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Subject:
Date: January 7, 2020 at 4:54 PM
To:

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NFCA Hosts “40 Under 40” Award Ceremony at Rudar Croatian Club in New York

NEW YORK, NY - On Sunday, December 1st, National Federation of Croatian Americans Cultural Foundation (NFCA) held a “40 Under 40” lunch at the Rudar Club New York in Long Island City to honor nine winners from the 2019 program. This NFCA program was created to honor Croatian Americans under the age of forty, who are role models, rising stars in a career or extraordinary activists within our community. The forty winners were selected over a six-month period and were officially announced in April of 2019.

The NFCA was pleased to have eight winners attend which included Marino Patrk, Katarina Crnogorac, Diane Kolanovic- Solaja, Tena Bugarin, Davor Anic, Andrew Ciacchi, Petar Crnogorac and Vedran Solaja. John Skibola, member of Lodge 789 (NY), who performed wonderfully with his guitar at the lunch, accepted the award for a family friend, Anna Nejasmic, who was not able to attend.

Steve Rukavina, President of the NFCA, shared with the crowd that, “It's very gratifying to see first, second and even third generation Croatian Americans exhibit their pride in being Croatian in substantive real ways and through how they lead their life in the 21st century here in the United States.”

The fifty-five folks in attendance were treated to a spirited kolo dance performance by Hrvatska Ruza, managed by Valentina Zuzic, and the performance choreographed by Kata and Petar Crnogorac, two of our “40 Under 40” winners. It should be properly acknowledged the “Ruza” dance group just celebrated their milestone 25th Anniversary.

It was special, too, that 2017 winners in attendance included Tatjana Mustac and Jelena Rudela. The NFCA Board members in attendance were Lydia Antoncic, Eric Gregrich, Tom Mustac, John Kraljic and Tatjana Mustac. The special guests there included Iva Vukina, local President of the New York City Association of Croatian American Professionals chapter, and local CFU (Croatian Fraternal Union) Lodge 1981 President from New York, Anton Angelich. We also were pleased to have award-winning author Catherine Kappahn, whose recent book is entitled, *Immigrant Daughter: Stories You Never Told Me*.

It's a wonderful book to honor the memory and life of her Croatian mother, Marijana, and her journey from turmoil within Zagreb during World War II, to her immigration to the USA.

All the guests enjoyed the delicious Croatian buffet. We salute Suzy Nemaric at the Rudar Club New York and her staff in the Long Island City location that made this event ever so memorable. The menu with all the cevapi, calamari, chicken francese, pasta and sarma did satisfy all those who braved the snow and rain to attend.

Steve Rukavina

NFCA President, Lodge 760 Philadelphia, PA



AT THE “40 UNDER 40” EVENT, John Skibola (back row- left), Davor Anic, Katarina Crnogorac, Diane Kolanovic-Solaja, Vedran Solaja with Tena Bugarin, Andrew Ciacchi and Petar Crnogorac, seated in the front row at the luncheon ceremony. Marino Patrk also attended.