



## Greetings from the new LF President

This year, the Lithuanian Foundation is celebrating its 45th anniversary. With over \$15.3 mil. in assets and \$14 mil. in distributed grants, the Foundation continues to play a significant role in the lives of Lithuanians, both in the United States and abroad.

With the passing of time, ensuring that the love of our language, traditions and culture is passed on to the next generation becomes an increasingly pressing concern. The work of the Foundation takes on even greater significance. Recently, we've paid particular attention to attracting new members to assure the growth of the organization. The results of these efforts were remarkable. We continue to make every effort to understand the challenges facing the Lithuanian community.

The Lithuanian Foundation was established to serve its members, to help reach common goals. We sometimes hear the question, "Why should I join the Foundation? What's in it for me?" It's a logical question, but one that does not have a single answer. LF is like a bank that continues to grow, but we don't see the benefits until our children attend Lithuanian heritage schools, join an organization like Scouts or Ateitininkai, or when we are enthralled at a song or dance festival.

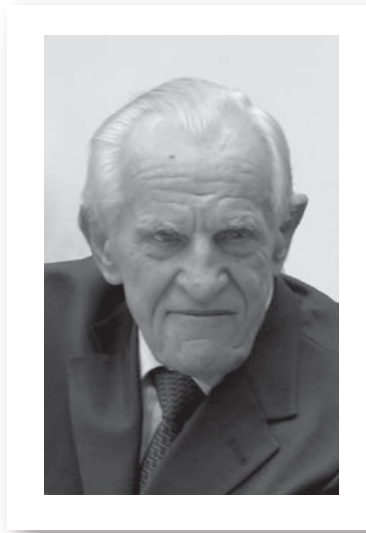
The Lithuanian Foundation is a leading edge organization, open to all. We invite you to join our membership ranks. The Foundation is here for you, your children and your children's children.

We thank all our members for their continued support and kind words spread throughout the community. If you'd like to learn more about the Foundation, please visit our web site, [www.lithuanianfoundation.org](http://www.lithuanianfoundation.org) or write to us at [admin@lithfund.org](mailto:admin@lithfund.org).



LF  
President  
Ramunas  
Astrauskas

## In Memorium



AtA  
Dr. Jonas Valaitis  
1922 - 2006

Dr. Jonas Valaitis—husband of Joanna, father of Sandra and Laura, brother of Jurgis, grandfather of two—died on December 19, 2006 in Vilnius, Lithuania and was laid to rest on December 28 at St. Casimir Lithuanian Cemetery in Chicago. Dr. Valaitis, a physician and avid sportsman, was active in the Lithuanian community, and is acknowledged as one of the founding members of the Lithuanian Foundation.

Born October 25, 1922, in Marijampole, Lithuania, Dr. Valaitis graduated from the Kaunas "Ausra" high school and studied medicine at Vytautas the Great University in Kaunas. He completed his medical studies and obtained his Doctor of Medicine degree in 1948 from Tubingen University in Germany. In 1949, Dr. Valaitis completed his residency at New York's Columbia Hospital and in 1951 received his license to practice medicine in Illinois where he lived and worked throughout the rest of his life. Dr. Valaitis served as president of the Illinois and World Lithuanian Medical Society. Dr. Valaitis spent nearly 40 years chairing the Pathology Department at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge, Illinois. Committed to education, he initiated and maintained a residency program in pathology and taught second-year medical students at the University of

Illinois Chicago Medical School. An avid researcher, Dr. Valaitis is author of "Renal Glomerular Diseases". Dr. Jerome Traxy, a colleague, remembered Dr. Valaitis as a man who was just as passionate about medicine as he was about the country of his birth. "He loved medicine and he was very proud of the fact that he was a doctor, but outside of medicine, he had a real passion for his homeland, Lithuania" said his daughter Dr. Sandra Valaitis-Rose.

From the incorporation of the Lithuanian Foundation in 1962 until his death, Dr. Valaitis was an integral and active part of the Foundation. He served on the Foundation's Board, in various capacities, for 40 consecutive years: Chairman of the Board, President, Chair of several committees including the Dr. Antanas Razma Award committee.

"Dr. John was an enthusiast, an organizer, a reliable and dedicated worker within the Lithuanian Foundation. He always reminded us that the Foundation was a financial Lithuanian organization with a responsibility to the community" states Dr. Antanas Razma, a long time friend of Dr. Valaitis and founder and honorary chair of the Lithuanian Foundation.

The Lithuanian Foundation, as well as the medical and Lithuanian community, will miss the passion, the tremendous energy and intellect that Dr. Jonas Valaitis shared with this world. We pray that he rests in well deserved peace.



### ATTENTION

### Children & Parents!

The Lithuanian Foundation is seeking Lithuanian-themed drawings for a planned children's coloring book. If you would like to become one of the book's illustrators, please submit your drawing to:

**Lithuanian Foundation, Inc.**  
14911 127th Street  
Lemont, IL 60439

## Evelina Puzaite: „I found so much of Lithuania here.“

Lithuanian Foundation members and guests who attended the “A Gift to Our Members” concert during last year’s November 4th LF Gala will remember one of the concert’s performers - the young and talented pianist Evelina Puzaite. The artist delighted all attendees with her visit to Chicago and her masterful playing at the Lithuanian World Center in Lemont. Evelina Puzaite’s performance, along with those of the other talented participants - former LF scholarship recipient pianist Gabrielius Alekna and current LF scholar soprano Vakare Petrolionas - were recorded in a compact disc, for the enjoyment of LF members. Remembering Evelina’s wonderful appearance, we talked to the young pianist about her visit to Chicago, the concert during the LF Gala, and, naturally, about her most recent accomplishments, concerts and her studies in London.

### Evelina, what are your most memorable impressions from your visit to Chicago and the concert in Lemont?

The trip to Chicago has left a huge impression – the city, the height of its buildings... But it is the people that are the most memorable—everyone that I met, all for whom I played. I was very moved by their warmth and graciousness and, especially, by their dedication to maintaining their Lithuanian heritage. I found so much of Lithuanian here! It reminds me of that which I miss when I return to Lithuania – the spirit of community, goodwill and mutual support.

### Shortly after your trip to Chicago, you participated in the Landor Records - a prestigious recording studio - contest. How did that go for you?

This contest is a long and stressful marathon. From hundreds of first-round musician contestants (not just pianists), twenty are selected, and then ten and, then, a final four make it to the finals. Besides myself, this year’s other finalists were a violinist and a saxophonist from Great Britain, and a cellist from Bulgaria. The former two are well known in London’s musical circles. But, I was fortunate to win! The winner of this contest is signed by Lander Records, who produces, distributes and markets their recordings. In January, we recorded my first CD which contains the five preludes of Mykolajus Konstantinas Ciurlionis, Z. Kodaly’s “Dances of Marosszek”, three F. Liszt’s concert etudes and six S. Rachmaninov’s movements. The record will be released in early autumn.



*Evelina Puzaite during the LF “A Gift to our Members” concert*



*Sightseeing in Chicago*

### You had your first solo performance recently at the famous London Wigmore Hall. How did that go?

I’ve had the privilege of playing at Wigmore before, but February 6th was my first solo performance. The hall was filled to capacity! I played Mozart, Rachmaninov and Liszt. The audience didn’t want to let me go! So, for an encore, I played a Ciurlionis prelude. I’m proud to say that a favorable evaluation of my first solo performance from a knowledgeable yet critical and fickle British music critic has calmed me and given me confidence. Receiving praise from London’s sophisticated and critical musical community is quite an achievement!

### Do you have plans to return to perform in the United States?

No, I have no such plans for the near future, but you never know what life has in store. I would like to return to Chicago, to Lemont. As you can imagine, one always wants to return to a place one has enjoyed.

### You have received several Lithuanian Foundation scholarships. Living in Lithuania, studying in England, how did you find out about the Foundation?

I am very, very grateful to the Lithuanian Foundation, not only for the much needed monetary support, but just as importantly, for the moral support and acknowledgment. I learned of the Lithuanian Foundation from others who, like I, are studying in London. Financial support is always needed. At the same time, we are aware that such support must be earned.

**Thank you, Evelina, for your time. The members of the Lithuanian Foundation, it’s Board and Officers are very proud of your accomplishments and wish you the very best.**

*Ms. Puzaite was interviewed by LF executive committee member Tadas Kubilius*

## New! Annual pledges

We’ve made it easier to become a supporting member of the Foundation. Just indicate the amount you choose to give each year on the new pledge line on the donation envelope. We’ll send you a reminder and proudly enter your name in the supporting member roles. Credit cards accepted.



## LF News

As in the past, the Lithuanian Foundation accepts scholarship applications through March 15. Grant and media applications are accepted through April 15.



*Delegates to the South American Lithuanian Youth Congress*

Audrius Makauskas, one of the Foundation’s scholarship recipients writes: “I was fortunate to study and graduate from a very special school – the February 16th High School in Germany. The school’s strong focus on Lithuanian heritage matured and developed my nationalistic viewpoint. I strove to fully utilize the opportunities that were presented by participating in extracurricular activities. I did well in my studies. All that I’ve achieved would not have been possible without the Lithuanian Foundation’s assistance. And for this I am very grateful.”



The SALFASS basketball league championship games will be held in New York this June. The LF trophy will be awarded to the winners. In addition, the winning team’s chosen Lithuanian heritage school will receive a \$1,000 grant. For more information, please visit [www.lithuaniafoundation.org](http://www.lithuaniafoundation.org).

## Lithuanian Foundation CD Released



A CD, recorded at the “Dovana Nariams - A Gift to Our Members” 2006 LF fall concert, has been released by the Lithuanian Foundation. The recording features three talented LF scholars - award-winning pianists Gabrielius Alekna and Evelina Puzaite and emerging soprano Vakare Petrolionas. The CD is available to donors for a membership-level (\$100US) contribution