

Celebrating 200 Years of Serbs in America



by Milos Rastovic

On June 27 -29, 2014, the Tesla Science Foundation, Philadelphia, and the Serb National Federation, Pittsburgh, sponsored the anniversary of "200 Years of Serbs in America." The event was held in Philadelphia, PA at the Arch Street Meeting House and Independence National Historical Park, where both the Declaration of Independence was signed and the founding of the Constitution took place. Philadelphia was chosen as the site for the celebration because the first Serb, Djordje Sagic, later known as George Fisher, arrived in the United States through the port of Philadelphia.

Sagic was born in 1795 in Hungary to Serbian parents. He attended a Serbian Orthodox Church School in Sremski Karlovci. However, at the age of eighteen, he joined Karadjordje and the Serbian Uprising against the Ottoman Empire. After the Serbian Uprising broke up, Sagic's adventurous spirit pushed him to sail across the ocean to the New Continent. He arrived in the United States through the port of Philadelphia as a redemptioner on the Delaware. Here he fought for the independence of Texas and Mexico. His knowledge of many foreign languages helped him to work as a translator in many public services, at companies and on boards. He was a judge in California and an Honorary Consul of Greece. He died in San Francisco in 1873.

More details about the life of Djordje Sagic were discovered in the documentary by Miodrag Kolaric. The movie had its world premiere at the Serbian Movie Festival on Friday, June 27 at the City

Institute where visitors had a chance to experience American-Serbian history in the last 200 years. One of the movie's spectators was Larry Mallette, from Houston, descendant of Djordje Sagic.

Like Sagic, Nikola Tesla, inventor and scientist, gave a great contribution to America and the world. According to Alex Shipley, director of the Museum in Rahway, New Jersey, Tesla established the first 35 lights of alternating current in the world. Samson D. Steinman, Mayor of Rahway, and Nikola Lonchar, President of the Tesla Science Foundation, unveiled the Tesla bust at the City Library. Mr. Steinman said that Tesla is "an important part of the heritage of this town."

Likewise in Rahway, the Tesla bust was unveiled at the Franklin Science Institute in Philadelphia. The Hall of the Franklin Science Institute was crowded with interested guests and visitors keen to hear more about Tesla. Among officials were Zeljka Cvijanovic, Prime Minister of the Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Slavka Draskovic, Representative of the Republic of Serbia. The moment of unveiling the Tesla bust was followed by loud applause from a very excited audience.

At the reception, Ms. Cvijanovic talked about the importance of marking 200 years of Serbs in America. John Martich, 1st Vice President of the Serb National Federation, gifted a book "Serb National Federation First 100 Years" to the Prime Minister of Republika Srpska. Mr. Martich stressed the contributions of the SNF and Serbian diaspora in building bonds with the homeland. RAS-The

International Serbian humanitarian organization, organized a silent auction and collected funds intended to go to victims of the floods in Serbia and Republika Srpska.

Members of the SNF Executive Committee participated in a meeting with Slavka Draskovic, Representative of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, along with other prominent members of the American-Serbian community and organizations. They discussed ways to further strengthen the bond between our countries.

The Arch Street Meeting House was crowded with curious people who wanted to hear more information about American-Serbian history. Thirteen speakers covered many interesting subjects including: World War I and how aid was collected for the homeland; the relationship between Laza Kostic, Serbian poet, and Tesla; American-Serbian history; Serbian people involved in American politics; Serbian traditional music; and about many contributions made by distinguished American-Serbians and organizations among other subjects. The SNF showed a movie about its history, and banners were displayed at the exhibition at the Independence National Historical Park. Kordun, a literature workshop, organized a literature competition "Serbian Diaspora in America," and awarded poets Zelimir Mladjenovic, Jelena Saula, Mirjana N. Radovanov-Mataric, and Katarina Kostic.

The Gala Banquet and Award Ceremony



Michael Marjanovic,
President of the
SNF, at the Gala
Banquet with the Award



Dancing
kolo at Independence National
Historical Park, Philadelphia, PA

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2014 SNF SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Each year, the Serb National Federation awards over \$20,000 in scholarships to worthy, young college-bound members. This year, there were 47 applicants from 11 states representing 16 SNF Lodges, from which a total of 22 scholarships were awarded.

The members of our volunteer SNF Scholarship Committee, comprised of experienced career educators, do

not have an easy time in selecting the awardees, because many more applications are received than scholarships available. The criteria upon which the applicants are assessed include high school or college ranking, grade point average, and academic aptitude test scores.

All of the 2014 scholarship recipients achieved a high school grade average of

"B" or better, a high school rank above 10 percent, and scored above 1650 total on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). The named memorial scholarship recipients, who have completed at least one year of post-secondary study, achieved a grade point average of 3.5 or better. Of the total number of applicants, 51% were female and 49% were male.

We hope that our membership will

consider making a donation to the SNF Scholarship Fund or consider establishing a scholarship in memory of a loved one. Congratulations to all the scholarship recipients on behalf of the SNF Board of Directors and Staff. Photographs and biographical information about our young scholars begins on page 10.

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gathered together distinguished Serbs and friends of Serbs. The Tesla Science Foundation recognized some of the most distinguished American-Serbian friends of Serbs and organizations: SNF members, Alex Machaskee, David Vuich, George Voinovich, Helen Delich Bentley, Branko Terzic, Milana K. Bizic, Dr. Nenad Janicijevic, Milan Puskar (posthumously), Mary Nicklanovich Hart, and Vasa Mihailovich along with Larry Mallette, Miroslav Michael Djordjevic, Milan Panic, Danielle Sremac, Dr. Branko Bojovic, Dr. Zorica Pantic, Marina Abramovich, Rushka Bergman, Walt Bogdanich, Mira Panajotovich Vukelich, Obrad Kesic, Dan Burton, Branko Tupanjac, Slobodan Pavlovic, Dr. Noam Chomsky, Dr. Miodrag Radulovacki (posthumously), Vlade Divac, Milorad Cavic, Stefan Milenkovic and humanitar-

ian organizations RAS-The International Serbian Organization, Serbian American Medical Association (SAMA), Srbi za Srbe, International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), and 28 Jun.

"We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to our forefathers: those early Serbian emigrants who by their courage and fidelity paved the way for all of us," Alex Machaskee stated. "Like many of you, I am the product of their sacrifices – it was because of the choices that my ancestors made that I am blessed to be Serbian and American."

SNF President Michael Marjanovic received recognition on behalf of the SNF, for helping to preserve Serbian Cultural Heritage in America. Mr. Marjanovic expressed gratitude for this award and stressed that the SNF has helped and supported Serbian people and organiza-

tions from 1901 in North America and continues today.

At Independence National Historical Park, the audience enjoyed an excellent performance of Jadranka Jovanovic, prima donna, with Nikola Rackov, pianist, and Vladan Mijatovic, jazz pianist, with his band and the West Philadelphia Orchestra. The audience participated by dancing kolos.

Zeljko Mirkovic, movie director, along with the Tesla Science Foundation is making a documentary "Tesla's People" featuring most distinguished American-Serbian. Making the movie is ongoing, and if you know somebody you think should be showcased in the movie, please e-mail teslapeople@gmail.com.



From left, Gregory Volitich, SNF Treasurer, Zeljka Cvijanovic, Prime Minister of Republika Srpska, John Martich, 1st Vice President of the SNF



John Martich, presented a book to Zeljka Cvijanovic, Prime Minister of Republika Srpska, on behalf of the SNF



Zeljka Cvijanovic, Prime Minister of Republika Srpska, and Dennis Wint, Franklin Science Institute, Philadelphia, PA



From left, Obrad Kesic, Miroslav Marjanovic, Miroslav Djordjevic, Milos Rastovic, John Martich, Slavka Draskovic, Gregory Volitich, Nikola Lonchar, Branko Terzic, Dessa A. Volitich, John Wuchenich.



From left, Samuel Manson, Samson D. Steinman and Nikola Lonchar in Rahway, New Jersey

SNF MEMBER LEADS LOUISVILLE TO ACC



Tom Jurich of SNF Lodge #95-Lovcen-Los Angeles was born and raised in Southern California. His late father Steve and mother Lynn were highly respected members of St. Steven Serbian Orthodox Church in Alhambra where Tom was quite active as an altar boy, Sunday school student, and basketball player representing his parish at many SNF tournaments.

Today, Tom is the Athletic Director at the University of Louisville, a position he has enjoyed for more than 17 years. In

2013, he was named Kentuckian of the Year. Recently, he led his school to acceptance into the Atlantic Coast Conference.

He was described by writer Kelly Lyell, in a story on Louisville athletics, as the reason for all the success. "The architect of it all? None other than athletic director Tom Jurich, who has taken Louisville to previously unimaginable heights since leaving the same post at Colorado State University nearly 16 years ago."

Among the many accomplishments during his tenure is a partnership with the City of Louisville and the State of Kentucky for a 22,000-seat arena where the men and women's basketball teams compete. He has steered the school from Conference USA to the Big East to the ACC; increased the athletic budget from just under \$15 Million to \$88 Million, almost entirely from private funding, and much, much more. He was inducted into Kentucky's State Sports Hall of Fame in 2006.

Jurich and his wife Terrilynn, a former Miss Wyoming, have four children: Mark (Lainey), Brian, and twin daughters Haley and Lacey. Mark and Lainey have two sons Jay Ryan and Thomas Jack.

We wish to thank SNF member Mercia Martich of Northridge, California, who sent us in the direction of this story. She paid Tom Jurich one of the highest compliments when she told me, "He is not only successful, but a fine gentleman and a family man, too." – str.