



Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Chicago

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PRESS RELEASE

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Czech Foreign Minister Lubomír Zaorálek to Launch Annual Series at the University of Chicago Celebrating his Country's Enduring Partnership with the University

Chicago, IL – The Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Chicago in partnership with the University of Chicago, announces the inauguration of the “Czech Series”, an annual event celebrating the University of Chicago’s historical contribution to Czech Statehood and nation-building efforts in the last century. The Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lubomír Zaorálek, will travel to Chicago to initiate the ceremonies.

The Czech Series is designed to honor Czechoslovakia’s important ties to University of Chicago. The country’s first two presidents, Tomas Garrigue Masaryk and Edvard Benes, were professors at the University of Chicago. Their tenures were of great importance for creating and sustaining the modern Czech statehood. Masaryk wrote the outlines for his country’s first constitution, which he primarily based on the Constitution of the United States. The University supported the Czech nation in other ways - During WWII, University of Chicago sponsored scholars and students from Czechoslovakia at a time when their own universities and colleges were shut down. And again opened its doors to Czech scholars forced to escape Czechoslovakia after the 1948 Communist takeover.

“The world-renowned University of Chicago has been an incredible friend of our nation. Its support on multiple occasions during the 20th century deserves our great thanks,” said Dr. Lubomir Zaorálek, the Czech Foreign Minister.

“Additionally, this event will be a great opportunity to celebrate the unique contribution of Czechs to the history of the city of Chicago - a second home to tens of thousands of Czech immigrants” added Dr. Borek Lizec, Consul General of the Czech Republic in Chicago. “The Czech Chicago stories has been largely forgotten because the Nazi and Communist regimes tried to erase the democratic part of Czech history, but now we have an opportunity to tell it again and celebrate it.”, explained further Consul General Lizec.

Chicagoans of Czech heritage include former Mayor Anton Cermak; founder of the Chicago Bears, George Halas; founder of McDonald’s Ray Kroc; actress Kim Novak; politician Judy Baar Topinka; astronauts Eugene Cernan and James Lovell; and many others.

Guests of Honor at the Czech Series will include Mr. Daniel Diermeier, Provost of the University of Chicago, Ms. Charlotta Kotík, great-granddaughter of President Masaryk, Joann Randall Benes, relative of President Benes, and Ms. Frances Crane Manson, great-granddaughter of Chicago Industrialist Charles Crane, without whose help Czechoslovakia might not have been created in 1918.

Event Details:

Who: Mr. Lubomir Zaoralek, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, and
Mr. Borek Lizec, Consul General of the Czech Republic in Chicago

What: Inaugural Evening of **Czech Series** honoring the University of Chicago’s contribution to Czech statehood

When: Friday, September 23, 2016, 6:30 pm

Where: Cloister Club of the University of Chicago, Ida Noyes Hall, 1212 East 59th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637

Media Are invited: Please arrive before 6:30pm. Street parking available. Contact media relations at 312-622-5894