

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AN ENDOWED FUND

NAME OF ENDOWED FUND

Adela and John Ridzon Memorial Scholarship and Research Bursary

INTRODUCTION

The Adela & John Ridzon Memorial Scholarship Fund was established in 2000 by Pauline and Margaret Ridzon in memory of their parents: Adela (Dec. 7, 1908 - Jan. 9 1987) and John (Feb. 15, 1899 - March 29, 2000).

John and Adela were born and raised in the village of Pohronska Polhora, Slovakia near Brezno. They grew up during the Austro-Hungarian era hence both were educated to speak the Hungarian language fluently. Their early years of schooling were influenced by the education system of that time. They experienced the period of history in which the Slovak language was not recognized.

During this period Adela was chosen from among her classmates to further her studies in Hungary as she excelled scholastically. However, her parents did not encourage this and were firm that she remain and continue her education in Slovakia.

Their own parents fostered and continued to instill their ancestral, language and culture of Slovakia. Thus although exposed to and forced to learn Hungarian, their Slovak language and culture remained their rock and foundation.

At the age of seventeen, John served briefly in the Austro-Hungarian Army during World War 1. He was inspired to come to Canada because he had heard stories from others, including his own father, who had been to America three times, working in the mines, but returned each time to share his experiences. In 1926 John applied to emigrate to Canada. As there was no response to his application he decided to marry in Polhora. John and Adela were married on February 13, 1928.

Within weeks after their marriage, John received a notice that he was accepted to immigrate to Canada. Adela encouraged John to answer his immigration call. She understood and trusted that she would be able to follow John to Canada once he was able to send her funds for her journey.

John left Slovakia on June 15, 1928 sailing on the SS Arabic, Red Star Line. He arrived in Halifax on June 22, 1928 with his one wicker suitcase.

Adela remained in Slovakia, working as a nanny for the Lupac family for four years in Rimavska Sobota. On December 14, 1932 Adela joined John in Canada.

She travelled on the TSS Veendam Holland-America Line to New York, then by train to Delhi, Ontario via Halifax.

Both worked very hard until they were able to purchase their first home in Delhi. John worked on the CNR railway laying tracks. Adela worked in the local tobacco factory with many other immigrants. In the off season, John also worked there. After a few years they moved onto their own farm to take up general farming in the Delhi area.

Throughout their lives their parents supported Slovak organizations that promoted an independent Slovakia. Adela was a member of the Canadian Slovak League since 1950. John became a life member of the Slovak World Congress. They enjoyed reading Slovak magazines, periodicals and newspapers such as Maria, Ave Maria, Posol, Bulletin Svetoveho kongresu Slovakov, Literarny almanac Slovaka v Amerike, Kalendar Jednota, Kalendar kanadskej slovenskej ligy, and the Slovak newspapers Slovák v Amerike and Kanadsky Slovák.

Their parents continued to foster and instill the Slovak language and culture in their home environment. The primary language spoken at home by the children was always Slovak. The Slovak traditions of Christmas and Easter, whether in food, song, or faith were lived out by their family because of their parent's example.

John and Adela had four daughters, the eldest being Irma Iglar and Emily Halyk (5.07.1936- 29.11.2003). Education was always important, particularly to their mother who encouraged all four daughters to receive an education.

John returned to his native country once in 1979 with three of his daughters. Adela could not travel due to poor health. There he visited with his three brothers and one sister in Pohronska Polhora.

All their lives, John and Adela remained firm and dedicated in their faith and Slovak culture and language. Pauline and Margaret were inspired to honour and remember them by supporting the Chair in Slovak History and Culture at the University of Ottawa.

PURPOSE OF FUND

Provide financial assistance to undergraduate and graduate students in the Department of History who wish to study Slovak history and culture at the University of Ottawa; or to scholars who wish to do research in the Slovak Archives at the University of Ottawa.

SCHOLARSHIP DETAILS

Eligibility Criteria

The applicant must:

1. be registered in an undergraduate or graduate program at the Department of History at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ottawa;
2. be a Canadian citizen, a permanent resident, a person of protected/refugee status or an international student;
3. demonstrate an interest in studying Slovak history and culture; and
4. demonstrate academic excellence.

External applicants must demonstrate professional interest in the use of the Slovak archives at the University of Ottawa.

Value of the award: Variable

Number of awards: Variable

Frequency of the award: Annual

Level or program of study: Undergraduate or graduate

Application contact: Financial Aid and Awards Service

Application deadline: October 31

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Applications must be made through Online Scholarships and Bursaries, which can be accessed through the uoZone portal, and should include a letter (max. 500 words) written by the applicant and detailing his/her interest in studying Slovak history and culture.

External applicants must submit to the holder of the Chair in Slovak History and Culture a résumé, and a detailed research proposal specifically outlining the anticipated benefit of access to the University of Ottawa Slovak Archives, and the financial request to complete their research.