

BIOGRAPHY: Pani Domna Daciw

PANI Domna Daciw was born in Svatove, Luhansk oblast, where the Krasik family owned & farmed their lands. Family life was forever changed by the genocidal, forced famine in Ukraine – the Holodomor - of 1932-3.

Her childhood saw the loss of 2 sisters Halia & Varia during the Holodomor, and the persecution and degradation of Ukrainian faith and identity under the Soviet occupation. In 1941, the NAZIs transported her and many of her contemporaries as part of the Oestarbaiten workers (forced labourers) to Kuehl Germany. Here she met Ivan Daciw, married in the Hohendohl DP Camp, and in 1946 Maria their only child was born. The family in Bathurst in 1949, finally settling in Bankstown, where she lived until recently.

Pani Domna immersed herself into the establishment of every facet of Ukrainian community life centred initially in her local Bankstown area, then Lidcombe. She was active in the Ukrainian Women's Association Bankstown (then Knyakynia Olha Branch), Suspilna Opika (Social Welfare) held Executive positions on the Editorial Committee of "Our Word" and state executives.

Concurrently she a member of Sydney based Choirs including Boyan-Surma, Ivasiuk, St Andrew's Catholic Church Choir and most recently Sutsvitya Women's Choir.

She was both an activist and a philanthropist of all major buildings, causes and political & humanitarian campaigns over her lifetime including but not limited to Ukrainian Narodny Dim, St Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church, Sisters of St Basil Monastery, St Volodymyr Catholic Church Lyneham, Ukrainian Millenium of Christianity Memorial Canberra, Ukrainian language schools, and was an Honorary Lifetime member of Ukrainian Free Kozaks Australia.

The National Council of Women NSW awarded her the Jean Arnot Recognition Award Recognition for her lifetime community commitments.

As a 7-year-old Pani Domna's memories were with her throughout her long life.

She focused on the personal attestation of her experiences, that of her family and community of Svatove, Luhansk, during Ukraine's genocidal Holodomor of 1932-33. With clarity she relived the barbaric atrocities and callousness of the Soviet officers and thugs who beat her and her siblings as they scavenged for food in forests, fields and meadows. At 7, she saw death, smelt it, lived amongst it. It bought death and immeasurable sorrow to her homelands.

It was these vivid experiences which drove her to ensure that this Genocide was unequivocally attributed to Russia then, now and forever. From her family's earliest memories, she also spoke of her Holodomor experiences, always lit her Holodomor candle for those killed by starvation. In our Ukrainian community she was at the forefront of every demonstration, commemoration, faith service, vigils and the planting of the Holodomor Tree in Centennial Parklands Sydney to eternally remember the Holodomor victims and attest to the atrocities she witnessed in Luhansk in 1932-33.