UNITED MACEDONIAN DIASPORA
ОБЕДИНЕТА МАКЕДОНСКА ДИЈАСПОРА

3RD ANNUAL

MACEDONIAN WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

INSPIRING WOMEN, IGNITING CHANGE

MARCH 7 - MARCH 9, 2025

Best Western Plus Fairfield Executive Inn
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FAIRFIELD, NEW JERSEY, U.S.A. 07004

3RD ANNUAL

MACEDONIAN WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

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WELCOME

Welcome to Inspiring Women, Igniting Change – UMD's 3rd Annual Macedonian Women's Conference! This year's event, happening on International Women's Day, aims to be a powerful, transformative experience designed to inspire women from all backgrounds to ignite change in their communities. We hope that you will become inspired, enhance your professional and personal growth, and build long-lasting, meaningful connections with a vibrant community of women committed to making a difference.

Macedonian women have long been at the heart of community-building and leadership, exemplifying resilience, innovation, and dedication in their careers. The conference will explore the evolving role of women in leadership across various sectors, such as business, finance, non-government and community organizations, healthcare, government, education, arts, and other professions.

Throughout the conference, we will be celebrating the resilience, achievements, and cultural heritage of Macedonian women together. Our thought-provoking discussions, leadership spotlights, and networking opportunities at this event are designed to foster dialogue on entrepreneurship, identity, and empowerment.

Whether you're here to connect with like-minded professionals, gain new perspectives, or reflect on your personal journey, this conference serves as an inspiring and enriching experience. Let's learn, grow, and lead together!

Thank you for your participation and support. **United, We Can!**

20 YEARS
UNITED MACEDONIAN DIASPORA
ОБЕДИНЕТА МАКЕДОНСКА ДИЈАСПОРА

AGENDA

All times listed represent Eastern Standard Time (GMT-5)

FRIDAY, MARCH 7, 2025

The Executive Lounge and Espresso Bar
Best Western Plus Fairfield Executive Inn
Fairfield, New Jersey, U.S.A.

TIME	ITEM
7:00 – 8:00 PM	**Pre-Conference Welcome Reception** Come grab a drink for a casual network gathering to kick off UMD's 3rd Annual Macedonian Women's Conference

SATURDAY, MARCH 8, 2025

Essex Meeting Room
Best Western Plus Fairfield Executive Inn
Fairfield, New Jersey, U.S.A.

TIME	ITEM
8:15 – 9:00 AM	**Breakfast**
9:00 - 9:10 AM	**Welcome Remarks** UMD Board Member & Global Secretary Dr. Kristina Bundra
9:00 - 9:40 AM	**Entrepreneurship, Family, and Resilience:** A Keynote Conversation with Founder of Quick Fit Bites Aleksandra Miloseska
9:40 - 9:50 AM	**Remarks from Inspiring Women Leaders in Government** • Macedonian President Gordana Siljanovska Davkova (Virtual Recording) • Macedonian Deputy Minister of European Affairs Viktorija Trajkov (Virtual Recording)
9:50 - 11:30 AM	**Panel 1: Between Different Worlds - Macedonian Cultural Journeys** • ***From Kumanovo to the Midwest: My Journey as an International Student in the U.S.*** – Anastasija Mladenovska, Political Science, Accounting & Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies Undergraduate at Miami University, Oxford, OH • ***But Where Are You Really From: A Closer Look at Second-Generation Immigrants*** – Dr. Natasha Garrett, Director, International Student Services, La Roche University • ***Leading Through Advancing Cultural Heritage*** – Dr. Kristina Bundra, Scientific Communications Lead, Inhibrx Biosciences, Inc. and Board Member & Global Secretary, United Macedonian Diaspora • ***Giving Back to our Motherland: Orthodox Youth Summer Camp*** – Konstantina M. Vanevski, MD, Principal Medical Director, Drug Safety Leader and Co-Founder Orthodox Youth Summer Camp (Virtual)

SATURDAY, MARCH 8, 2025 (CONT.)

TIME	ITEM
11:30 AM - 12:10 PM	**Speaker Inspiration Session** ***The Dance of Success: Mastering Balance, Discipline, & Passion*** – Irena Bozdogan, President, CEO and Co-Founder of Health Genesis Corporation (Virtual)
12:10 - 12:30 PM	**Leader Spotlight** ***Breaking Barriers: From the Balkans to the Stars*** - Martina Dimoska, Published Research Scholar, Analog Astronaut & Founder of the International Space Alliance (Virtual)
12:30 - 1:15 PM	**Lunch and Business Card Exchange** With Special Macedonian Musical Performance by Andrea Georgiana Stancu
1:15 - 1:30 PM	**Leader Spotlight** ***Strengthening of the Macedonian Olympic Spirit*** - Divna Pesic Grozdanov, President of the Macedonian Olympic Diaspora for USA and Canada
1:30 - 2:30 PM	**Entrepreneurship/Financial Empowerment Session** ***Financial Literacy and Road to Financial Health*** - Julie Bogatinoska, Vice President, Bank Secrecy Act Officer, OceanFirst Bank & Vida Bundra, Owner and Founder Smart Money, LLC and Financial Coach
2:30 - 2:45 PM	Break
2:45 - 3:05 PM	**Leader Spotlight** ***Life is a Patchwork Quilt: Seizing Every Opportunity*** – Divna Popovska, Lifelong Entrepreneur
3:05 - 4:20 PM	**Panel 2: Women in Leadership: Navigating and Shaping the Environments We Lead In** • ***The Power of Authentic Leadership: Finding Strength in Our Stories*** - Olivia Vieceli, Founder and President of Career Launch Consulting, LLC • ***Empowered Women, Empower Women: Women's Leadership Development, Work-Life Balance*** - Natalia Doshlakoski, Senior Key Account Manager in SGS, Consumer Testing, Inspection, Certification • ***The Emergence of Women in Leadership*** - Ivana Karataseva, Human Rights Learner and Avid Traveler
4:20 - 4:40 PM	**Leader Spotlight** ***Leading with Purpose: From Diplomacy to Wall Street to Entrepreneurship –*** Eliza Prendzov, CEO & Founder, Prend Capital and President, American Balkan Chamber of Commerce
4:40 - 4:45 PM	**Remarks on Inspiring Women, Igniting Change** Ambassador Ljubica Z. Acevska – Former Ambassador for the Republic of Macedonia to the United States and Honorary Advisory Council Member, United Macedonian Diaspora
4:45 - 5:00 PM	**Closing Remarks** UMD Board Member & Global Secretary Dr. Kristina Bundra
6:00 - 9:00 PM	**Post-Conference Dinner (Extra Fee Required)** ***Deja Vu Restaurant & Bar,*** 50 River Dr., Garfield, New Jersey, U.S.A.

SUNDAY, MARCH 9, 2025

TIME	ITEM
9:00 - 10:00 AM	**Farewell Breakfast** ***PJ's Coffee of New Orleans,*** 437 US-46, Fairfield, New Jersey, U.S.A.

SPEAKERS & CONTENT



KEYNOTE REMARKS

ALEKSANDRA MILOSESKA

Founder, Quick Fit Bites
Conference Planning Committee

Aleksandra Miloseska is the founder of Quick Fit Bites, a mother of three, and a passionate advocate for empowering women in business. She holds a business degree in Finance and Economics with a Master's in Marketing. Growing up in Macedonia, Aleksandra was surrounded by her parents' restaurant business, where food was at the heart of daily life and came directly from nature. She learned firsthand the dedication, hard work, and resilience required to nurture dreams and navigate the ups and downs of entrepreneurship. With a deep understanding of the importance of eating healthy, nutritious meals made from nature-born ingredients—free from additives—Aleksandra developed a strong appreciation for wholesome, clean food. Balancing a demanding career in corporate finance with motherhood, she struggled to find quick, wholesome snacks made from simple, nutritious ingredients. This personal challenge led her to create Quick Fit Bites—convenient, wholesome snacks made with transparent, natural ingredients that support a healthy lifestyle.

Entrepreneurship, Family, and Resilience: A Keynote Conversation with Founder of Quick Fit Bites
Aleksandra Miloseska

Explores Miloseska's journey as an immigrant and entrepreneur, highlighting how her Macedonian heritage influenced her business mindset and the challenges she faced in starting and growing Quick Fit Bites. It also addresses how she balances her roles as a mother, wife, and business owner, while prioritizing self-care. Finally, Miloseska seeks to provide advice for other women, particularly Macedonian women, who are aspiring to pursue their dreams.

REMARKS FROM INSPIRING WOMEN LEADERS IN GOVERNMENT



GORDANA SILJANOVSKA DAVKOVA

Macedonian President

Gordana Siljanovska Davkova, born in Ohrid, is a prominent jurist and university law professor. She is serving as the 6th Macedonian President since May 2024, becoming the country's first female president. Gordana has a distinguished academic career, having taught constitutional law and political systems at the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. She also held significant roles, including being a member of the Constitutional Commission and serving as a minister in the early 1990s.

In 2019, she ran for president but was defeated by Stevo Pendarovski. However, in a rematch during the 2024 presidential elections, she triumphed with a decisive victory, marking a milestone in the nation's political history. Throughout her career, Gordana has contributed extensively to the fields of constitutional law and political systems, publishing over 200 scholarly works.



DR. VIKTORIJA TRAJKOV

Macedonian Deputy Minister of European Affairs

Dr. Viktorija Trajkov was born in Bitola. She is the Deputy Minister of European Affairs, as well as the Deputy Chief Negotiator with the EU. She holds a degree in English and Spanish, and a master's degree in the field of public relations on the topic "The influence of public relations on political campaigns." She has is a PhD in economics at the University of St. Kliment Ohridski, Bitola in the field of marketing and branding.

Viktorija serves as an associate professor of International Economy and Political Marketing at the University of Skopje. She speaks English, Spanish and Italian. Additionally, she is the author of several domestic and international scientific works.

Remarks from Inspiring Women Leaders in Government
Gordana Siljanovska Davkova & Dr. Viktorija Trajkov

Gordana and Viktorija's remarks will highlight their roles as women leaders in the Macedonian government and emphasize the significance of the distinguished speakers at UMD's 3rd Annual Macedonian Women's Conference. They will underscore how these influential women, through their diverse career paths, inspire others and ignite meaningful change.

PANEL 1: BETWEEN DIFFERENT WORLDS: MACEDONIAN CULTURAL JOURNEYS

The Macedonian experience is one of movement, adaptation, and identity negotiation. This panel brings together individuals whose journeys have taken them across borders, whether as first-generation immigrants, international students, or cultural advocates. Each speaker offers a unique perspective on the challenges and triumphs of navigating multiple worlds, preserving heritage, and building connections across cultures. Through personal narratives and professional insights, the panel explores the evolving nature of Macedonian identity in a globalized world.



ANASTASIJA MLADENOVSKA

Political Science, Accounting & Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies Undergraduate at Miami University, Oxford, OH
Conference Planning Committee

Anastasija Mladenovska is a third-year student at Miami University, Ohio, studying Political Science, Accountancy, and Russian Studies. Originally from Kumanovo, Macedonia, she focuses on international relations, geopolitics, and diaspora studies in the Balkans. She has interned with the Greater Dayton Volunteer Lawyers Project, tutors Russian, and serves as a Resident Assistant. Passionate about leadership and international law, she also advocates for her Macedonian heritage. In her free time, she enjoys crosswords, poetry, and puzzles.

From Kumanovo to the Midwest: My Journey as an International Student in the U.S.
Anastasija Mladenovska

Explores the challenges and triumphs of cultural adaptation, academic growth, and personal resilience. Through research, leadership, and community engagement, she shares how embracing identity and overcoming obstacles can lead to empowerment. Her story offers valuable insights on building confidence, finding support, and transforming challenges into opportunities for growth.



DR. NATASHA GARRETT

Director, International Student Services, La Roche University
Conference Planning Committee

Natasha Garrett, PhD was born in Skopje, Macedonia. She obtained her Master's degree in English Literature from Duquesne University and her PhD in Social and Comparative Analysis in Education from the University of Pittsburgh. She is currently the Director of International Student Services and an adjunct professor at La Roche University. She is a published author of academic articles, poetry and personal essays, focusing on the themes of cross-cultural living. Her collection of personal essays, Motherlands, exploring the experiences of modern migrants, was published in 2018 and adopted as a first-year reading at the Westmoreland County Community College for the 2019-2020 academic year.

In 2014, the United Macedonian Diaspora named Dr. Garrett to its first-ever 40 Under 40 list, which recognizes Macedonian leaders and community role models who have excelled in their professions. In 2015, she was admitted into the Distinguished Alumni Circle at La Roche University.

But Where Are You Really From: A Closer Look at Second-Generation Immigrants
Dr. Natasha Garrett

Explores how second-generation immigrant identity is a complex but under-examined phenomenon that goes beyond the dichotomy of resistance/belonging. This presentation will take a closer look at the role of language, family ties, travel and history in shaping one's sense of belonging. It will focus on Macedonian-Americans and the ways in which they negotiate the linguistic and cultural space between their parents' world and their own reality.

PANEL 1: BETWEEN DIFFERENT WORLDS: MACEDONIAN CULTURAL JOURNEYS



DR. KRISTINA BUNDRA

Scientific Communications Lead, Inhibrix and Board Member & Global Secretary, United Macedonian Diaspora
Conference Planning Committee

Dr. Kristina Bundra comes from a family with Macedonian and Serbian roots. She earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from MCPHS University in Boston, Massachusetts, where she graduated summa cum laude and was a distinguished member of the Rho Chi Society (Pharmaceutical Honor Society). She went on to complete a Postdoctoral Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowship Program through Rutgers University. She has since spent most of her professional career in the pharmaceutical industry, working on scientific advances in the Oncology and Rare Disease landscape. She has held positions growing in leadership at Bristol-Myers Squibb, Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals, and currently Inhibrx. She has completed vast executive leadership training from Columbia University, NYU Stern School of Business, and Yale University.

Kristina has a longstanding history of being involved and has taken an active role with organizations she is passionate about including the National Organization for Rare Disorders, patient advocacy organizations, and the Novak Djokovic Foundation. She is very active in the Macedonian community and regularly participates in religious and cultural events. Kristina is the Global Secretary and board member of the United Macedonian Diaspora and believes in the value and importance of maintaining the integrity of her heritage, which has inspired her to take a more active role and give back.

Leading Through Advancing Cultural Heritage
Dr. Kristina Bundra

Explores the powerful intersection of scientific innovation, leadership, and cultural advocacy. Drawing on Kristina's experiences in the biopharmaceutical industry and her interest in global advocacy, she aims to inspire others to make an impact throughout their own career paths while also remembering the importance of cultural preservation.



KONSTANTINA M. VANEVSKI, MD

Principal Medical Director, Drug Safety Leader and Co-Founder Orthodox Youth Summer Camp

Konstantina M. Vanevski, MD, is a proud Macedonian Orthodox wife and mother, as well as a senior-level pharmaceutical professional dedicated to advancing therapeutic modalities and addressing areas of high medical need. Passionate about faith, heritage, and community, she actively supports the growth of Macedonian Orthodox traditions and fosters fellowship among youth through the Summer Youth Orthodox Camp.

She is a dedicated member of the Orthodox Missionary Center: Sv. Nektarij Bitolski and the Humanitarian Organization Utesitel, Bitola, contributing to charitable and faith-based initiatives.

Giving Back to our Motherland: Orthodox Youth Summer Camp
Konstantina M. Vanevski, MD

Highlights Konstantina's journey returning home and giving back. She will discuss the remarkable humanitarian work Humanitarian Organization Utesitel and Orthodox Missionary Center Sv. Nektarij Bitolski, focusing on the successful organization of the Summer Orthodox Youth Camp. Over the past two years, this camp has grown significantly, bringing together children from diverse backgrounds for a week of enriching educational and spiritual activities. Discover how these efforts are making a positive impact on the community and fostering a sense of unity and purpose among the youth.



SPEAKER INSPIRATION SESSION

IRENA BOZDOGAN

President, CEO and Co-Founder of Health Genesis Corporation

Irena Bozdogan is the President, CEO, and Co-Founder of Health Genesis Corporation, where she has been leading the company since 2019 after nearly two decades as Vice President. She is also the President and CEO of Biophix, a supplement brand dedicated to health and wellness. A visionary entrepreneur, Irena is committed to inspiring others to reach their full potential through leadership, personal growth, and her example. Beyond business, Irena is a passionate ballroom dancer, training at Fred Astaire Dance Studio since 2022. Her dedication to excellence—both in the boardroom and on the dance floor—reflects her belief in discipline, resilience, and lifelong learning.

The Dance of Success: Mastering Balance, Discipline & Passion
Irena Bozdogan

Explores the journey of entrepreneurship, highlighting the pivotal roles of family, faith, and resilience in building a successful business. Irena will discuss innovative strategies in business transformation, including cutting-edge technologies and efficient manufacturing processes. Additionally, it emphasizes the significance of community outreach and the power of providing international aid. Her presentation chronicles her challenges and triumphs, all while passionately pursuing the art of ballroom dancing. She aims to inspire others to achieve their goals while also pursuing their passions.



LEADER SPOTLIGHT

MARTINA DIMOSKA

Published Research Scholar, Analog Astronaut & Founder of the International Space Alliance

Martina Dimoska is a pioneering space researcher, analog astronaut, and the visionary founder of the International Space Alliance (ISA). Born and raised in the Balkans, she overcame significant barriers to forge a career in space exploration, advocating for global STEM education and innovation. With a background in aerospace research, she has contributed to advancements in 3D printing for space habitats, sustainability in human spaceflight, and deep-space exploration technologies.

Martina has earned international recognition, including the Emerging Space Leader award, and has collaborated with NASA under a Space Act Agreement, bridging research with real-world applications. Through ISA, she is committed to expanding access to space and STEM opportunities for underrepresented communities worldwide. Her work continues to inspire the next generation of scientists, engineers, and explorers.

Breaking Barriers: From the Balkans to the Stars
Martina Dimoska

Explores how resilience, innovation, and determination can transform the impossible into reality. Through a personal journey of overcoming geographic, societal, and industry barriers, this speech highlights the challenges and triumphs of forging a path in space exploration. Backed by real-world experiences and insights into space technology, it challenges attendees to defy limitations, embrace STEM opportunities, and reach for the stars—because barriers are meant to be broken.



LEADER SPOTLIGHT

DIVNA PESIC GROZDANOV

President of the Macedonian Olympic Diaspora for USA & Canada

Divna Pesic Grozdanov, born in Kavadarci, Macedonia, is an accomplished abstract expressionist artist and former professional rifle shooter. She holds a degree in Philology and a Master's in Economic Science. Divna lives and works in the USA, where she creates her unique style of painting, DIVNISM, a form of abstract expressionism. Her vibrant oil paintings, crafted with fingers and spatula, blend rational and irrational elements, showcasing her intuitive and imaginative approach. Divna's artwork has earned international recognition, with her paintings collected globally, including one acquired by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. She has held 20 major exhibitions worldwide in cities such as New York, Miami, Washington, Skopje, Paris, Istanbul, and more. She has been named the best abstract expressionist in the world by AAA and the World Art Awards.

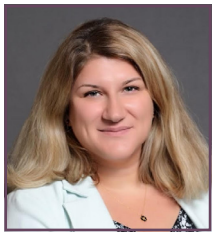
In addition to her art career, Divna was a professional rifle shooter for 25 years, winning numerous titles, including twice being an Olympian and twice Balkan champion. She holds 37 national records in air rifle and 22-caliber sport rifle disciplines. Her disciplined and focused mindset from shooting has deeply influenced her art and personal life.

Divna is currently the President of the Macedonian Olympic Diaspora for the USA and Canada, where she works to unite Macedonian youth athletes, enhance the value of Macedonian sport, and bring international recognition to the national team. Learn more about Divna at www.divnapesic.com.

Strengthening of the Macedonian Olympic Spirit
Divna Pesic Grozdanov

Explores how the power of sport can unite communities, build resilience, and elevate national pride. Through a personal journey of artistic and athletic achievement, Divna Pesic Grozdanov shares her story of overcoming challenges and achieving success, both in the world of abstract expressionism and as an Olympian. This speech highlights the importance of discipline, focus, and perseverance, and how these values translate into both sports and art. By discussing the mission of the Macedonian Olympic Diaspora, Divna emphasizes the potential to strengthen Macedonia's Olympic spirit and inspire future generations of athletes, proving that the unifying power of sport can bring a nation together, promote peace, and cultivate a winning spirit.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP/FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT SESSION



JULIE BOGATINOSKA

Vice President, Bank Secrecy Act Officer, OceanFirst Bank
Conference Planning Committee

Juliana Koloska-Bogatinoska, MBA is currently the Vice President and BSA Officer at OceanFirst Bank in New Jersey. Juliana is an experienced BSA Officer with a proven track record in developing, implementing, and managing strategic BSA/AML and OFAC programs. She leads a team of analysts, managers, and officers, with over 15 years of combined experience in investigations, fraud mitigation, risk management, and regulatory compliance. Juliana has experience in implements fraud detection, email surveillance, and AML software, recently spearheading a new digital customer outreach platform to support future customer growth to effectively reduce regulatory risk and reputation, while allowing the front-line to re-focus time on revenue-driving activities.

Juliana received her Bachelor's Degree in International Business from Berkeley College in Manhattan in 2008. During her studies, she interned in the Anti-Money Laundering/Compliance Department at Spencer Savings Bank in Elmwood Park, NJ. This experience sparked her interest in combating financial crime. She pursued her passion further by completing an MBA in Economic Crime and Fraud Management from Utica College in 2014. Additionally, Juliana is a Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialist (CAMS) and a Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE).

Juliana's parents immigrated to the USA with limited resources, driven by the desire to pursue the American Dream. They instilled in her and her brother the values of hard work, determination, and the importance of family. The loss of her father during her early teens made her stronger and more empathetic, shaping her personal and professional life.

Juliana is married to her supportive husband, Zdravko, and is a proud mother to her daughter, Sophia, and son, Georgi, who inspire her daily. She cherishes her Macedonian heritage, finding joy in the colorful costumes, beautiful churches, and memorable music that remind her of her childhood. Her father's clarinet playing to Macedonian music at home remains a cherished memory.

Juliana advises the next generation of young Macedonians to value their heritage and know their worth. She encourages them to cherish conversations with their elders to learn about the history, values, and traditions of Macedonia, emphasizing that heritage is their history.



VIDA BUNDRA

Owner and Founder, Smart Money, LLC and Financial Coach

Vida Bundra has more than 20 years of experience in the financial industry where she gained extensive knowledge about banking and finances. She was responsible for effectively and efficiently managing a full size branch and helping her customers manage finances and grow wealth. She is a graduate of the Connecticut School of Finance and Management and has received many certifications.

As the Owner and Founder of Smart Money, LLC, Vida is dedicated to helping people achieve their financial goals. She helps her clients to build strong financial knowledge so they can better themselves.

Financial Literacy and Road to Financial Health
Julie Bogatinoska & Vida Bundra

Will break down essential wealth management strategies, helping you build a secure financial future with confidence. Learn from Julie and Vida's expertise to become equipped to set yourself up for financial success.



LEADER SPOTLIGHT

DIVNA POPOVSKA

Lifelong Entrepreneur

Divna Popovska is a lifelong entrepreneur; from construction to coffee, she has found success in various industries. Born in Strumica, Macedonia, Divna came to the United States in the late nineties and studied in New Orleans, Louisiana. After moving to New Jersey and starting a family, Divna went on to become the principal owner of Pope Contracting Inc., a general contractor construction company based in Clifton, New Jersey. Pope Contracting was a staple of the New York City construction community, working on numerous projects with the New York City Housing Authority and New York City School Construction Authority. As Principal Owner, Divna's work and contribution to professional development led to her certifications as a Women Business Entity in New York City and New Jersey.

Wanting to slow down from her hectic work as Principal owner of Pope Contracting, Divna decided the next step for her would be found in her love of New Orleans. Divna opened and now manages a PJ's Coffee of New Orleans franchise location in Fairfield, New Jersey, as her way to keep busy in her "early retirement" phase. Along with PJ's, Divna is an avid investor in real estate and other industries.

Life is a Patchwork Quilt: Seizing Every Opportunity
Divna Popovska

Coming from Piperevo, Strumica Macedonia, Life is a Patchwork Quilt: Seizing Every Opportunity, explores how Divna Popovska has stayed grounded in her roots while expanding her professional portfolio. From being the principal owner of Pope Contracting, Inc., a certified Woman Business Entity, to a coffee shop franchise with PJs Coffee of New Orleans and her multitude of real estate investments, Divna has never shied away from a new idea or opportunity.

PANEL 2: WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP NAVIGATING AND SHAPING THE ENVIRONMENTS WE LEAD IN

This panel explores the evolving role of women in leadership and the strategies they use to navigate and shape the environments they lead in. Discussions will highlight the power of authentic leadership, emphasizing how personal experiences and resilience contribute to strong leadership styles. The conversation will also examine the importance of leadership development, mentorship, and work-life balance, shedding light on how empowered women can uplift others. Additionally, the panel will reflect on the broader emergence of women in leadership and the shifting dynamics that create more opportunities for women to step into influential roles.



OLIVIA VIECELI

Founder and President of Career Launch Consulting, LLC

For over 20 years, Olivia Vieceli (Olivera Zorovska) has empowered women to break through barriers and embrace their full leadership potential. As a Macedonian immigrant to the United States, she intimately understands the unique challenges and opportunities facing women. Rising through the ranks to Director and VP-level roles in male-dominated industries such as publishing, utilities and automotive, Olivia defied expectations and paved her own way up the corporate ladder. This experience fuels her passion for helping other women achieve their career aspirations. Through her HR consulting practice, Career Launch Consulting, LLC; she specializes in helping women develop unwavering confidence and navigate workplace obstacles with resilience and grace. She has guided countless women to create targeted career plans that lead to their desired roles, empowering them to confidently advocate for themselves, and step into leadership positions. Olivia is passionate about fostering a supportive community where women can thrive and achieve their leadership aspirations.

The Power of Authentic Leadership: Finding Strength in Our Stories
Olivia Vieceli

Explores how embracing one's unique background fosters stronger leadership. Through a personal journey of breaking cultural and workplace barriers, this speech highlights the power of authenticity, resilience, and diversity in leadership. Backed by data, it challenges attendees to own their stories and lead with confidence.



NATALIA DOSHLAKOSKI

Senior Key Account Manager in SGS, Consumer Testing, Inspection, Certification

Natalia Doshlakoski is a self-motivated individual who implements academic qualifications and real life experiences in the competitive field of the corporate world to achieve success in domestic or multinational environments of regulatory compliance. She stands behind the purpose to enable a better, safer and more interconnected world by helping businesses work efficiently, deliver with quality, and trade with integrity and trust.

Empowered Women, Empower Women: Women's Leadership Development, Work-Life Balance
Natalia Doshlakoski

Explores Natalia's years of experience in Logistics, Sourcing, Manufacturing and Regulatory Compliance in a presentation that she hopes will guide and open the door of understanding that we are all connected in one life cycle, from the consumer standpoint back to the landfill. Her motto, "We live once, let's make a difference."

PANEL 2: WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP NAVIGATING AND SHAPING THE ENVIRONMENTS WE LEAD IN



IVANA KARATASEVA

Human Rights Learner and Avid Traveler

Ivana Karataseva was born in Skopje, Macedonia, immigrating to the United States in 2007 and growing up in New York City and the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. She recently graduated summa cum laude from East Stroudsburg University, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Philosophy with a minor in Sociology. During her college career, Ivana engaged with organizations on and off campus, participating in the Peer Mentor Program, political campaigns, and a human rights internship through Tilting Futures, a nonprofit. While traveling to fifteen countries, interning at an education nonprofit in South Africa, and studying Chinese philosophy in China, Ivana deepened her passion for human rights, international law, and understanding people and systems. She believes it is through understanding one another and the systems we coexist in that true sustainable change can be achieved.

The Emergence of Women in Leadership
Ivana Karataseva

While humans are all constructed with the same biological components, the byproducts are unique multifaceted individuals. Similar to biology, the emergence of leadership is a result of certain societal and personal "building blocks." But what are the societal and personal experiences and characteristics in women's lives that contribute to the development of leadership roles and qualities? In this qualitative research presentation, we will explore potential factors that foster leadership in women, drawing from four interviews - conducted by Dr. Kelly McKenzie from East Stroudsburg University - representing a diverse group of female leaders.



LEADER SPOTLIGHT

ELIZA PRENDZOV

CEO & Founder, Prend Capital and President, American Balkan Chamber of Commerce

Eliza Prendzov is a distinguished leader and innovator in partnerships, sustainable finance, and infrastructure. Eliza is the CEO and Co-Founder of Prend Capital, a boutique firm in New York focused on impact finance and sustainability advisory across industries and spanning the global public and private markets. She is an expert in global partnership building and has over 20 years of experience in consulting, asset management, finance, impact finance, sustainability, government and multilateral relations. Eliza is also the President of the American Balkan Chamber of Commerce, an organization dedicated to promoting economic growth, trade, and cultural exchange between the United States and the Balkan region.

Eliza's prior experiences include Merrill Lynch, Morgan Stanley (formerly Smith Barney), the United Nations, and the Biden Presidential Campaign. Eliza holds a Master of International Affairs in International Finance and Banking from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, and is a PhD Candidate in Economics at American University College Skopje. Eliza and her family reside in New York.

Leading with Purpose: From Diplomacy to Wall Street to Entrepreneurship
Eliza Prendzov

Shares a personal journey of navigating different career paths, emphasizing the importance of purpose, resilience, and reinvention. It highlights the transformative power of leading with passion and purpose, from global diplomacy to the high-stakes world of finance, with a focus on giving back.

REMARKS ON INSPIRING WOMEN, IGNITING CHANGE



AMBASSADOR LJUBICA Z. ACEVSKA

Former Ambassador for the Republic of Macedonia to the United States and Honorary Advisory Council Member, United Macedonian Diaspora

Ambassador Ljubica Z. Acevska served as the Republic of Macedonia's Ambassador to the United States between 1991-2000. During her time representing the Republic of Macedonia, she successfully established bilateral relations between Macedonia and the United States, and advocated for the U.S. to send troops as U.N. peacekeepers to Macedonia's northern border in the early 90s. She also oversaw Macedonia's membership in the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, and served as a Macedonian Delegate to the United Nations General Assembly.

After her service as Ambassador, Acevska went on to become a Public Policy Scholar at the prestigious Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. From 2005-2008, she was a co-host of the DC-TV talk show "Conversations," focusing on international issues. In addition to her current public speaking engagements and international business development consulting work, Acevska is Co-Founder and President of Pencils 4 Kids International, an organization that provides much-needed school supplies to children worldwide. Acevska has served on numerous Boards, and was a founding partner of Gulf Enterprises, which deals in international trade, consulting and development in the Arabian Gulf, with offices in Washington, D.C and Abu Dhabi.

Acevska was born in Capari, Macedonia. She came to the United States with her family at the age of nine, and grew up in Mansfield, Ohio. Acevska completed her undergraduate and postgraduate studies at The Ohio State University in the field of international studies. She attended Harvard University twice, once at the John F. Kennedy School of Government for a fellowship in Leadership in the 21st Century: Chaos, Conflict and Courage, and later at the Harvard Business School for an Executive Development Program sponsored by the World Bank.

SPECIAL MACEDONIAN MUSICAL PERFORMANCE



ANDREA GEORGIANA STANCU

UMD welcomes the talented 13 year old Macedonian born in Romania, Andrea Georgiana Stancu, for her performance of three popular Macedonian songs. We are excited to hear her beautiful voice and enjoy her guitar playing skills.

CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Conference Planning Committee for their dedication and hard work in making UMD's 3rd Annual Macedonian Women's Conference, Inspiring Women, Igniting Change, a resounding success. Their commitment, creativity, and tireless efforts were essential in planning this year's event. We are grateful for all their passion and collaboration in creating an inspiring and impactful experience for all attendees.

Emily Abramczyk
Julie Bogatinoska
Ema Brown
Dr. Kristina Bundra
Dr. Natasha Garrett
Aleksandra Miloseska
Anastasija Mladenovska



EMILY ABRAMCZYK

Senior Global Policy and Advocacy Officer, ***Conference Planning Committee***

Emily Abramczyk was born in Melbourne, Australia, but grew up in Rochester Hills, Michigan. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and History from Albion College, where she graduated summa cum laude along with Honors from the Prentiss M. Brown Honors College. She also completed a concentration from the Gerald R. Ford Institute in Leadership in Public Policy and Service at Albion College. She is a member of the Michigan Phi Beta Kappa chapter, which recognizes students in the top 10% of their graduating class, the Pi Sigma Alpha National Political Science Honors Society, the Phi Alpha Theta National History Honors Society, and Mortar Board, a national honors society dedicated to academics, leadership, and service. She was also happy to have had the opportunity to serve as the President of Model United Nations and History club at Albion College during her senior year.

During the summer of 2022, Emily interned with UMD as one of their International Policy and Diplomacy Fellows. Through the internship, she learned more about Macedonian culture, history, and politics, as well as Macedonian-American contributions within the United States, especially in Michigan. She is excited to be back with UMD as the Senior Global Policy and Advocacy Officer, so she can continue to further UMD's mission to advocate for and promote the interests of the Macedonian community worldwide.

Emily is also passionate about her research on sports diplomacy and sportswashing where she has explored how sports, history, and politics intertwine to impact international relations. Besides academics, she is an avid golfer and loved playing Division 3 golf for Albion College.



EMA BROWN

Assistant Director of Development, College Success Foundation, DC
Conference Planning Committee

Ema (Reshkoska) Brown brings a wealth of experience and a passion for development to her role as the Assistant Director of Development at the College Success Foundation - DC. With a distinguished background as the Director of Advancement and Development at the United Macedonian Diaspora, Ema is dedicated to advancing educational opportunities and fostering growth within the community. Three years ago, she launched UMD's Macedonian Women's Conference with the goal to bring Macedonian women together to celebrate their incredible achievements. Originally from Ohrid, Macedonia, Ema's journey to the United States was propelled by her talent in basketball. A former player for the Macedonian National Team, she earned a full scholarship at Radford University, where she played Division I basketball and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology in 2013. Transitioning her love for basketball into coaching, Ema also holds a Master's degree in Social Science from Morehead State University.

Beyond her professional achievements, Ema is deeply involved in her local community, coaching boys' varsity High School basketball in Maryland. Her commitment

extends to her family life, as she and her husband Aaron, both former student-athletes, share a love for sports that comes alive during March Madness and football season. Together, they are proud parents of two daughters, Sasha (4 years) and Luna (2 years).

ABOUT UMD

Founded in 2004, the United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD) is the leading non-governmental, non-partisan, non-political educational advocacy organization promoting the interests of Macedonians and Macedonian communities worldwide. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., UMD's presence is felt throughout the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Australia, with membership spanning six continents.

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UNITED MACEDONIAN DIASPORA
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