

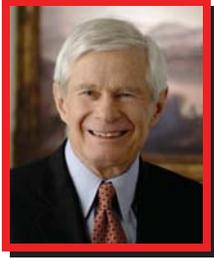
# AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Fall 2018

NEWSLETTER

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## AFoCR Award Gala Celebrates 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Czechoslovak Independence



*Gala Honoree  
Fred Malek*

Over 200 friends, descendants, and citizens of the Czech Republic gathered in the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., on the evening of November 1, 2018, to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the independence of Czechoslovakia. The gala dinner also honored AFoCR Chairman Fred Malek with the *Václav Havel Award for the Advancement of Civil Society*, which was presented by former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who was born in Czechoslovakia. *Washington Post* newspaper columnist Petula Dvorak, whose parents immigrated from Czechoslovakia, served as the Master of Ceremonies.

In addition to U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic Stephen B. King and Czech Ambassador to the U.S. Hynek Kmoníček, the event was honored by the presence of four former U.S. Ambassadors to the Czech Republic: Bill Cabaniss (2003-06), Richard W. Graber (2006-09), Norman L. Eisen (2011-14), and Andrew H. Schapiro (2014-17). Also present were Michaela and Zdeněk Bakala, who have been generous supporters of AFoCR projects, as well as Ivan Hodáč, President & Founder of the Aspen Institute Central Europe, and Jane Harmon, President and CEO, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

The guests first congregated in the Library's Great Hall for cocktails and conversation, with entertainment by a jazz trio comprised of guitarist Dom Petrellese, bassist James B. King, and drummer/percussionist Nasar Abadey, all three of whom are acclaimed musicians working in the Washington area. The guests then proceeded for dinner to the magnificent wood paneled Paster Reading Room, its beamed ceilings reminiscent of Shakespearian times. Ms. Dvorak welcomed all and introduced AFoCR President Thomas Dine, who remarked that the evening also celebrated the founding father of Czechoslovakia, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, who set high democratic principles for the new country: the rule of law, civic equality, constitutionalism, and the freedoms of press and worship. He further noted that AFoCR is a bipartisan organization, dedicated to continuing to enhance the close and strong relationship between the democratic United States and the democratic Czech Lands.

In toasting 100 years of friendship between the countries, Ambassador King noted his upbringing in Chicago, a city with

deep Czech ties, and his pride to represent the American people as their Ambassador. He praised the talent and commitment of the Czechs, who "have worked diligently to protect our shared values and the freedom regained after the Nazi occupation and forty years of communism," and expressed the faith that the "bonds of friendship would remain ironclad over the next century." Ambassador Kmoníček also alluded to the influence of Czech immigration, noting that the Czech nation has "two legs - one in the Czech Republic, and one abroad, including in the U.S." With tongue in cheek, he expressed the wish that both legs can walk straight without limping.

Before dinner, guests were treated to a short video describing Tomáš Masaryk and the movement that led to the creation of the Czechoslovak state in November 1918. After dinner, Czech Roma Pianist Tomáš Kačo played a composition based on the old Czech folk song "Široký, hluboký" (Wide, deep), about a man lamenting a lost love. He was then joined at the piano by Michaela Bakala for a duet of the folk song "Ach synku, synku" (Oh, my son), which was Masaryk's favorite. In the song, a father encourages his son to fix his broken plow so that he can succeed in his task.

At the podium Mrs. Bakala described how honored she was to be present, especially as she was born under the communist regime and had never thought she could even come to America. She emphasized that without the United States there never would have been a Czechoslovakia. Finally, she praised the tremendous contributions of Fred Malek, an enormous personality from a humble background who lived a dream and gave much back to America and the Czech Republic.

Next was shown a video about Mr. Malek, his great success in the business world, and his many philanthropic activities, including the new Frederic V. Malek West Point Visitors Center at his alma mater. The video concluded by reviewing his leadership, along with that of entrepreneur Zdeněk Bakala, AFoCR Director Fritz Duda, and the Czech government, in rebuilding the Sokol gymnasium in the town of West, Texas, that had been destroyed in a tragic industrial plant explosion in 2013. Ms. Dvorak then introduced Anna Dulock, representing Sokol West Gymnastics, who described the joy in the community when the new gym opened in November 2015. She noted their gratitude to Fred Malek and AFoCR for helping them to rebuild.

The next speaker was AFoCR Director Michelle Olson, Mr. Malek's daughter, who read a letter from former U.S. President George W. Bush, who described him as a "fine American who answered the call to serve our Nation, but he never forgot his Czech roots." Ms. Olson then introduced a video about Václav Havel, the leader of the 1989 Velvet Revolution, and his historic speech to a joint session of the U.S. Congress in February 1990.

In preparing to present the Václav Havel Award for the Advancement of Civil Society, Secretary Albright described Mr. Malek as a "doer" and acknowledged that people in Washington were often surprised to learn that she and he are such good friends, due to their different political affiliations. She noted that the old world Czech values that his parents instilled in him - a respect for discipline, a belief in hard work, and a commitment to persevere in the face of any challenge - had helped him *(Continued on Page 6)*



Letter from

**AFoCR President Tom Dine**

## Democracy in Need in Central Europe



*AFoCR President  
Tom Dine at  
AFoCR Award  
Gala, 11/1/18*

The current health and sustainability of “democracy” are doubted almost daily in worldwide headlines, news reports, commentaries, and conversations.

Is democracy — as a form of government with its political institutional and rule-based processes — on the decline? A short reply: yes, for instance, in the Visegrad countries of Central Europe, as well as in Brazil, Italy, and Turkey.

There are explanations for this development. One is a rapidly growing return to a cold-blooded and prevailing racial belief in Caucasian dominance in Europe and the United States. Prejudice is fueled by fear as in the case of migration; prejudice is fueled by anger and disillusionment, along with poverty, poor wages, and unemployment. Racial hate and insecurity lead to behavior that is both historically and currently marked by cruelty, desecration, violence, and even mass murder. Instead of hierarchical clarity, constitutional democratic societies often are characterized by ambiguity, gradualness, and confusion - leading to frustration or even worse. The spread of chaos and corruption can disrupt democracies, as practiced by Russia’s authoritarian president and his henchmen.

Vladimir Putin’s regime is inserting the Kremlin into the geopolitical and military affairs of many countries in Europe, the Middle East, and North America. Putin is hell-bent on making Russia a recognized Great Power — although it is politically and economically weak, as shown by its steady demographic decline owing to poor health and low birth rates. Putin cries out for sympathy for Russia’s victimization by the West, especially by the United States, after the fall of communism. Yet, Russia’s weak situation is a result of its own victimization.

Putin’s strategy, therefore, is to seed chaos in the West via asymmetrical means and methods, i.e. spreading disinformation and bribing government officials, as well as outright subversion and political and military warfare. Without doubt, this is happening in the four Visegrad (V-4) countries (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, and Hungary), in Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova, and in the Baltic countries (Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia). All of these places are known in Moscow as the “near abroad,” and in more poignant words: “fair game”.

Let’s look into the current state of democracy in the four Central European outposts of the former Soviet Union. Unfortunately, the V-4 record of openness and checks-and-balances is mixed, weakening since the beginning of the 21st century. Authoritarian leaning and opportunistic politicians and their backers are widespread, and Russia’s strategy to disrupt and undermine the V-4 countries has had effect.

Democracy has dissolved in Hungary under the eight-year dictatorship of Viktor Orban, who models himself after Putin. He literally labels his country an “illiberal society.” He has called his policies a “soft fascism,” which includes corruption at election ballot boxes, shakedowns of small- and medium-sized businesses, and a kleptocratic government that steals from its citizens to enrich those at the top and disallows bidding on government contracts. He calls his regime “authoritarian,” and his communication efforts “propaganda.” In campaign speeches, he described migration from Syria and Lebanon as an existential threat and blamed this event on George Soros, a Hungarian-born, successful American financier and civil society philanthropist, who is a Jew. In September of 2018, the European Parliament voted to label Orban’s government a “systematic threat to the rule of law.”

Fledgling democracy building in Poland ground to a halt in 2015, the year the inaccurately named Law and Justice Party came to power. Today, Poland is currently flogging democratic institutions under the more and more repressive rule of Jarosław Kaczyński. A retreat from democracy is underway, with checks and balances undermined and independent institutions central to democracy denuded. Party loyalists are heading public media, increasing harassment of opposition politicians and judges, refusing to accept the European Union-mandated quota of refugees. Even worse is a series of dramatic reforms to the court system, including the firing of the Supreme Court’s President.

Democracy in the Czech Republic is the strongest among the V-4, but there is growing dissatisfaction with the quality of that democracy, despite low unemployment and high economic growth, as well as free and fair elections. Ongoing major political conflicts and political corruption hinder the parliamentary and cabinet system of governing, with the Economist Intelligence Unit index labeling the country’s democracy as “flawed.” The respected Freedom House annual scorecard on democracy, however, still shows Czechia as “free.”

Democracy in the Slovak Republic, under stress since the Velvet Divorce in 1993, has been less healthy than that in the Czech Republic. The Slovak people have been repeatedly demanding governmental reforms and the end of public corruption. As Prime Minister (1998-2006), Mikuláš Dzurinda accomplished many policy reforms — including a pro-market flat tax of 19 percent, pension reform, and educational financing — enough for Slovakia to be invited into the European Union (EU) and NATO. Slovaks are demanding more today. The mass public demonstrations following the murders of investigative journalist Jan Kuciak and his fiancé, forced long-serving Prime Minister Robert Fico and his entire government to resign in March 2018.

The V-4 are experiencing domestic pushback to the EU’s oversight of regional rules and regulations. Central Europe is being energized by anti-establishment and anti-EU rebels, whose policies are increasingly authoritarian, and whose geopolitical allegiances are to Moscow, not the West. For democracy to hold, the Czech Republic will need to improve and lead to regenerate this precious, hopeful legacy in the heart of Europe.

Thomas A. Dine  
President, AFoCR

## Professor Lukes Warns of History's Lessons



*Igor Lukes  
Professor of History  
& International Relations  
Frederick S. Pardee  
School of Global Studies  
Boston University  
(photo by www.bu.edu)*

Amid the celebrations of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Czechoslovak independence, Professor Igor Lukes provided a sobering analysis of the current Czech political situation. In addressing the AFoCR Directors at their annual meeting in Washington on November 2, he warned that the Czech Republic might repeat the mistakes that drove Czechoslovakia into crisis in 1938-39.

A Professor of History and International Relations at Boston University, Professor Lukes writes primarily about Central Europe. His book, *On the Edge of the Cold War: American Diplomats and Spies in Postwar Prague* (New York: Oxford, 2012), outlined the failures of American diplomacy and the Czech democratic parties on the eve of the 1948 communist coup d'état. He also serves as Honorary Consul General of the Czech Republic in Boston.

Lukes opened his talk by praising the Czech Republic's status as a reliable member of NATO, despite years of Nazi and communist occupation, and its strong relations with the United States, which are important achievements. He saw as noble and admirable, AFoCR's record of supporting the country's transition, beginning with Czech membership in NATO.

But in the vein of telling a friend that truth, even when it is painful, Lukes cited current mistakes, including lack of concern regarding neighbors and allies, submissiveness toward Russia, and unwillingness to help others in need.

As examples from the First Republic (1918-38), he cited the Czech gain at the Paris Peace Conference of significant Hungarian and Polish territories, only to have the Polish and Hungarian minorities later help Hitler collapse the country. Further, shortly after World War I, Vienna experienced famine, but the Czechs rebuffed the pleas of the Allies to supply food on an emergency basis, and the incident contributed to the country's isolation in 1938. Finally, in 1920 when the Red Army was approaching Warsaw, the Czechs refused to let military aid from the French cross their territory and even used the occasion to seize disputed territory in the Teschen region by armed force. The Czechs' self-centeredness had the result that in the fall of 1938, they faced the Third Reich, Poland, Hungary, and their German minority on their own.

In the current situation, Lukes sees the Czech political class as having lost the idealism and presumption of moral decency it had inherited from Masaryk and Havel, with the refusal to accept just fifty Syrian war orphans as an example. Former president Václav Klaus is a vocal critic of the European Union, and current president Miloš Zeman has endorsed the Kremlin's disinformation campaigns. Some influential Czech politicians even see Russia as the ramparts against western decadence.

Lukes perceives the present political elite in Prague as repeating the mistake of promoting the concept of the nation as an ethnic clan intolerant of outsiders unrelated by blood, which deprives the country of brilliant outsiders and drives a wedge between the Czech Republic and its multicultural EU allies.

He fears that some Czechs hope to exploit the advantages of EU membership while ignoring the duties, which would lead to the same outcome as in 1938: the country's retreat from its natural western allies.

Professor Lukes concluded: "History teaches that there can be no gray zone in Central Europe. Therefore, the Czech Republic's withdrawal from the EU would automatically push the country back into the Russian realm. That is what the Kremlin desires. A useful litmus test of future developments will be the Temelin project. If it goes to ROSATOM [a Russian State Corporation specializing in nuclear energy], the Czech Republic will have provided Putin with a cover for operations against NATO, and it should set the red warning lights blinking."

## The Václav Havel Award for the Advancement of Civil Society



*(l) Fred Malek, with wife Marlene, is presented the Václav Havel Award for the Advancement of Civil Society at the Award Gala, Shakespeare Folger Library, 11/1/2018 (r) Close up of the Award*

AFoCR is proud to have presented the Václav Havel Award for the Advancement of Civil Society to Fred Malek at the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Award Gala. The award's purpose is to acknowledge and acclaim those individuals who have contributed in a particularly meaningful way to the vitality of civil society and have thus promoted liberty, democracy, and civic well-being within the wider community. It honors the life and legacy of the late playwright Václav Havel (1936-2011), who is best known as one of the principal architects of the 1989 Velvet Revolution, and who became the last President of Czechoslovakia and the first President of the Czech Republic. The award is one of seven that has been authorized or awarded by the Dagmar and Václav Havel Foundation - VIZE 97, founded in 1997, and currently chaired by President Havel's widow, Mgr. Dagmar Havlová.

AFoCR is honored to have received permission to commemorate President Havel's memory, as it is clear that his ideas, personal attitudes and political prudence would remain the values firmly embedded in modern Czech history. The Award for the Advancement of Civil Society is but one of two Václav Havel awards granted in the United States, the other being the Václav Havel Award for Creative Dissent awarded by the Human Rights Foundation, a New York-based non-profit.

AFoCR Director Kristyna Driehaus played an instrumental role in securing the authority to grant the award, and she and Mrs. Havlová shared a commitment to giving a U.S. award, as Havel greatly admired the American values of civil society, which he promoted worldwide.

# Award Gala Dinner, Shakespeare Folger Library Washington, D.C. - November 1, 2018 (photos by Lillis Werder)



*Jane Harmon and Marlene Malek (l-r)*



*Zdeněk Bakala, Michaela Bakala, Tomáš Kačo, and former Czech Ambassador Martin Palouš (l-r)*



*Timothy Ruben, Gala Chair Barbara Gibian, and Christine Gibian (l-r)*



*Petula Dvorak*



*Michelle Olson, Fred Malek, and Olivia du Pont (l-r)*



*Czech Ambassador Hynek Kmoníček*



*Anna Dulock*



*AFoCR Founders Milton Cerny, Robert Doubek, and Phillip Kasik (l-r) with Fred Malek*



*U.S. Ambassador Stephen King, David Skipp of Florida International University, Martin Palouš, and former U.S. Ambassador Richard Graber (l-r)*



*Marlene Malek and AFoCR Vice President Kristyna Pellouchoud Driehaus*



*Fred Malek and Madeleine Albright*



*Marlene Malek, Zdeněk Bakala, Madeleine Albright, and Fred Malek (l-r)*

## Czech Embassy Celebrates 100 Years of Independence



*Prague  
Philharmonic  
Children's Choir at  
the Czech Embassy  
on National Day,  
10/30/18  
(Photo by  
Lillis Werder)*

With a series of films, lectures, exhibits, concerts, and other events, the Czech Embassy in Washington commemorated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Czechoslovak independence in marvelous fashion through its *Mutual Inspirations Festival 2018 – Czech Independence*. The Czechs marked a centennial of struggle for freedom as well as the establishment of a thriving democracy.

The Embassy launched *Festival 2018* with the exhibition, "The Good 100," in early September. Acknowledging that in the first century of their independence, the Czech people experienced many hard times, media students at the University of West Bohemia created a visual exhibit to highlight positive moments and events in each of the one hundred years. These exhibits include groundbreaking discoveries, artistic creation, incredible achievements, and vibrant life.

The Festival's highlight, if there could be just one, was the concert of the Czech Philharmonic orchestra on October 29 at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall. The program featured Antonín Dvořák's triumphant Seventh Symphony and a rarely heard work by the 20th-century composer Luboš Fišer. Soloist Alisa Weilerstein performed the Dvořák Cello Concerto in B minor. The concert was presented in collaboration with the Karel Komárek Family Foundation and the Washington Performing Arts Society. During the evening, David Mareček, executive director of the Czech Philharmonic, accepted the highly esteemed Antonín Dvořák Prize presented by the Czech Academy of Classic Music and given to the orchestra for its lasting contribution to Czech music. Prior to the concert Karel Komárek and Czech Ambassador Hynek Kmoníček hosted a reception, with distinguished guests including former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Czech Minister of Culture Antonín Staněk, U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic Stephen King, and former Czech Ambassador to the U.S. Petr Kolář.

On the evening of the following day, October 30, the Washington National Cathedral was filled with the angelic sound of the Prague Philharmonic Children's Choir, which performed a special selection of Czech and international classics. The choir, with children ranging in age from 12-18, has performed throughout the world. Featured were songs such as Dvořák's *Ave Maria*, Schubert's *Psalm XXII*, and Bernstein's *Gloria Tibi*.

Perhaps the most prestigious event of the Festival was the conference titled "From Masaryk to Havel and Beyond: The Struggle for Democracy," held on October 18 at the Cosmos Club, directly across the street from the Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk Memorial. The keynote speaker was Secretary Albright, and the conference marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of publication of the Washington Declaration, which heralded the birth of a new state in Central Europe that had its inspiration in

American values and ideals.

Also in October the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars opened an exhibition: "Czechs and Slovaks on Their Difficult Road to Peace and Independence." The exhibition, created in cooperation with the Military History Institute Prague and the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava, delved into period photographs and newspaper clippings, accompanied by historical analysis, to depict the enormous scale of the quest for independence, both in politics and in combat, by the Czechs, Slovaks and their supporters abroad. The opening, in collaboration with the Slovak and Czech Embassies, featured a panel discussion with distinguished historians Kevin McNamara, of the Foreign Policy Research Institute, Philadelphia, and Michal Kšinan, of the Institute of the History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

Additionally, in the cultural sphere, the Svanda Theatre, one of the Czech Republic's top theatre companies, performed a series of plays at Washington theaters, including "The Good and the True," "Pankrác '45," and "Protest"/"The Debt." Other concerts included Czech mezzo-soprano Pavlína Horáková on the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage exploring love songs and all matters of the heart that have inspired Czech and Slovak music for centuries. A concert of Modern Czech Composers at the Czech Embassy featured Czech violinist Jana Kubánková performing works of contemporary composers Ervín Schulhoff, Karel Sklenička, Klement Slavický, Martin Hybler, among others, and Prague-born singer/musician Martina Fišerová introduced her original songs in the concert "Jazz Shift" on the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage.

A significant film, entitled "Masaryk," told the story of Jan Masaryk serving as Czechoslovak Ambassador in London and desperately trying to save his homeland from Nazi occupation.

### New Leadership at NCSML



*President and CEO of  
NCSML  
Dr. Cecilia Rokusek*

Dr. Cecilia Rokusek became President and CEO of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library (NCSML) in September 2018. A native Midwesterner who is fluent in the Czech and Slovak languages, Dr. Rokusek has held top academic and administrative positions at several colleges and universities since 1976. Since 2008 she has been the Slovak Honorary Consul for Florida. During her career, she has established many academic affiliations with institutions in the Czech and Slovak Republics.

Since becoming the NCSML's President and CEO, Dr. Rokusek has traveled to the Czech and Slovak Republics, as well as to New York City and Washington, D.C., on museum business. In October at the meeting in Bratislava of more than 120 Honorary Consuls of the Slovak Republic, Dr. Rokusek was one of four Honorary Consuls awarded the Silver Medal by Miroslav Lajčák, Slovak Republic Minister of Foreign Affairs.

She also has had the opportunity to meet many NCSML members, friends, and supporters through a series of community events in the Cedar Rapids, Iowa, area.

*(AFoCR Award Gala continued from Page 1)* achieve the American dream, so that it was no surprise that he had dedicated so much of his time and energy, especially through his leadership of AFoCR, to strengthening the ties between the U.S. and the Czech Republic. She recalled the powerful experience of traveling to Prague with him for the unveiling of the new monument to Woodrow Wilson, which would not have happened without the hard work, persistence, and dedication of people like him. She concluded: "I am so grateful to call him my friend, and I am so glad that a love of Czech values and culture made our bipartisan relationship possible."

The symbol of the award was a glass sculpture, created by Ruckl Crystal of Nizbor, Czech Republic, in the form of a 12-inch circle, etched with the images of Václav Havel and Fred Malek, and enclosed in a larger crystal block. The dual images symbolize the commitment to civil society exemplified by both men.

In accepting the award, Mr. Malek thanked the gala committee, led by Barbara Gibian, and including Patricia Stack, Michelle Olson, Christine Bedoret, Robert Doubek, and Kristyna Pellouchoud Driehaus. He described growing up in the Chicago suburb of Berwyn, Illinois, where 80% of the population was of Czech descent and noted that the founders of AFoCR all hailed from the same small community. In a gracious gesture, he called upon Milton Cerny, Robert Doubek, and Phillip Kasik to the podium to share the limelight. He expressed his special pride in what had been done in West, Texas, and how it was one of his most meaningful experiences. Finally, he spoke about the successful effort to install a bust of Václav Havel in the U.S. Capitol building and expressed his appreciation to all who had attended.

The evening concluded with additional thoughts from Secretary Albright, starting with perspective on the Czech experience. She noted that in one of his first speeches, President Masaryk emphasized three basic prescriptions – for unity, moral vigilance, and patience. She believes that these prescriptions are still apt, but that it is becoming harder and harder to find leaders around the world today who are living up to those ideals, with democratic values and institutions under attack around the globe, including in the Czech Republic and the U.S. As to why this was happening, she suggested that technology, one of the forces that has brought the world closer together, has also made many people want to cling more tightly to their ethnic, cultural, and religious identities. When people feel insecure about the future, they tend to look for someone to blame, and the information revolution has enabled grievances to be shared instantly.

As to what could be done, Secretary Albright pointed to five principles of leadership connected to the spirit of Masaryk, Wilson, and Havel. She saw the best leaders as striving to bring citizens together, encouraging respect for democratic institutions, respecting a free and independent press, upholding accountability to the highest standards of truth, and possessing a gift for openness to the arguments of others. She concluded: "Democracy does provide the best chance that leaders will be held accountable, human rights respected, and mistakes corrected over time." "What must never change is our determination to stand together, to defend liberty and seek truth, and to persevere in our effort to build a better and freer life in our own countries and for all people."

The Award Gala was successful in raising substantial funds for AFoCR's new initiatives, especially to promote shared democratic values and to conduct exchange visits for U.S. Congresspeople and Czech Parliamentarians.

Representing the U.S. government at the Gala were Matthew G. Boyse, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European &

Eurasian Affairs; Daniel J. Lawton, State Department Director of Central European Affairs; Amy Carnie, Deputy Director of Central European Affairs; Jonathan P. Herzog, State Department Czech/Slovak Desk Officer; and Ricky Gill, a State Department Special Assistant.

Czech Honorary Consuls present were Brian Vanacek from Texas, Richard Pivnicka of San Francisco, and Sharon Kay Valasek from Kansas City. Representatives of U.S. Czech-related organizations included Dr. Cecilia Rokusek, the recently named president and CEO of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library in Cedar Rapids; Jean K. Hruby, President of the American Sokol; and Retta Slavik Chandler, Board Chair of the Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center.

Also among the notable guests, especially for football fans, was Pete Dawkins, a West Point classmate of Mr. Malek, who as a halfback led its football team to an undefeated season in 1958 and won the Heisman Trophy, the Maxwell Award, and was a consensus All-America selection.



*U.S. Ambassador  
to the Czech  
Republic  
Stephen B. King  
at Award Gala  
(Photo by  
Lillis Werder)*

## Tree of Liberty at Moravian College



*AFoCR Vice  
President  
Patricia Stack and  
former Director  
Peter Rafaeli at  
Moravian College*

On October 18, 2018, in celebration of the centennial of Czechoslovak independence, faculty, staff, and students at Moravian College in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, planted a linden tree as part of the Trees of Liberty project. This project was begun in October 2017 by the Czech Environment Foundation in recognition of the Czech and Slovak tradition of planting linden trees to mark special moments in their national histories. Hundreds of trees have been planted, not only in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, but also throughout the United States by descendants of earlier immigrants to this country. Moravian College was chosen because of its special historic relationship with Czech immigrants.

Moravian College boasts a proud history, dating to 1742, when a girls' school was established by members of the Moravian Brethren, a religious group that originated with the Hussite movement in Bohemia. Today it is a thriving co-educational liberal arts college where "everyone knows your name." AFoCR was represented at the event by Director Patricia Stack and former Director Peter Rafaeli.

## AFoCR Welcomes Director Jan Smilek



*AFoCR Director  
Jan Smilek*

Jan Smilek grew up in Jeseník, Czech Republic. Shortly after the Velvet Revolution, he joined Prague's office of Price Waterhouse as one of the first local employees and worked on privatization projects and the first ever international audits of Czech and Slovak financial institutions. After transferring to the U.S., he worked in PWC's offices in Miami and Washington, D.C. He then served as the CFO of several privately held and publicly traded companies. Since 2012, he has been the CFO of two medical communications companies with offices in Reston, VA, New York City, and San Francisco.

Mr. Smilek served as a director of DC Scores, a non-profit organization that runs after-school programs for D.C. public school students with a focus on soccer, community service, and creative writing. Since 2010, he has been a Vice President of the Whitetail Ski Education Foundation in Mercersburg, PA.

He earned an MBA from Georgetown University and a BA degree from the School of Economics, Banská Bystrica, Slovakia. He and his wife live in Leesburg, VA, and have two children.

Mr. Smilek provides this reflection as he joins the AFoCR Board: "My wife, Angelika, and I met as members of the student council heading the activities at our alma mater during the Velvet Revolution. Now AFoCR is planning activities to commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year, and there is no better time for me to join and help organize those events. Clearly, this anniversary has much personal meaning to me, my family, and friends."

## Annual Meeting Held

The annual meeting of AFoCR's Board of Directors was held in Washington in November. Chairman Fred Malek welcomed new Director Jan Smilek, and noted that over the past year, three new directors have joined the Board. Dr. Igor Lukes, Professor of History at Boston University, addressed the meeting as guest speaker. He marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Czech independence and presented an urgent case on the present risks to democracy in several Central European countries, including the Czech Republic. A summary of his remarks is provided separately in this issue.

The Directors received reports on 2018 activities, including improvements to the Masaryk Memorial and the 2018 Gala. They also discussed plans for 2019, including a second visit of Czech parliamentarians to Washington and projects celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution in 1989.

Officers elected to serve in 2019 are Fred Malek - Chairman, Tom Dine - President, Patty Stack - Vice President, Kristyna Driehaus - Vice President, Phil Kasik - Executive Vice President, Barbara Gibian - Treasurer, and Robert Doubek - Secretary.

## The Soul of Graffiti



*(r) Albin Polasek Museum and Sculpture Gardens in Winter Park, Florida, (l) Exhibiting Artist Jan Kaláb  
(photo credit polasek.org)*

The American Friends of the Czech Republic accepted a challenge to match a grant from the Kristyna M. Driehaus Foundation to contribute to the Albin Polasek Museum and Sculpture Gardens to support the exhibit "The Soul of Graffiti: Jan Kaláb," which opened in August 2018 and concludes with a reception on December 2, 2018.

The exhibit was planned in partnership with the Czech Embassy in Washington, D.C., to coincide with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Czechoslovak independence. The Polasek Museum and its exhibits attract approximately 5,000 visitors per year, who are exposed to Czech arts and culture in Central Florida. AFoCR and the Polasek Museum cooperated closely on the project to rebuild the Woodrow Wilson Monument in Prague, the statue for which had been originally sculpted by Albin Polasek.

## The 2018 Czech and Slovak Freedom Lecture



*Former Slovak  
Prime Minister  
Mikuláš Dzurinda*

The 18<sup>th</sup> Freedom Lecture was presented at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, DC, in November by former Slovak Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda (1998-2006), whose far-reaching governmental reforms enabled Slovakia to enter NATO and the European Union in 2004. Dzurinda's talk, "Miracles in the Heart of Europe," highlighted the challenging yet inspiring path that the Czechs and Slovaks followed over the past 100 years from independence in 1918 to successful democracies now side by side as members of NATO and the EU. He believes that relations between the Czech and Slovak peoples have historically never been better.

The Freedom Lecture is an annual event hosted at the Woodrow Wilson Center that features either a distinguished Czech or Slovak speaker. It commemorates the Velvet Revolution. AFoCR President Tom Dine was joined by Friends of Slovakia's Founding President Ted Russell to present Prime Minister Dzurinda with appreciations.

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