

IHRC

Preserving America's Cultural Treasures

The Croatian American Studies Fund

*I*nternational migration involves the history and culture of both the country of origin and the country of destination. Croatian immigration to the United States is thus an important component of the historical relationship between the Croatian and American peoples. The study of Croatian Americans inevitably involves the study of the history of both countries. Through its documentary collections and its conferences, publications, and Internet communication, the Immigration History Research Center (IHRC) facilitates understanding and appreciation of the mutual enrichment resulting from this interaction.

The IHRC, an internationally recognized leading institution for the study of migration and ethnicity, observed its 35th anniversary in the year 2000. Over these years, the center has been engaged in collecting and preserving the historical records of the great immigration from eastern and southern Europe to the United States. It now holds the richest and most extensive collection of materials for a number of ethnic groups, including Croatian Americans. Scholars from all over the country and from countries abroad, including Croatia, use these printed and manuscript documents for dissertations, articles, and books. For example, Professor Ivan Cizmic of the Institute of Applied Social Research in Zagreb, the leading historian of the Croatian emigration, has been a frequent researcher at the IHRC.

The Croatian American Collection includes such precious records as the papers of Zlatko Balokovic, famous violinist and political activist; Zlatko Kerhin, promoter of Croatian American cultural activities; Ivo Lupis-Vukic, pioneer author and journalist; and Francis Preveden, author of "History of the Croatian People." It also includes the archives of "Dramatski Zbor "Nada" of Chicago, a Croatian American dramatic society; and over 100 Croatian American newspapers and periodicals dating from the 1890s to the present. These and other materials document the history of Croatian immigrants and their descendents over the past 100 years.

Because of the unique value of this documentation, used by researchers from around the world, its care and development require the ongoing commitment of knowledgeable staff. The Croatian American Studies Fund will provide staff support, research awards, and outreach services to the Croatian American community. The first goal is the establishment of a *Croatian American Fellowship* for qualified graduate students. The fellowship will support a graduate student with an interest in and knowledge of the Croatian language, Croatian history and culture, or Croatian American history. Students pursuing research on some aspect of Croatian

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American history or relations between Croatia and the United States will be particularly encouraged to apply.

The graduate fellow would help process materials in the Croatian American collection and also be involved in further developing the collection. Most existing documentation on Croatian Americans is at this time not in a library or archive, but in social halls, organizational files, church offices, and in basements and attics of individuals. As the older generation dies, much of this material is in danger of being lost. With this endowed position, the IHRC would be better able to work with Croatian American institutions and organizations to preserve these records.

The endowed fellowship will ensure the scholarly care and attention the collection deserves and enhance possibilities for public education through media, exhibits, and curricular materials. These enhancements will contribute substantially to a great appreciation of the significance of the Croatian presence in America.

The Croatian American Fellowship is aided by generous matching opportunities. For every \$4 raised for the fellowship fund by July 2005, the IHRC will receive an additional dollar from a prestigious National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant. Also, interest from this investment is matchable on a 1:1 basis by the University of Minnesota Graduate School. Thus each dollar contributed to the Croatian American Fellowship will generate the equivalent of \$1.25 in matching funds. To obtain these matching funds, the fellowship endowment will be invested and administered by the University of Minnesota Foundation.

Establishing the Croatian American Fellowship requires an initial gift or pledge of at least \$25,000, with a total of \$150,000 needed ultimately to endow it fully. The fellowship (as well as the Croatian American Studies Fund in general) may be named after the primary, or "lead," donor.

As a major national initiative, the creation of the Croatian American Studies Fund will raise public consciousness and understanding of Croatian history and culture and constitute an investment in the future of research and scholarship pertaining to Croatian Americans..

A Challenge Grant awarded to the University by the National Endowment for the Humanities will match gifts to this endowment fund that are received by July 31, 2005, on a four-to-one basis.

For more information or to contribute: Contact the College of Liberal Arts - Office of External Relations - 225 Johnston Hall - 101 Pleasant Street SE - Minneapolis MN 55455 - (612) 625-5031 - claext@claext.tc.umn.edu - <http://www2.cla.umn.edu>.

The IHRC is located in the new Elmer L. Andersen Library - 222-21 st Avenue South, Suite 311 - Minneapolis MN 55455, on the West Bank campus. Telephone (612) 625-4800; e-mail ihrc@umn.edu; Web: <http://www.umn.edu/ihrc>

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