

LITUANUS

LITHUANIAN QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Volume 21, No.3 - Fall 1975

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IN THE MEMORY OF LITHUANIAN CONSUL GENERAL PETRAS DAUŽVARDIS (1895-1971)

Lithuanians who struggle for the independence of their land will not forget the dedication to this cause of the late Consul General of Lithuania Petras Daužvardis, who died on September 26, 1971. In his speeches, letters, writings, and personal contacts he was constantly guided by the desire to free Lithuania, a victim of Soviet colonialism. He was an educated jurist and shrewd diplomat.

He was born in Pakamentis, county of Ilukste, Latvia, on November 16, 1895. He immigrated to the USA in 1914 and for a time lived in Newark, N. J. He completed his pre-law studies at Valparaiso University, and continued studying law at Georgetown University, Washington, D. C., where he graduated, receiving a Bachelor of Law degree in 1924. He further pursued the study of law at John Marshall Law School, Chicago, where he earned the degrees of Master of Patent Law and Doctor of Jurisprudence. Later he was granted a Juris Doctor degree by Georgetown University.

He had a great interest in international relations and entered the foreign service of Lithuania in 1925. At the beginning of his career he was a secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, working in the law section. In 1927 he was appointed Vice Consul of Lithuania in New York City, and in 1937, Consul in Chicago. Promoted to Consul General in 1961, he remained in this position until his death.

In addition to his dedicated service as an official of Lithuania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he was also active with various Lithuanian patriotic associations and collaborated with the Lithuanian press. He was a teacher of Lithuanian at Valparaiso University, secretary and president of the Union of Lithuanian Students, secretary of the Lithuanian Workers' Society, one of the editors of the Lithuanian weekly "Darbininkas," and vice-president of the Lithuanian Catholic Federation and Knights of Lithuania.

His lecture tours led him to almost all of the cities of the United States where there were organized Lithuanians. He lectured extensively at colleges, universities, clubs, and on radio and television, emphasizing Lithuania's right to independence, providing proof that the Soviet occupation of Lithuania was illegal and contrary to the peace treaty and non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and Lithuania. In the same spirit he wrote numerous articles for encyclopedias, periodicals, newspapers, and other publications.

P. Daužvardis was twice decorated by the Republic of Lithuania with the Order of Gediminas. He was the recipient of Ukraine's Order of Petliura, the Lithuanian National Guard (Šauliai) star, Lithuanian Scout Association medal, Loyola University Consular Medallion, Captive Nations - Eisenhower Proclamation Medal, and many other awards and citations.

Consul General Daužvardis successfully handled hundreds of inheritance cases in probate courts within his consular jurisdiction which encompassed thirty-two states, from Ohio to California, refuting efforts of the Soviet Union to appropriate estates of deceased Lithuanian nationals. He rectified errors and misconceptions concerning Lithuania in the American press, encyclopedias and news media, and widely disseminated accurate information about Lithuania. His consular duties were many and varied, requiring a full seven-day week of work. He served his country and people with rare dedication.

He unceasingly kindled the enthusiasm of Lithuanians, encouraging them in their fight for the restoration of their country's freedom, and impressing on them the necessity of gaining influential friends and allies to help in their righteous struggle. He was unswerving in his faith and belief that Lithuania would again be free and independent.

The death of Petras Daužvardis grieved many and occasioned countless eulogies praising not only his patriotism, but also his faith and dedication to justice.

Juozas Prunskis