On January 23, 2004, over a hundred professors, scholars, university administrators, friends and colleagues, and Ukrainian community members attended a reception hosted by the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (CIUS) to mark the 60th birthday of its director, Zenon E. Kohut.

Dr. Kohut has been serving as the Institute’s director since 1994 and was recently re-appointed for another five-year term starting in July 2004. Before coming to the University of Alberta in 1992, he served as a Senior Research Analyst in the Library of Congress, and Soviet Political Affairs Analyst in the US Department of Defense in Washington, DC. Dr. Kohut holds his PhD in history from the University of Pennsylvania and has taught there as well as at Yale University, the University of Alberta, Michigan State University, and the Harvard Ukrainian Summer Institute. Dr. Kohut is a renowned specialist in Ukrainian early modern history and the history of Ukrainian-Russian relations. His book, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy: Imperial Absorption of the Hetmanate* (1989, Ukrainian translation, 1996), and his subsequent work on Russian and Ukrainian political culture and Ukrainian historiography have received international recognition and acclaim.

As the director of CIUS, Dr. Kohut oversaw a dramatic expansion of the Institute and its activities in the 1990s and first years of the new century. During that period, the publication of the *Encyclopedia of Ukraine* was successfully completed when in 2001 a volume containing a name index and list of errata was issued. That same year, the encyclopedia staff began developing the website of the *Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine*. The Peter Jacyk Centre has published three volumes of Mykhailo Hrushevsky's classic ten-volume *History of Ukraine-Rus’,* while the Ukrainian Language Education Centre (ULEC) has been successfully working on its major publication project, the NOVA Ukrainian-Language Development Series (grades one through six) for the Ukrainian-English bi-lingual school program. It was a founder of the Ukrainian Knowledge Internet Portal Project (UKiP), which aims to create digital resources and interactive modules for Ukrainian language and culture learning.

During Dr. Kohut’s tenure, CIUS has been exceptionally successful in securing funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for policy and legislative assistance work in Ukraine. In 2003, the Canada Ukraine Legislative and Intergovernmental Project (CULIP), which is the second phase of a CIUS-managed, CIDA-funded project, completed the third year of its program, during which it organized working visits, seminars, round tables and meetings between Ukrainian legislators and government officials with their Canadian counterparts on six topics, including land privatization and title registries, culture and the role of the state, and public participation in policymaking. Dr. Kohut has served on the project’s steering committee, which acts as an oversight body.

While director, Dr. Kohut also took part in organizing a series of symposia on Ukrainian-Russian relations at Columbia University and the University of Cologne, financed by the National Endowment for the Humanities.
and the Humboldt Foundation. He is the coeditor of selected presentations from these symposia, recently issued by CIUS Press as *Culture, Nation and Identity: The Ukrainian-Russian Encounter*.

Dr. Kohut also serves as the director of the Kowalsky Program for Study of Eastern Ukraine, which supports scholarly and publication projects on eastern and southern Ukraine. Most of these projects are centred at Kharkiv National University’s Kowalsky Institute, but recently the program has expanded to include collaborators at Zaporizhia and Chernihiv.

At the celebration of his birthday, Dr. Kohut was greeted by the Hon. David Kilgour, MP (Edmonton, Southeast), who had collaborated with Dr. Kohut on the CULIP project. Dr. Bill McBlain, Associate Vice-President (Research), delivered greetings from the University of Alberta administration in which he stressed the Institute’s accomplishments and the importance of the new digital initiatives launched under Dr. Kohut’s directorship. Dr. Frank E. Sysyn, Director of the Peter Jacyk Centre (CIUS), recounted Zenon Kohut’s life and career before he assumed his post at CIUS. He placed special emphasis on Dr. Kohut’s intellectual formation and his role in establishing Ukrainian studies at Harvard. Dr. Serhii Plokhii, Director of the Church Studies Program (CIUS), concentrated on the impact of Dr. Kohut’s scholarly work in the West and in Ukraine.

Dr. Plokhii also read excerpts from greetings sent from various academic circles and institutions on the occasion of Dr. Kohut’s birthday. These included letters from the Ukrainian Research Institute at Harvard University, the Ukrainian Studies Program at Columbia University, the Canadian Foundation for Ukrainian Studies, the Ukrainian Studies Fund (USA), Shevchenko Scientific Society (USA), the Archival Administration of Ukraine, and individual scholars from Canada, Ukraine, the USA, Great Britain, Poland and Hungary.

Drs. Sysyn and Plokhii presented Dr. Kohut with the manuscript of a *Festschrift*, entitled, *Synopsis: A Collection of Essays in Honour of Zenon E. Kohut*. The volume, which takes its name from a seventeenth-century historical work, contains 23 articles from historians in Canada, Ukraine, the United States, Great Britain, Austria and Poland. Those present at the event could pre-order the book at a special pre-publication price. The volume will appear at the end of 2004 as a special issue of the *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* and as a separate publication.

In his remarks, Dr. Kohut thanked the speakers and colleagues who organized the event. He was particularly touched by the *Festschrift* presented to him, noting that by its very title the work referred both to his research interests and to a tradition of seventeenth-century Kyivan learning that included the presentation of *Festschriften*. He mused on how a seventeenth-century monk at the Kyivan Academy would react to such a presentation. Undoubtedly, such a monk would deny any accomplishments of his own and attribute all achievements to God’s grace. While not claiming that kind of providential thinking, Dr. Kohut, nevertheless, believed that he did share with the seventeenth-century monk the feeling of being blessed. In enumerating these blessings, Dr. Kohut included a caring family, enthusiastic and wonderful academic colleagues, a dedicated staff at CIUS, and a supportive Ukrainian community that considered his work important. In concluding, Dr. Kohut expressed his gratitude for such an abundance of blessings.

The last speaker was Dr. Kohut’s wife, Zorianna Kohut, who thanked the Ukrainian community of Edmonton for providing the family such a hospitable and warm environment during the two terms of her husband’s directorship of CIUS.

By: Frank E. Sysyn and Serhii Plokhii