert. We raised a lot of money for Hilandar that evening. We've also exposed people to the Serbian culture by having the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra perform in Cleveland.

We've also invited several educational and business groups to come to Cleveland. Unfortunately, what happened sometime when delegations come from Serbia is that maybe 20 people will come. Half of them will take the meetings that I've set up with them seriously, but half of them want to go to Walmart to do their shopping. That's my experience with some of the interactions between Serbia and the United States.

There have also been times when we have had a congregation in Serbia of Diaspora representatives. These are wealthy Serbian business people in Germany, Austria, France, and Australia who are willing to come and help Serbia. I said to them, "Look, we all know that Serbs have conditions that are not very good because of past leadership and atrocity. If the Serbian Government took the initiative to bring the Serbian business leadership to the table and sponsored the dinner, even though the Serbian Government doesn't have the money to put funds into the effort, I will bring people from the United States and other leaders will bring people from different parts of the world. We will put our heads together to develop a plan to correct the Serbian image and provide some resources to carry out the mission. Again, a lack of initiative and nothing happened. Those are good and bad experiences, and some of the things that we've been trying to do to build a much stronger relationship between Serbia and the Diaspora.

When I talked about the Diaspora, it is not just the Diaspora in the United States, but also other parts of the world. There are successful people in a position to help Serbia, but they have to be invited. One of the things that the Serbian Government could do would be to re-establish the Ministry of the Diaspora. Once there was a Minister for the Diaspora, then they downgraded it to a department and later on to an office. One good move of the Serbian Government to show that they care about the Diaspora would be to restore the Ministry of the Diaspora. I think there are many here that would take a stronger interest.

There is a lot of apathy on the part of American Serbs because they have the attitude that the Serbian Government doesn't care about the Diaspora, so why should we care about Serbia?

People's relationships are good. I love our Serbian people. I feel like I was born in Serbia, even though I am second generation American born.

***How often do you visit Serbia, and what places do you like to see?***

I have visited Serbia a number of times over the last 20 years. I always loved meeting with the late Patriarch Pavle. What a wonderful human being. I thoroughly enjoyed reading the new book by Father Rogic about the Walking Saint on the life of Patriarch Pavle. I enjoyed my meetings with him in Belgrade and the United States when he came here to reconcile the two Serbian churches. I also enjoy visiting St. Sava on Vračar and meeting with families and people. You can't go to Serbia without going to Skadarlija. I also love to go to Novi Sad because I have dear friends there. Sometime I would love to go to Serbia and not have to be in such a hurry, I would like to spend two or three weeks and see a lot of parts of Serbia that I haven't had the chance to see.

I had the opportunity to be on the Board with the Cleveland Orchestra to travel to many cities, mainly European cities... Singapore and Bangkok...Tokyo, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Beijing. I would invite the Associated Press Bureau Chief to come to the concert in every one of those cities. Over our two hours at dinner, I would learn about the country and also expose that Bureau Chief to the Cleveland orchestra. It was a wonderful trip and a nice experience to be able to travel with the orchestra. Besides touring with the Cleveland Orchestra, we have had the opportunity to travel to Prague, Hungary, Ljubljana, Venice, and Florence. We had great trips through the Russian Church of St. Petersburg and Moscow. When Bishop IRINEJ was in Australia, we went to Australia and New Zealand and spent time with him there, I also had the opportunity to visit Cuba before and after Castro and learn about that culture. Our last big trip was to Chile, Argentina and Brazil. So all of these travel experiences helped me to understand people better and interact with people. Those have been excellent learning experiences. My advice to young people, especially young Serbian people, is that if they have the opportunity through a school or any other way to travel to Serbia, they should learn about their country, but also travel to other parts of the world.

***You initiated and built a Serbian Cultural Garden in Cleveland, Ohio. The***

***Serbian Cultural Garden was inspired by the people and the land of Serbia. In the Garden is an icon of St. Sava, and busts of Bishop Petar Petrovic Njegos, Mihajlo Pupin, King Peter I, Nikola Tesla, Stevan Mokranjac, Vuk Karadzic, Milutin Milankovic, Mileva Maric, Nadezda Petrovic, while Desanka Maksimovic is planned. What was the main idea of building the Serbian Cultural Garden?***

Cleveland Cultural Gardens are made up of some 35 different ethnic gardens in a 4 to 5-mile stretch; all the gardens are side by side, in a very harmonious way. The slogan of the Cleveland Cultural Gardens is "peace through understanding." In 1930, the Slovenians started the Slovenian Garden; Before the end of the 1930s, they invited the Serbians and Croatians to have a Yugoslav garden. It was that way until the 1990s when Yugoslavia broke up. When that happened, Serbians and Croatians were out, and the Garden became Slovenian. I was just still publisher at *The Plain Dealer* at that

time. I said that we are going to have a Serbian Garden. I organized the dinner and raised over \$100,000 to get the basic plan for the Garden. We got a nice plot of land from the city which controls the Garden. The first bust was our wonder-



Alex's maternal grandmother Maria Marinkovich



Alex's maternal grandfather Jacob Marinkovich



Alex Machaskee (9 years old) when traveled to Warren for Serbian Sunday School



Continental Strings Orchestra with Bob Hope at Ohio State Fair in Columbus, Ohio



Alex's parents George and Martha Machaskee



Alex's paternal grandmother Milica Macesich (Little Baba Milica). Alex's paternal grandfather Alexander Macesich



Alex's parents George and Martha Machaskee (when young)



ful Nikola Tesla. Unfortunately, that bust was stolen. Through the good efforts of Nikola Lonchar, President of the Tesla Science Foundation, we got another bust of Nikola Tesla. I drove to Philadelphia seven and a half hours, picked up the bust of Nikola Tesla, and drove back to Cleveland in one day. God willing, we will add Desanka Maksimovic in next summer. We will also add St. Nikolai Velimirovic because I understood that Bishop Longin has a bust of St. Nikolai in Libertyville, Illinois. Something



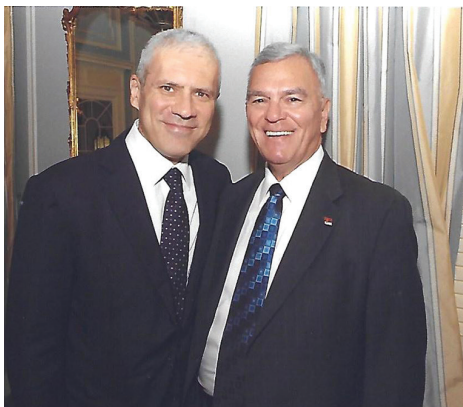
Alex and wife Carol Machaskee



Alex and Carol Machaskee with Crown Prince Alexander and Crown Princess Katherine at the Royal Palace in 2019



Alex with school children in Kosovo where he and friends donated \$10,000 to replace roof

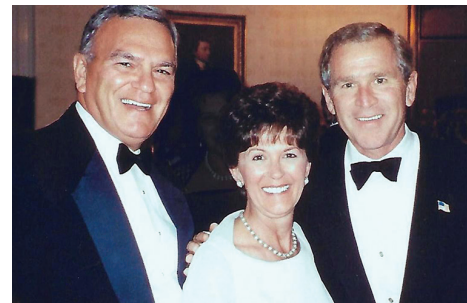


Alex and Former President of Serbia Boris Tadic in Cleveland, Ohio

happened during the fire, and they put the bust in the storage. Bishop LONGIN said that they were trying to find it.

***You were born in the United States, but you speak Serbian fluently since childhood. How much is the Serbian language critical in preserving our heritage and how essential is the Orthodox Faith for you?***

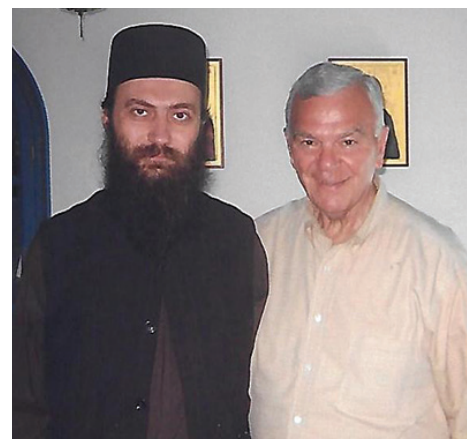
The maintaining of the language is essential. I was fortunate for two reasons. Even though my mother and father didn't speak Serbian in the house, my grandfather passed away when I was seven years old, and my Little Baba came to live with us. I spoke with her a lot in the Serbian language. I went to Serbian school in Youngstown and learned the language as well. When I was very young, I could read Cyrillic well. As I was learning to speak, I played music for many years. I don't like to sing Serbian songs if I don't know what they meant. I managed to use Serbian songs to increase my vocabulary. When I meet with people who graduated from college or used technical terms, my vocabulary isn't or wasn't strong enough to understand all those terms. My Serbian heritage has always been a strong part of me. When I was very young, I would say the Lord's Prayer (Oče naš) in Serbian because I thought that maybe God could hear me



Alex and Carol Machaskee with President George W. Bush at a White House State Dinner



Alex and the late Senator George Voinovich with Novak Djokovic in Cincinnati, Ohio



Alex and Fr. Petar Metodiye at Monastery Hillander at Mt. Athos during one of his eight trips to Mt. Athos.

better if I said it in Serbian. Because of my strong belief in the Serbian Orthodox Christian faith, I have been on Mount Athos eight times. There is nothing like spiritual rejuvenation. On the Esphigmenou monastery is written in Greek: 'Be Orthodox or Die.' I've also been to St. Panteleimon and St. Paul monastery. One hundred sixty years ago, St. Paul monastery was owned by Serbians and later sold to Greeks. On Mount Athos, there are 20 monasteries, 17 Greek, one Serbian, one Russian, and one Bulgarian. I saw Great Lavra and Iviron. I was able to pick up a wonderful cookbook made by the monks. They do not eat meat and rarely eat fish. If you want an excellent book for fasting, this book shows how to make zucchini in 20 different ways. In addition to Mount Athos, I had the privilege, mainly through IOCC, to meet nine different Orthodox Patriarchs, including the Patriarch in Ethiopia. Eighty million people live in Ethiopia, and 35 million of them are Orthodox Christians. Their Patriarch has 500 priests and 40 dioceses. I had the good fortune of working with Nikola Borota in Cleveland. We raised \$250,000 with a dinner that we sponsored, and together with Kosta Papić and the late Mitch Zunich, we were able to put up significant funds to build the church at Monastery Marcha (Richfield, Ohio). I'm very proud of that accomplishment.

***Karl Malden, a famous Serbian-American Hollywood Actor, in his book When Do I Start, says that his father, Petar Sekulovich, had always said: "One who is born into a Serbian home, who does not care to be a good Serb, will also not be a good American." You always underscore respect for Serbian values. What is to be an excellent Serb for you?***

First, you have to be committed to the Serbian Orthodox Christian faith. It's not just enough to say, "Ja sam Srbin" (I am a Serb). We have our Slava, which is essential. It's very important also to practice your faith. Don't just come to the church on Easter and Christmas. Try to go as many times as you can, and take communion as many times as possible because that is the crux of our faith. I think that it is important to take the advice of the late Patriarch Pavle. He said, "Ni telo više nego što mu treba, ni duši manje nego što joj treba" (Neither give to the body more than it needs nor give to the soul less than it needs). The way to do that is by practicing your Serbian Orthodox Christian faith.

***Based on your experience and participation in the Serbian Unity Congress, what kind of message do you have for the Serbian-American Diaspora organizations, societies, and community members in dealing with the current issues for the Serbian cause? What can we do to better improve our work?***

That's a good question. Going back to my days with Mirjana Samardzija and Michael Djordjevich in the Serbian Unity Congress, there was apathy among Serbs in this country. We tried to form, with Senator George Voinovich, a Serbian anti-defamation league, because of all the bad publicity Serbia was getting. We sent something like almost 200 letters out to leaders in the Serbian community across the United States. We got back less than 15 replies, and only two of us put up money for the effort. That was a sad indication of Serbians' apathy in this country towards Serbia, particularly towards the government, not to

the people. I think we have to find ways for people to keep an interest in what is going on in Serbia and protect Serbia's interest by keeping our Representatives in our own Congress informed. We have to stay above in the knowledge of what's going on in Serbia. To energize the Serbian Caucus would be another way to get more interest in Congress regarding what's happening in Serbia. Anything that we can do to improve the image of Serbia would be a starting point. Marina Schwabic, Dušica Protić, and others are working on efforts. The Serbian-American Diaspora needs to connect with other Diasporas in other countries. By the collective effort of eight to ten different Diasporas from different parts of the world, we could again prevail upon Serbia to elevate the Office of the Serbian Diaspora to a Ministerial post. Serbia needs help, make no mistake about it. When I went back to my first meeting with President Kostunica, he told me that his biggest difficulty was how much of his personal values to sacrifice for political expediency. That plagued him throughout his presidency, plus the fact that you had 18 political parties in Serbia. Like in this country, none of them put the country's good on their agenda, so they formed these coalitions. Unfortunately, it doesn't always move Serbia forward. Implementing judicial reform, financial and economic reforms and agricultural reforms are essential. The Diaspora can help.

There are also other opportunities. Serbia is the largest producer of raspberries in Europe. We tried a year ago to get Serbia hooked up with the Smucker Company in Ohio because Smucker is world-famous for their jams. That would be a good marriage and maybe even leading to Smucker producing a processing plant in Serbia. There was a meeting between Prime Minister Ana Brnabić and the CEO of Smucker. It was a good meeting, but it takes a follow-up. When I was in Serbia last time, I asked Prime Minister Brnabić: 'What are you doing to preserve this contact?' If I were running Serbia, I would get President Vučić on an airplane with two first-class tickets, come to Ohio and say to the Smucker that we want you to go to Serbia. We're capable of doing our sustainability. But no, they turned it over to the Chamber of Commerce. I don't think anything is happening, and I'm afraid nothing will happen due to that initial contact. Those are the kinds of efforts that I think we've got to work on, to get rid of this apathy, and to better have an understanding between, on the one hand, Serbian people and the Serbian Government, and the other hand, the Serbian and American Government and American people."

***As a lifetime member of the Serb National Federation, how important is it that we have this kind of organization in the United States and what message do you have, especially for young people, preserving our tradition and heritage?***

I think what you, Sandi Radoja, and the *American Srbobran* are doing is very good. Without the *American Srbobran*, we would have no link to our culture. I also want to acknowledge that Mary Hart does an excellent job for *Serb World U.S.A.* However, we need much amplification to promote our culture. Certain communities will bring in a dance group or a musical group from Serbia from time to time. It's up to each

*continued on page 12*



# CELEBRATING SERBIAN WOMEN

## Draginja Draga Ljocic Milosevic

By Sandi Radoja

Draga Ljocic was born in Sabc on February 22, 1855. She was the first Serbian woman to be accepted and educated at the University of Zurich, to become the first Serbian female doctor. Despite this distinction, she had a difficult time finding employment until Queen Natalija, wife of King Milan I (Obrenovic), granted her approval to open a private practice. Eventually, she got a position in a state hospital in Belgrade, but her pay was substantially less than her male colleagues. This likely was her inspiration to advocate for equal professional rights for women. Due to her activity in the newly founded women's rights movement in Serbia, she faced accusations of promoting immorality but, remained committed to the cause. She also worked to open children's hospitals and orphanages and was a great philanthropist. She joined the army as a field nurse and served during the Balkan Wars and World War I, receiving the rank of Lieutenant.



She married Rasa Milosevic, one of the founders of the People's Radical Party. He had been sentenced to death due to his role in the Timok Rebellion, one of the most significant events between independence in 1878 and the First Balkan War in 1912. He was released from prison three years after the death verdict thanks to political changes. The couple had five daughters together; one daughter, Radmila, decided to follow her mother and complete her medical studies in Zurich.

In 2016, Google Doodle commemorated Draga's 161st birthday with a doodle created by Jennifer Hom whose work featured the tools of the medical trade typical of the times: a small leather doctor's bag or "stara torba lekarska" filled with instruments.

Draga died in Belgrade on November 5, 1926 at the age of 71.



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## Machaskee

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community to try to find how they can do it, where they can do it, and get the volunteers to do it. Maybe the SNF could look into the possibility of becoming the booking agent where the SNF brings in the musical or dance group. You charge a fee so that the SNF makes some money in the process. You pick out the cities from New York to Los Angeles for the tour of that cultural group. I don't think it should just be limited to musical or dance groups. Serbia is rich with dance beyond folk dancing. We have ballet and drama. With today's technology, you can have a Serbian group to come to Cleveland or wherever and put on a Serbian play. With technology, you can have translation either from Serbian to English or English to Serbian. I would go in a minute, even with the pandemic, to see an excellent Serbian play. You're doing great with the Serbian Movie Festivals, but you need more film festivals in different cities. I don't think it's going to work for each town individually, trying to do something necessarily. We have had a Serbian dance group from Switzerland come to Cleveland and performed at the Switzerland Government's expense and by the funds from that cultural group in Switzerland. There are ways that you can put on programs. I think it goes beyond just Serbian dance and musical groups. There's so much literature that

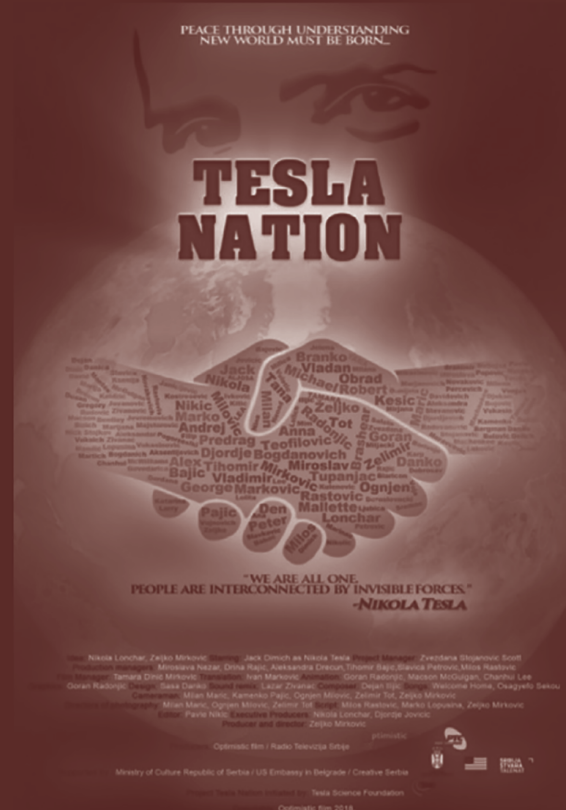
can be translated from Serbian to English for those who do not read Serbian. There is more that can be done by the SNF rather than just reporting on it. The SNF should be the catalyst to bring more culture from Serbia here.

As to the young people, I would say that our young people, whenever possible, should travel to Serbia as much as they can. They should also travel to other parts of the world, learn as much as you can about our Serbian culture, and share it. It's important, particularly with our Serbian people in middle age, some of those who have maybe been successful in their career or business. I'm a firm believer that if God has been good to us and God has been good to me, then I have an obligation to give something back in time, talent, and treasure. I just happen to believe and practice that. Most important to me is my faith, family, music, and travel, as I've indicated. In addition, continuous learning...Don't be afraid to tell people that you're a Serbian and a Serbian Orthodox Christian. We have a lot in our heritage to be very proud of.

In closing, I would just say to you, the wonderful workers at the Serb National Federation, and to everyone that might be exposed to reading about this interview or to be in a position to see it on YouTube: "Od našeg srca želim Vam sve najbolje"

- "From our heart, I wish you the best of everything."

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