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Peter and Olya Savaryn Award supports Ukrainian studies at CIUS

4 March 2014 —The Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (CIUS) at the University of Alberta, together with the Canadian Foundation for Ukrainian Studies (CFUS) and Peter Savaryn, a well-known Ukrainian-Canadian activist, are pleased to announce the launch of the Peter and Olya Savaryn Award. The award is intended to support a range of scholarly and educational projects at CIUS, such as providing grants to scholars, organizing public events, and supporting publications and translations in Ukrainian studies. The terms of reference were recently finalized, and all three parties have signed an agreement. CIUS will determine the allocation of the award, while CFUS will continue to manage the fund that generates income for it. The first award will be issued this spring.

In 1996, CFUS created the Peter Savaryn Award for Contributions to the Development of Ukrainian Studies to honour Mr. Peter Savaryn for his many years of dedicated service and contributions to Ukrainian studies. In 1997, during the presentation of the award, Mrs. Savaryn generously matched its value ($5,000) with a personal donation, and it was renamed accordingly. Since then, the principal of the fund has remained intact and has now generated an amount sufficient for an annual award.

Peter and Olya Savaryn are well known in Canada for their generosity, initiatives, and dedicated community work. Peter Savaryn was born in the village of Zubrets near Buchach in Ternopil oblast. He began his studies in Ukraine but was only able to complete them after the war in Germany. He arrived in Canada in 1949. Soon afterwards, he obtained a law degree at the University of Alberta and had a professional career as a lawyer. He was active in such community organizations as the Ivan Franko School of Ukrainian Studies, Plast, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, the Ukrainian Professional and Business Club, the Multicultural Committee of the UP&BC, the Alberta Ukrainian Commemorative Society, St. Michael’s Nursing Home, and the Bishop Budka Charitable Society. Mr. Savaryn served five years as president of the World Congress of Free Ukrainians and is currently chair of the Shevchenko Scientific Society, Edmonton branch. He was one of the founders of the Canadian Foundation for Ukrainian Studies, serving as its president (1979‒83) and then as a board member until 1997.

Mr. Savaryn has also excelled in Canadian political, educational, and cultural life. He was instrumental in numerous election campaigns at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels. He served as president of the Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta, was a member of the University of Alberta Board of Governors, and acted as a representative of the board in the Senate (1972‒78). Later, Mr. Savaryn was chancellor of the University of Alberta (1982‒86) and subsequently served for twenty years аs chair of the Friends of the University of Alberta. In 1958, Mr. Savaryn was among those who inspired the provincial government to introduce Ukrainian language instruction in Alberta high schools and at the University of Alberta. Permission alone was not sufficient, however. Mr. Savaryn recognized the need for textbooks and established Gateway Publishers to prepare learning materials in the Ukrainian language. In 1971 he was also one of those who inspired Prime Minister Trudeau to proclaim Canada an officially multicultural nation. This proclamation led to the establishment of bilingual schools, the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village at Elk Island Park, and CIUS at the University of Alberta. It also motivated the erection of the world’s first memorial in honor of the victims of the Holodomor in front of the Edmonton city hall, as well as the establishment of St. Michael’s Long Term Care Centre, Verkhovyna.

Olya Savaryn (née Kobzar Prystajecky) was born in 1930 in the village of Zhyznomyr near Buchach, Ternopil oblast. She began her studies in Ukraine, continued in Germany, and completed them in Alberta. A graduate of Alberta College, she worked as a legal secretary in her husband’s office. She was active in the Ukrainian and Canadian communities, being involved in Plast (recipient of the St. George’s and Eternal Fire badges in silver) and the Ukrainian Catholic Women’s League of Canada (in charge of education and culture, honorary life member), and conducting a musical radio program for the League for twenty years. Mrs. Savaryn sang for thirty years in the Dnipro Choir, acted as secretary of the Alberta Ukrainian Commemorative Society for fifteen years, and served as secretary and president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Edmonton branch (recipient of the Shevchenko Medal and the Hetman Award from the Alberta Provincial Council of the UCC). She was also an active member of the Conservative Party of Alberta and Canada. Mrs. Savaryn accompanied and assisted her husband in his numerous projects and business trips.

“Olya and I travelled everywhere together as an inseparable pair of horses,” writes Peter Savaryn in his memoirs, *Z soboiu vzialy Ukraїnu* (We Took Ukraine with Us, 2007). “We will rest in the other world. And life is so interesting!” The Peter and Olya Savaryn Award is another accomplishment of this unique couple. It will serve the Ukrainian community in Canada and elsewhere and always remind us of the generosity, caring, and visionary mindset of its founders.

**Photo (l‒r)**: Roman Shiyan, Volodymyr Kravchenko, Peter Savaryn, Zenon Kohut, and Mykola Soroka.

The Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (CIUS) is a leading centre of Ukrainian studies outside Ukraine that engages in and support research and scholarship in Ukrainian and Ukrainian-Canadian studies. If you would like more information on the Institute, please visit our website at [www.cius.ca](http://www.cius.ca), facebook page at [www.facebook.com/canadian.institute.of.ukrainian.studies?ref=hl](http://www.facebook.com/canadian.institute.of.ukrainian.studies?ref=hl) or contact Dr. Bohdan Klid at (780) 492-2972; cius@ualberta.ca.

The Canadian Foundation for Ukrainian Studies is a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to securing funds and other resources that will promote the growth and development of Ukrainian studies in Canada in perpetuity. The work of CFUS is supported by the generosity of individuals through donations, bequests, and endowments. For further information, please visit CFUS’s website at [www.cfus.ca](http://www.cfus.ca).