

THE KAZICKAS FAMILY ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIP

A Legacy of Cultural Exchange



Dear Jurate,

It is a pleasure to send you a report about the University of Washington Baltic Studies Program. Your donation a decade ago transformed the Program. The Kazickas Family Endowed Professorship made it possible for the UW to establish a permanent faculty position devoted to research and teaching about Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

Today, our Baltic Studies teaching staff has grown to four persons: Associate Professor Guntis Šmidchens teaches courses about Baltic history, politics and culture. Visiting Lecturer Eglė Žūrauskaitė teaches Lithuanian language and culture. Visiting Lecturer Iveta Grīnberga teaches Latvian language and culture. And Liina-Ly Roos is Teaching Assistant for Estonian language courses. These courses, other Baltic-related events, the Baltic collection at the UW Library, and student scholarships are funded from numerous sources, including ten Baltic Studies endowments totaling \$3,000,000.

I must emphasize that among these ten endowments, the Kazickas Family Professorship holds central importance. In the early years, proceeds from your endowment supplemented other funds to pay our Baltic Studies professor's salary. More recently, the endowment has supported the professor's research and other program initiatives.

I have asked Guntis Šmidchens to report on his research and program initiatives funded by the Kazickas Family Endowed Professorship in Baltic Studies, and more generally about the expanding Lithuanian portion of our Baltic Studies Program.

Please feel free to contact me if I may be of any help to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andy Nestingen". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Andrew Nestingen
Chair, Department of Scandinavian Studies

Dear Jurate,

The Kazickas Family Endowed Professorship has dramatically impacted my time at UW, funding my research-related travel and also enhancing the courses I teach. So much of this work would not have been possible without your generous support.

In my book, *The Power of Song*, I surveyed the history of Baltic singing traditions from the 18th century to the successful end of the Singing Revolution in 1991. I am now working on a sequel, tracing out developments in Baltic singing traditions over the past 25 years of independence.

Thanks to the endowment proceeds, I was able to travel to the Baltic several times in the past three years, attending choral events and festivals.

During the course of these trips, I was able to be both an observer and a participant, learning first-hand by experiencing the singer's point of view. I was also able to interview famous performers and festival organizers—a true boon to my research.



Research-related travels included visits to the National Song Festival in Latvia (2013), Estonian and Lithuanian song festivals (2014), and World Choir Games in Latvia (2014).





The 2014 trip included a lecture to students at Vilnius University, interviews published in the university newspaper and the periodical *Bernardinai*, and a translated excerpt from *The Power of Song* in the magazine *Liaudies Kultūra*.



This year's Skype lecturers are Ainė Ramonaitė and Vytis Jurkonis of Vilnius University, and Ainius Lašas, who earned his PhD degree at the University of Washington and is now teaching at the University of Bath.

The endowment proceeds have also paid for my travel to American and European conferences where I could present papers, compare my findings with other scholars and learn about the newest developments in the study of Baltic history, politics, literature and culture.

I was also thrilled to be able to share my research with students and public in Lithuania during a 2014 trip to Vilnius University.

This fall here in Seattle, I am teaching a seminar about current Baltic politics and societies.

Thanks to money from the Kazickas Professorship, I will be able to bring in guest lecturers.

Among them are three young Lithuanian scholars who will "come to class" via Skype, presenting their views on the Lithuanian Seimas elections before, during and after the elections. The Skype lectures are a taste of things to come in future years, when we plan to enhance our students' experience even further by bringing guest speakers to campus in person.



Lithuanian courses at the UW are continuing strong. This fall, our new lecturer, Eglė Žūrauskaite, has six students in her first-year Lithuanian language class.

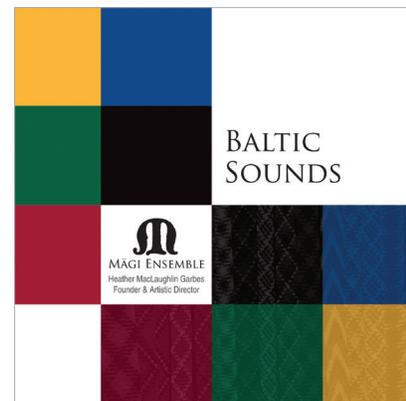
Later in the academic year she will also teach a Lithuanian culture course in English, reaching out to a broader community of students.

Students at UW study Lithuanian for a variety of reasons, from exploring their own ethnic roots to broadening their areas of specialization. Among them are, for example, a doctoral student specializing in North European film, and an undergraduate student who already has learned German, Russian and Latvian.

We are proud that one of last year's Lithuanian language students, a PhD candidate in the Linguistics Department, was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship and is currently on exchange in Vilnius.



Eglė Žūrauskaite's appointment is part of a lectureship initiated and jointly funded by Vilnius University.



Lithuanian student Heather MacLaughlin Garbes (2008 PhD, Music) went on to establish a professional musical group, the Māgi Ensemble, which is devoted to performing works by Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian composers; this year, they published their first CD.





I'll close by saying that all of the wonderful developments—guest lecturers, expanded language offerings, growing numbers of students—revolve around the fact that the Scandinavian Department now has a tenured professor in Baltic Studies. And that professorship became a reality thanks to your generous gift. Thank you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Guntis Šmidchens". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

Guntis Šmidchens
Associate Professor
Kazickas Family Endowed Professor in Baltic Studies





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