

CANADIAN MACEDONIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY



25TH ANNIVERSARY GALA
1991 - 2016

Celebrating 25 years of dedication and hard
work, the following proud sponsors
congratulate the
Canadian Macedonian Historical Society

Chris & Vasilka Stefanovich

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George Markou

Alex Mishos

Susan Niczowski

Zlatka Cokov

and their Families

History

The Canadian Macedonian Historical Society was originally started in 1990 as the Canadian Macedonian Place Historical Society by two board members, Pete Kondoff and Virginia Stoymenoff, with the full support of the Canadian Macedonian Place Board. Its Mission Statement: To Promote Public Interest in the history of Canadian Citizens of Macedonian descent, as well as to document the ongoing traditions, culture, religion, language and history of events, starting with the immigration of Canadian Macedonian seniors and their descendants. It was incorporated as the Canadian Macedonian Historical Society in 1991 with a distinctive logo and brochure.

A small grant was obtained from the federal government through the New Horizons for Seniors in 1991 and about 80 video interviews of our seniors and war veterans were conducted between 1992 and 1994. A 2nd small grant was obtained from New Horizons for Seniors to reconfigure the lower level space of Canadian Macedonian Place, and for furniture and supplies. This is the official premises of the Canadian Macedonian Historical Society.

The aims of the Society are:

- * To chronicle and describe the Canadian Macedonian historical experience,
- * To record the achievements of Canadian Macedonians over time and place
- * To document the traditions, culture, religion, language and history of the Macedonian people in Canada
- * To compile and record the participation and contributions of Canadian Macedonian veterans during the wars
- * To support and assist in the accurate presentation of Macedonian history
- * To recognize outstanding Canadians of Macedonian descent for their contribution to the Canadian community.
- * To promote public interest in the history of Macedonian and Canadian Macedonian experiences by encouraging research therein.
- * To initiate and promote Macedonian historical and archaeological research
- * To establish and maintain a permanent resource centre with a library and museum, and
- * To support other complementary purposes consistent with these objects.

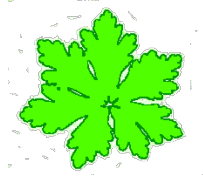
The Society presently maintains a library/resource centre with more than 4,000 books, in both Macedonian and English, most about the history and culture of Macedonia, which can be accessed through our website www.macedonianhistory.ca. We collect photographs, Macedonian village costumes, and other memorabilia of our early immigrants. Over the years we have conducted an average of 3-4 lectures per year, a symposium on immigration stories, entitled, "Let Me Tell You a Story" in 2007 and 2010, many book launches, and film premieres, many academics which included doctorates and knowledgeable and passionate folks who gave lectures on their chosen subjects. . We have updated the website with our web master Alex Nitsis, where all our activities are and will be recorded. We are currently interviewing our many Canadian Macedonians who have made a great contribution to both Canada and to the Macedonian community whose stories must be recorded and preserved for our future generations. These interviews and the older interviews have been added to our website and to YouTube. We have a membership list of about 450 people.

Our crowning achievement this year has been the opening of the First Macedonian Museum in Canada, with the help of Canadian Macedonian Place. This museum, in the lower level of Canadian Macedonian Place, may be small but we hope it is a precursor to having our own large Museum/Cultural Centre in the not-too-distant future. To achieve this we need the funds and support from all our Macedonian organizations, village societies, churches and individuals.

A people without memory are like cut flowers without roots.

*Be like the Zdravets that has long roots
that stretch back to where we came from – Macedonia.*

Alex Gigeroff





**EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
OTTAWA, CANADA**

До Г-дин Тодор Марковски, Претседател на
Канадско-Македонското Историско Друштво

Почитуван Г-дине Марковски,

Ми претставува особена чест и задоволство од мое лично име и на Амбасадата на Р.Македонија во Отава, да Ви го честитам одбележувањето на големиот јубилеј 25 годишнината од основањето на Канадско-Македонското Историско Друштво.

По тој повод дозволете ми да ви посакам натамошни успеси во вашите активности во поглед на зачувувањето и пренесувањето на македонската историја, култура, јазик и традиција на сите генерации Македонци кои што живеат и творат во Канада.

Посебно сакам да Ви оддадам признание и почит за вашето дело во изминатите 25 години и особено за придонесот за зачувување на приказните за животот на Македонците во Канада кои одиграле значајна улога и дале огромен придонес за Република Македонија и за Канада, за основањето на библиотека со преку 4,000 книги на македонски и на англиски јазик, како и за отворањето на Првиот Македонски Музеј во Канада.

Посакувајќи Ви натамошни успеси со подготовката на вашата јубилејна книга, ве известувам дека Амбасадата на Република Македонија во Отава ви стои на располагање за поблиска и посодржајна соработка, во насока за унапредување на заложите за зачувување на македонската историја, култура, традиции и обичаи во Канада.

Со почит,

Отава, 02.11.2016 г.

Амбасадор,
Тони Димовски



Greetings were received from:

The Prime Minister of Canada

The Premier of Ontario

The Mayor of Toronto

The Ontario Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport

The Ontario Minister of Citizen and Immigration

Member of Parliament Beaches-East York

City of Toronto Councillor of Beaches East York

Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21

The Multicultural History Society of Ontario

Presidents Message

Twenty-five years of solid achievement, a record to be proud of!

With love and respect for each other, working together, community minded volunteers from all walks of life, giving freely their time, is what I believe to be the key to the success of the Canadian Macedonian Historical Society.

In 25 years Canada has seen the progressive development of a culturally rich and dedicated Macedonian community.

I applaud the vision, belief and commitment of those who have founded the Canadian Macedonian Historical Society and all of us who have upheld its objective throughout the last 25 years.

May the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of our Society be truly memorable and may it long continue to serve well for our community, our province and our country.

Looking back at history and enduring in the present life are proof that we do not have control over what happens to us. However, we do have control over the way we choose to handle the things life throws our way, and if we choose wisely every challenge can lead us towards the greatest of opportunities.

Canada next year will be celebrating 150 years as a confederation. Canadian Macedonians have had a presence in Canada for 125 years. We have much to celebrate.

Twenty-five years ago, the Canadian Macedonian Historical Society took on a daunting task in chronicling our contribution to Canada.

I am continuously amazed and humbled by the depth and wealth of history that is found within our Canadian Macedonian community.

To lose our stories, to be without them being told, written, chronicled and passed on, will be disinherit to our future. There is no future without the path made to it by the past.

With this in mind, I have been very proud to act as the custodian of our history for the last two years as president and 23 years as a board member. It is an honour to follow our past presidents who have enriched our future by finding value in the past. In this way, it makes us more present.

I wish to thank all of the presidents that preceded me for their commitment and dedication. Likewise, for all the presidents that will follow, I wish the same commitment and support that I enjoy as we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Canadian Macedonian Historical Society.

It is an honour and privilege to serve.

СИТЕ ЗАЕДНО,

Поздрав,

Todor K. Markovski – Tony

President, CMHS

CMHS Board of Directors

President:	Tony Markovski
Vice-President:	Alexander Nitsis
Past President:	Virginia Evans
Treasurer:	Paul Thomas
Membership:	Virginia Stoymenoff
Secretary:	Virginia Stoymenoff
Special Events::	Odie Belchevski
Director:	Connie Arnone
Director:	Dr. Dan Mallin
Director:	James Mangos
Director:	Mary Outow
Director:	Bill Pavlovski

25th Gala Organizing Committee

John Evans
Helen Giffen
Tony Markovski
Alexander Nitsis
Mary Outow
Natasha Outow
Bill Pavlovski
Vele Tosevski

Past Presidents

Pete Kondoff
Boris Christoff
Virginia Stoymenoff
Odyssey Belchevski
Alexander Nitsis
Virginia Evans
John Thomas
Tony Markovski (current)

Thank You!



The CMHS would like to thank the **CANADIAN MACEDONIAN PLACE FOUNDATION** for over 25 years of support. First, we thank you for giving us a place to call home. You have been the roof over our heads. Most of all, you believe in us and our cause of promoting the interest of Canadians of Macedonian descent. Without you, we would not be able to house a library with over 4000 books, record over 100 videos of our oral history in Canada, deliver over 50 inspiring lectures, and house the first Macedonian Costume Museum in Canada. We and the Macedonian community in Canada, will be forever grateful for your foresight, guidance and continued support.

The CMHS Board of Directors would like to thank all those involved in assisting with the planning, organizing, and presentation of our 25th anniversary celebration.

Special thanks to St. Clement of Ohrid Macedonian Orthodox Cathedral, staff, executive and clergy. We congratulate you on your 50th anniversary.



Founders Award

Pete Kondoff::

Pete Kondoff's father (Dimitri) migrated to the US in 1909 with his 3 uncles from Dumbani (Aegean) Macedonia in the Ottoman Empire. His father married Veleka Tolкова from Gabresh in 1925 in Detroit. Pete was born in 1928 and brothers John and Bill followed. He met Mary Vasilieff from Toronto and they were married in 1949. Mary was not able to enter the US so they settled in Windsor, Ontario (1950-1955) while Pete worked and went to school in Detroit. In 1955 Pete accepted a job in Toronto and they moved to the Kennedy Road and Lawrence Avenue area. Daughter Dove came soon after.

Mary and Pete were very involved with maintaining their Macedonian culture by being involved in the Macedonian church and attending many social gatherings such as picnics, weddings and name day celebrations. Daughter Dove was also sent to Macedonian school.

In 1960, Pete was recruited to join the United Macedonians and became the executive secretary and was effectively the managing director for 10 years. His community involvements were numerous and the most notable included being on the Board of Directors of Canadian Macedonian Place; one of the founders of St. Clement of Ohrid Macedonian Church; and the Original Founder and Past President of the Canadian Macedonian Historical Society.

We thank Pete Kondoff for his tireless leadership and commitment in not only being an original founder of the CMHS but for always fighting for the Macedonian cause in Canada and abroad.



Founders Award

Virginia Lazaroff Stoymenoff:

One day in 1977 Virginia was reading the paper and noted that the Estonians, a much smaller community than the Macedonians, were building a nursing home. She tried to interest her circle of friends and got nowhere until she was introduced to John Bitove whose group was already fundraising for such a project. He invited her to sit on his board where she has been ever since. She became the first administrator of Canadian Macedonian Place but left that position to pursue a 25 year career in Real Estate.

In 1990 Pete Kondoff suggested to the Board of CMP of starting a historical society with a grant from New Horizons for Seniors, and together with Virginia, the CMP Board, and many other prominent Macedonians, the Canadian Macedonian Place Historical Society was born. In 1991 Boris Christoff was able to incorporate it with its own constitution and by-laws into Canadian Macedonian Historical Society. During this time Virginia held the position of Secretary and was President in 1996-97 when the Logo and Brochure were finalized.

Virginia grew up in the Macedonian community in the Macedonian Bulgarian Cultural Centre of 386 Ontario Street where she was taught to play the mandolin by Chris Dafeff and Jimmy Campbell from age 8 to about 12-13. She put her mandolin away until the age of 47 when she joined the Toronto Mandolin Orchestra of the Shevchenko Musical Ensemble where she still plays. The Orchestra is celebrating its 60th anniversary with a very special concert next Saturday November 19th @ 7:00 PM at the beautiful Trinity-St. Paul's Centre on Bloor Street just west of Spadina Avenue.



Silver Shield Award



Chris N. Stefou, or better known to Macedonians as Risto Stefov, was born on June 11, 1953 in the village Oshchima, Lerin Region, Western Aegean Macedonia now known as Northern Greece. Risto is the son of Nikola and Sofia Stefou from Oshchima and Zhelevo respectively, who tried to make a life for themselves in Greece after the Greek Civil War but found it very difficult. Nikola had served time in the Greek prison camps for having Macedonian sentiments and the stigma of that followed him in civilian life everywhere in Greece, even in his remote and desolate village.

Having concluded that there was no life for him and his family in Greece, Nikola decided to immigrate to Canada and join his two brothers and sister in Toronto. Nikola left Greece in 1965 to establish himself and brought his family, wife, daughter and two sons a year later.

Since it was impossible for a Greek citizen with Macedonian sentiments to get into high school in Greece, the Stefou family left Oshchima and arrived in Halifax, Canada on October 1st, 1966. Risto was thirteen years old when he arrived in Canada. In Greece, Risto states that they were not allowed to speak Macedonian and they barely spoke Greek, so it was very hard for him to learn to speak English and adjust to the new way of life.

After finishing high school at Westview Centennial Secondary School in 1974, Risto enrolled in a four-year program in the Faculty of Electrical Engineering at the University of Toronto where in 1978 he received his Bachelor degree of Applied Science in Electrical Engineering.

Right after his graduation Risto married Laurie, a nursing graduate from the same University and they both immediately joined the work force.

Risto's first job was with the Toronto Transit Commission where he worked with the computerization of TTC vehicles. This included the installation of vehicle tracking and Communication Systems.

After finishing University, Risto joined the village association Benefit Society Oshchima (formed in 1907) where he served for many years on the Board of Directors and was later voted President, a title which he holds with pride to this day. In the early 1990's he joined the newly formed Lerin Region Macedonian Cultural Association of

Ontario where he served on the board of directors for two terms as Treasurer and two terms as President. Risto had also joined various other Macedonian Organizations in various capacities but since his retirement his passion has been writing.

To date Risto has written sixteen of his own books, co-authored two books, and so far, has translated twenty-three books from Macedonian to English. All of the translations were done for free, as donations for the Macedonian cause. Two of Risto's books have also been translated from English to Macedonian.

Risto is currently working on translating more books from Macedonian to English.

He has also written over one thousand essays and articles in support of human rights and the Macedonian cause.

Risto is hopeful that there will be better days for the Macedonian people in the future but the most important thing now is for them to know who they are and be proud of it.

We honour Risto with the CMHS Silver Shield Award. The Macedonian Silver Shields were the picked corps of the Macedonian army that had rendered a lifetime of professional service to the Macedonian kings. They were distinguished by the brilliance of their Silver Shields and their bravery. They were not in the flower of their age, but veterans with silver hair, who were in their fifties and sixties, some even older, but all of them were irresistible because of experience and strength. Undefeated in battle, the fame of whose exploits caused much fear among the enemy.

Risto Stefov exemplifies the attributes of a Macedonian warrior. It is his exploits as a Macedonian literary fighter that we dedicate this award in honour of Macedonia's Silver Shields.



Outstanding Contribution to the Canadian-Macedonian Community



Dr. Christina Elizabeth Kramer is Professor of Slavic and Balkan Languages and Linguistics at the University of Toronto and Chair of the university's Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures which is part of the Faculty of Arts and Science.

Dr. Kramer authored *Macedonian: A Course for Beginning and Intermediate Students*. The book – first published in 1999, with a revised and expanded second edition published in 2003 – is the most recent English Macedonian textbook.

She is a specialist on Balkan languages and semantics, specifically on South Slavic languages. Her research focus on synchronic linguistics, sociolinguistics, verbal categories, language and politics. She teaches courses in Russian and Macedonian language and others.

Her publications include:

- * *Macedonian: A course for Beginning & Intermediate Students*
- * *Guard the Word Well Bound: Proceedings of the Third North American-Macedonian Conference on Macedonian Studies*
- * *Analytic Modality in Macedonian*
- * *Makedonsko-Angliski Razgovornik*
- * Translating numerous Macedonian novels

Dr. Christina Kramer received the 2006 Book Award from the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and Eastern European Languages for Best Contribution to Language Pedagogy for her book *Macedonian: A Course for Beginning and Intermediate Students*. She received the prize on December 28, 2006 during the Association's annual meeting in Philadelphia.

Her lectures for the Canadian Macedonian Historical Society include:

- * Translating the Balkans - which was both a lecture and a book
- * The Jews of Macedonia
- * Language & Identity in the Macedonian Village of Vrbnik with our own Virginia Stoymenoff

The most outstanding accomplishment for Canadian Macedonians has been in her role of preserving our ethnic identity by teaching our language at the University of Toronto.

The following is an excerpt from the Canadian Macedonian Place newsletter, *Zdravets* (2015).

The Macedonian course at the University of Toronto began when John Bitove, accompanied by Meto Jovanovski, and Tanas Jovanovski, asked the chair of Slavic Studies, Professor Bedford in 1987 to allow Christina Kramer release time to teach Macedonian. Following that conversation, Van Petroff and Stan Thomas initiated the use of proceeds from the Canadian Macedonian Open Golf Tournament to support the Macedonian program at the University of Toronto. The concept moved to action and with the continued support of the CMP Foundation, this course has been running for more than two decades now. Macedonian at U of T is one of the only regularly offered University credit courses in North America.

It is for this achievement, that we honour Dr. Christina Kramer with the award of Outstanding Contribution to the Canadian Macedonian Community. Your dedication, commitment, and perseverance in preserving our ethnic identity has made you part of our Canadian-Macedonian family.

Ви благодариме !

Congratulations to the
Canadian Macedonian Historical
Society
for its commitment, contribution
and service to the Macedonian
community
here in Canada.

Best wishes to the participants and
organizers of the
25th Anniversary Gala
Chessttito!



CANADIAN
MACEDONIAN
PLACE