

PRESS RELEASE: February 28, 2006

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UECC AND UFA WELCOME NEW UKRAINIAN AMBASSADOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Jenkintown, PA – February 26, 2006. The Ukrainian Educational and Cultural Center (UECC) and the Ukrainian Federation of America (UFA) welcomed the newly appointed Ukrainian Ambassador to the United States, Dr. Oleh Shamshur, on February 26, 2006 at the UECC. The informative meeting included many representatives of local Ukrainian organizations and friends of the Ukrainian community including former Rep. Charles Dougherty, Rep. Jim Gerlach and Rep. Allyson Schwartz.

The Alexander B. Chernyk Gallery of the UECC provided the perfect setting for the intimate gathering with the new representative of Ukraine to the U.S. and the Ukrainian Philadelphia Diaspora. In native Ukrainian costumes, Voloshky Ensemble dancers greeted Ambassador Shamshur with the traditional Ukrainian greeting of bread and salt, representing hospitality and friendship. Representatives of the Ukrainian organizations were introduced to Ambassador Shamshur and had opportunity to discuss their thoughts and concerns with the Ambassador. Mrs. Vera Andryczuk, President of UFA, and Mr. Borys Zacharczuk, President of the UECC, welcomed everyone present. Bishop-elect John Bura, newly appointed by the Holy Father as an auxiliary bishop for the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, led opening prayers.

Former Congressman Charles Dougherty, who has a long history of working closely with the Philadelphia Ukrainian community, including being a founding member of the Action Ukraine Coalition, whose aim is to advance a democratic Ukraine by developing more effective channels of communication between the U.S. Congress and the Ukrainian-American community, introduced Congressman Jim Gerlach, of the 6th District of Pennsylvania, to those present. Rep. Gerlach is sponsor of H.R.1053, one of six bills introduced in the 109th Congress to graduate Ukraine from the 1974 Jackson-Vanik

Amendment, which imposed trade restrictions on the Soviet Union in response to its poor human rights policies, particularly restrictions on the emigration of religious minorities. Rep. Gerlach spoke about the legislation and his commitment to seeing H. R. 1053 passed and the trade restrictions. Congresswoman Allyson Schwartz, of the 13th District of Pennsylvania, shared her thoughts on Ukraine and the Ukrainian-American community.

Ambassador Oleh Shamshur, appointed by the President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko, a former Deputy Foreign Minister, as Ukraine's Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to the USA on December 19, 2005, in his opening remarks, thanked everyone present for such a warm welcome and proceeded to focus on a few key issues including: the graduation of Ukraine from the Jackson-Vanik amendment; the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster; the 75th anniversary of the Ukrainian Genocide of 1932-1933 and the building of a monument in Washington, DC to its victims; and, the upcoming Ukrainian parliamentary elections. His Excellency Shamshur then responded to various questions posed by members of the gathered community, including questions about voting for Ukrainian citizens in future elections of Ukraine, the first Ukrainian Ambassador to the United States, Ukraine and NATO, and Ukraine's relationship with the United States and Russia.

In closing, Mr. Bohdan Korzeniowski, Chairman of the Board of the UFA, quoted the famous Ukrainian writer Bohdan Lepky as he presented Ambassador Shamshur an Encyclopedia Set of Ukraine. V. Rev. Frank Estocin, of St. Vladimir Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral of Philadelphia, said a moving closing prayer for Ambassador Shamshur, for Ukraine and its people, and the gathered community. Ambassador Oleh Shamshur again mingled and spoke to individuals and small groups of people who expressed their thoughts, concerns and appreciation for his visit.

The Ukrainian Educational and Cultural Center would like to thank the Ukrainian Federation of America and all involved with organizing the event. Thank you to all the Ukrainian organizations that sent representatives to meet Ambassador Shamshur. A heartfelt thank you to the Ukrainian Selfreliance Credit Union of Philadelphia for its financial support. Please visit our website www.ukrainiancenterphila.org for photographs and video of this event.

The Ukrainian Educational and Cultural Center, founded in 1980, is a non-profit organization whose objective is to preserve and promote awareness of Ukrainian heritage throughout the Philadelphia community. The UECC is located at 700 Cedar Road in Jenkintown, PA 19046 and can be reached at 215-663-1166 or e-mail at contact@ukrainiancenterphila.org.

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