

## NATIONAL PRAYER Breakfast 2017

by Milos Rastovic

Last month as a guest of U.S. Representative Mike Doyle (14th District PA) I was honored to attend the 65th Annual National Prayer Breakfast at the International Ballroom, Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C. On the first Thursday in February each year, members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives breakfast groups organize the National Prayer Breakfast in order to reaffirm their faith in God and encourage the power of prayer with others throughout the world. This year, there were more than 3,000 people in attendance from the United States and over 150 countries. Clergy, missionaries, businessmen, politicians, scientists, artists, athletes, teachers, students, doctors, and other professionals gathered together to build and develop friendship and deepen their love for God, and to strengthen ties among nations and promote peace.

From the first National Prayer Breakfast in 1953, with President Dwight D. Eisenhower, American presidents have participated in the National Prayer Breakfast. This year Donald J. Trump appeared for the first time as President of the United States along with other representatives of the U.S. Administration such as Vice-President Mike Pence and Rex W. Tillerson, Secretary of State.

Other guests included Ben Zobrist of the Chicago Cubs and Mark Burnett, film and television Producer, H.E. Djerdj Matkovic, Serbian Ambassador to the United States, Ivica Dacic, Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Zeljka Cvijanovic, Prime Minister of Government of the Republic of Srpska, and Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Alexander and Crown Princess Katherine Karadjordjevic to name a few. I shared a table with Hon. Rep. Mike Doyle, Brian DiSabatino, President and CEO of EDiS Company, as well as representatives from Finland, Eija-Ritta Korhola, former Member of the European Parliament, from Scotland, Consol Efomi, and others.

After a warm welcome message from The Honorable John Boozman and Christopher Coons, U.S. Senators from Arkansas and Delaware, to all participants we prayed to



strengthen our ties with friends, neighbors and nations. Throughout the hall, there was a common feeling of tranquility of spirit and a common spiritual voice for peace and understanding among people.

During prayer and in conversation we found common commitments to the ultimate values of goodness and caring. Music was performed by MercyMe. Rear Admiral Barry C. Black, Chaplain of the United States Senate, delivered a keynote address calling on us "to make our voices heard in Heaven" through prayer. President Trump welcomed the faithful and all other leaders throughout the globe and stressed that "(T)his gathering is a testament to the power of faith, and is one of the great customs of our nation." The closing prayer was made by The Honorable Amy Klobuchar, U.S. Senator from Minnesota.

The National Prayer Breakfast is only one part of the event which runs three days including meetings, seminars, and luncheons. One luncheon was dedicated to representatives from the Balkan region at which they could introduce each other and develop relationships. I was present at the seminars and listened to the speakers discuss their life experiences and faith including Mark Burnett who spoke about his road to success and his idea to help rebuild Christian heritage such as churches and monasteries in the areas of the world where they need that kind of help. It was very inspirational to hear how faith and love of God can help each person to build his or her own life.

If our life is based on love of God and care for each other, our spirit will achieve the highest moral values of honesty, sincerity, and goodness. This commitment can be a great deed in our and others' lives. President Abraham Lincoln, 16th once expressed the necessity of God with the following words:

"We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God... Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us!"

### Book "Christian Heritage of Kosovo and Metohija" Presented



On March 13, 2017, the Honorable Mike Doyle, U.S. Representative for the 14th District of Pennsylvania, accepted as a gift the book "Christian Heritage of Kosovo and Metohija" at his Southside Office in Pittsburgh, PA. Mr. Doyle was delighted to receive the book and expressed gratitude for this gift.

SNF Cultural Director Milos Rastovic discussed the history and Christian Heritage in Kosovo and Metohija with Representative Doyle. Throughout the centuries, the Serbian Orthodox Church, with steadfast and laborious efforts, created a rich spiritual and material culture. The Christian Heritage of Kosovo and Metohija vividly captures the remaining treasures of Orthodox heritage of the area.

The book, published by Sebastian Press, the Episcopal Council of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America, includes over 750 brilliant photographs and other depictions of monasteries, churches, frescoes, icons, and historical figures. In addition to the resplendent photographs and art work, there are 1,000 pages of history detailing the deep Christian heritage in this small region.

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## Republic of Serbia Statehood Day

On February 16 the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia sponsored the celebration of Statehood Day and Armed Forces Day at the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. The Republic of Serbia celebrates February 15th as its official Statehood Day, signifying the beginning of the first Serbian uprising against the Ottoman Empire in Orasac, 1804 and the founding of the Candlemas ("Sretenje") Constitution in Kragujevac, 1835. **cont. on page 9**

David Vuich, with Pres. John Martich, Ambassador H.E. Djerdj Matkovic, and Milos Rastovic, Cultural Outreach Coordinator of the SNF, with presenters in traditional Serbian costumes



## ► SRBO ON THE ROAD

The *American Srbobran* is continuing its world travels with former Pennsylvanians Lauren Mrkal Rockliffe and Veda Mrkal Burns. Here they are enjoying the quintessential rainy day in London. In the background is St. Paul's Cathedral. Lauren currently lives in England while Veda is still stateside in Atlanta, Georgia. Both ladies are members of SNF Lodge 23-Kraljevich Aleksandar of Aliquippa, PA. Cheery-o!



## ART TO BE AUCTIONED

PITTSBURGH, PA - Eli Maravich's work will be on the auction table at the Pittsburgh Tri-State Committee's event on Friday, April 21. The benefit for Lifeline Humanitarian Organization will feature several items of varied interest. For art lovers, it will be a chance to own a paper collage art piece by Maravich.



The *Kosovka Devojka* seen here is one of his latest creations. A collection of many of his previous works of art can be viewed at [www.fancybread.co](http://www.fancybread.co), on Instagram @fancybread.

Eli, who is originally from Aliquippa, PA but now lives in Pittsburgh, is a graduate of Ithaca College and earned a Masters at St. Thomas Aquinos. He played basketball at both schools. He is familiar to many having been a frequent past participant at SNF Basketball Tournaments.

The Lifeline benefit and auction will take place at the American Serbian Club, 2524 Sarah Street in Pittsburgh. Doors open at 7:00 PM.

# Republic of Serbia Statehood Day

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Among the guests were representatives of the Serbian Diaspora and Serbian organizations in the United States as well as officials, congressmen and ambassadors from other countries. On behalf of the Serb National Federation, President John Martich and Cultural Outreach Coordinator Milos Rastovic were present. After the Serbian and American anthems were played, guests received a warm welcome from H.E. Mr. Djerdj Mat-

kovic, Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to the United States who pointed out the importance of a strong relationship between the USA and Serbia. In many fields, the cooperation between two countries has improved and continues to make progress.

Ivana Mangov, Mistress of Ceremony, introduced the speakers. The Honorable Ted Poe stressed the importance of cooperation between the two countries and the similarities between his home

state of Texas and Serbia. One of the main bonds is Djordje Sagic also known as George Fisher who fought for the independence of Texas. Mary Burce Warlick, former U.S. Ambassador to Serbia (2010 – 2012), also talked about the relationship between the two countries in many aspects.

Afterwards, guests had the opportunity to socialize and enjoy Serbian food made by Milka and Zarko Zukic. —*Story by Milos Rastovic.*



**SNF President John Martich, left, with Ambassador Djerdj Matkovic, and SNF member David Vuich**



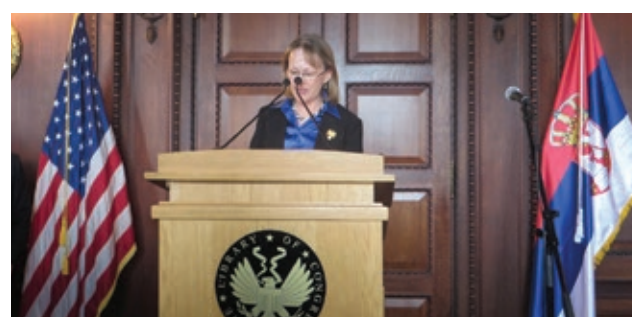
**From left are Colonel Dragan Galic, Defence Attache of the Republic of Serbia, John Martich, President of the SNF, Milos Rastovic, Cultural Outreach Coordinator of the SNF, and H.E. Djerdj Matkovic, Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to the United States**



**H.E. Djerdj Matkovic, Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to the United States**



**Ivana Mangov, Mistress of Ceremonies and Second Secretary for the Press and Culture of the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia in the United States**



**Mary Burce Warlick, former U.S. Ambassador to Serbia**



**Ted Poe, United States Representative (2nd District Texas)**