

СЛІДАМИ БУДІВНИКІВ КАНАДИ

# Senator Paul Yuzyk – A Vision of Diversity Celebrated "Architect of Multiculturalism" *by Luba Fedorkiw*



Senator Paul Yuzyk

On June 24, 2017, posthumously, Senator Paul Yuzyk was awarded the Canadian Ethnocultural Council Award for Multiculturalism. His active profile in Ukrainian academia at the University of Manitoba (Slavic Dept), authorship on historical Ukrainian Canadian topics and community leadership earned him an appointment to the Upper Chamber, as Senator on February 4, 1963. It is there that he championed the concept of multiculturalism, human rights and national defense. For his role in shaping the policy of multiculturalism, he has been called the "Father of Multiculturalism."

In 1964, Liberal Prime Minister Lester Pearson launched The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. In his maiden speech in the Upper Chamber on March 3, 1964, titled, Canada: A Multicultural Nation, the newly appointed senator from Manitoba balked at the notion of cultural dualism of two solitudes.

Senator P. Yuzyk, as a young teacher, personally experienced the tribulations of being a Canadian born Ukrainian, educated in Canada, and, still being refused employment due an ethnic surname.

He was proud of his pioneering fa-

mily—their roots, contributions and tenacity at a time when ethnicity was not celebrated. He also witnessed similar perseverance of other diligent working immigrants. He argued: "those who did not descend from either of the so-called founding nations—the 'third element' in Canadian society—saw their share of the population more than double since the turn of the century. "Where was their story acknowledged in Canadian history?"

Multiculturalism, the concept as we know it today—or "unity in continuing diversity" he affirmed, "should be celebrated as part of what makes Canadians who they are, but also Canada what it is." Is that not what manifests unobtrusively today?

Volume IV of the Royal Commission was specifically assigned and dedicated to ethnic groups in Canada highlighting their contributions. Included were recommendations.

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress, academics, businessmen, Ukrainian organizations and the general community were at the forefront of lobbying for the adoption of multiculturalism as a reality in Canada. It was progressive and relevant. It was a path to accredit the significant contribution of multi-ethnic communities and embrace them in the tapestry of multiregional Canada.

Currently, it is well recognized and accepted that Canada's identity has been shaped by the original indigenous inhabitants, the ancestors who pioneered before us and the immigrants who arrived from all parts of the world seeking to build a new life and call Canada "home." Canada's name, originated from the indigenous Ka-nata (meaning a village). It is a young country and remains, a land of opportunity and hope.

The late Senator Paul Yuzyk's words are just as valid today as they were when he had a vision for this multicultural country: "This principle, in keeping the democratic way, encourages citizens of all ethnic origins to make their best contributions to the development of a general Canadian culture as

essential ingredients in nation-building process."

Canada's policy of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism was officially announced by the late Prime Minister Pierre E. Trudeau, at the Triennial Congress of Ukrainian Canadians, held at the Fort Gary Hotel in Winnipeg, Manitoba (October, 1971). On October 8, 1971 in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister stated: "Although there are two official languages, there is no official culture nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other." (Hansard)

As we conclude commemorating the 125th Anniversary of Ukrainian immigration to Canada, the acknowledgement of Dr. Paul Yuzyk, (1913-1986), son of pioneers in Saskatchewan is most appropriate and timely.

Ottawa—"As Canadian flags throughout the national capital region flew at half mast, Sen. Paul Yuzyk, the Ukrainian who drafted Canada's multiculturalism policy and occupied a seat in the Senate for 23 years, was buried here July 14th. "(Michael B. Bociurkiw, *The Ukrainian Weekly*, Sunday, July 20, 1986)

In celebrating Canada's 150th anniversary of Confederation, the honour bestowed upon a distinguished citizen underscores to all Canadians the profound difference he made in our Canadian history.

As Canadians, we can stand tall and take pride in

1) the majesty and uniqueness of Canada,

2) the willingness to understand and reconcile errors of our history,

3) affirm our common Canadian heritage and most importantly

4) promote our individual and collective "unity in the continuing diversity" as defined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Multiculturalism Policy of Canada.

**Quotes:**

"Canada's greatest strength is in its diversity, and I'm proud to see multiculturalism flourish in communities right across this great country, as shown time and time again by the extraordinary strength of Ukrainian Canadians—who see no contradictions in being proud Ukrainians and proud Canadians at the same time."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

"The work of the late Senator Yuzyk, is instrumental in defining our shared values and the celebration of our cultural richness and diversity."

Dominic Capnione, President, Canadian Ethnocultural Council (June 24, 2017, Ottawa, Ontario)

**Sources:**

- www.vuzyk.com
- www.manitobahistoricalsociety.com
- www.ucc.com
- Hansard: Debates of the Senate of Canada Multiculturalism, being Canadian, Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1987
- Ukrainian Weekly



The Senator at his 20th Anniversary Banquet in 1983 with Judge Walter Tarnopolsky (right) of the Ontario Court of Appeal and Borys Sirskyj, President of the Ottawa Branch, Ukrainian Canadian Committee.

**THE MULTICULTURALISM POLICY OF CANADA**

WHEREAS the Constitution of Canada provides that every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination and that everyone has the freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, opinion, expression, peaceful assembly and association and guarantees those rights and freedoms equally to male and female persons;

AND WHEREAS the Constitution of Canada recognizes the importance of preserving and enhancing the multicultural heritage of Canadians;

AND WHEREAS the Constitution of Canada recognizes rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada;

AND WHEREAS the Constitution of Canada and the Official Languages Act provide that English and French are the official languages of Canada and neither language or dialect from any region or province is to be given preference or priority over the other;

AND WHEREAS the Citizenship Act provides that all Canadians, whether by birth or by choice, enjoy equal status, are entitled to the same rights, powers and privileges and are subject to the same obligations, duties and liabilities;

AND WHEREAS the Canadian Human Rights Act provides that every individual should have an equal opportunity with other individuals to make the life that the individual is able and wishes to have, consistent with the duties and obligations of that individual as a member of society, and, in order to secure that opportunity, establishes the Canadian Human Rights Commission to redress any prohibited discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin or religion;

AND WHEREAS Canada is a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which Convention recognizes that all human beings are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law against any discrimination and against any incitement to discrimination, and to the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, which Convention provides that persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities shall not be denied the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess their own religion or to use their own language;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Canada recognizes the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and is committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada;

(1) It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Government of Canada to:

- (a) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and social diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage;
- (b) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity and that it provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of Canada's future;
- (c) promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society and assist them in the elimination of any barrier to such participation;
- (d) recognize the existence of communities whose members share a common origin and their historic contributions to Canadian society and enhance their development;
- (e) ensure that all individuals receive equal treatment and equal protection under the law, while respecting and valuing their diversity;
- (f) encourage and assist the social, cultural, economic and political institutions of Canada to be both respectful and inclusive of Canada's multicultural character;
- (g) promote the understanding and empathy that arise from the interaction between individuals and communities of different origins;
- (h) foster the recognition and appreciation of the diverse cultures of Canadian society and promote the reflection and the evolving expressions of those cultures;
- (i) preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French, while strengthening the status and use of the official languages of Canada; and
- (j) advance multiculturalism throughout Canada in harmony with the national commitment to the official languages of Canada.

(2) It is further declared to be the policy of the Government of Canada that all federal institutions shall:

- (a) ensure that Canadians of all origins have an equal opportunity to obtain employment and advancement in those institutions;
- (b) promote policies, programs and practices that enhance the ability of individuals and communities of all origins to contribute to the continuing evolution of Canada;
- (c) promote policies, programs and practices that enhance the understanding of and respect for the diversity of the members of Canadian society;
- (d) collect statistical data in order to enable the development of policies, programs and practices that are sensitive and responsive to the multicultural reality of Canada;
- (e) make use, as appropriate, of the language skills and cultural understanding of individuals of all origins; and
- (f) generally carry on their activities in a manner that is sensitive and responsive to the multicultural reality of Canada.

Prime Minister of Canada

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