



Connecticut Immigration & Refugee Coalition



DENISE W. MERRILL

SECRETARY OF THE STATE
CONNECTICUT

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For more information:
Tina Prakash: (860) 509-6224 (o)
(860) 985-7460 (c)

- PRESS RELEASE -

SECRETARY MERRILL TO JOIN CONNECTICUT IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE COALITION TO HONOR IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS

TONY AWARD WINNING HARTFORD STAGE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR DARKO
TRESNJAK, AN IMMIGRANT FROM THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA, TO GIVE
KEYNOTE ADDRESS FOR 18TH ANNUAL IMMIGRANT DAY CEREMONY

HARTFORD: Secretary of the State Denise Merrill today announced that she will be joining the Connecticut Immigrant and Refugee Coalition (CIRC) in hosting the 19th annual Immigrant Day Ceremony at the State Capitol in Hartford. The ceremony will take place on Tuesday April 21, 2015 at 3:00 p.m. in the Old Judiciary Room on the 3rd floor of the State Capitol in Hartford. Immigrant Day honors Connecticut's immigrants, and celebrates their long lasting contributions to their communities and professions. This year's ceremony will honor 13 immigrants originally from 13 different countries who live in Connecticut. A complete list of honorees can be found at the end of this news release.

"It is a great honor to pay tribute to hard working citizens who contribute so much to our communities who, in some cases, overcame very difficult circumstances to come to America, just like my family did 100 years ago," said Secretary Merrill. "Our strength as a democracy comes from our diversity and the fact that anyone – from anywhere in the world – can succeed in this country if they work hard enough. Each of those honored on Immigrant Day have not only done well for themselves and their families, but they have also had a lasting impact in their community. Our entire state has benefitted from their talent and tireless efforts."

The keynote speaker for the 2012 Immigrant Day Ceremony is Darko Tresnjak, the artistic director of Hartford Stage since 2011. Mr. Tresnjak immigrated to the United States in 1976 from Zemun, Yugoslavia which is now part of Serbia. He has a long and

distinguished career of directing stage and opera productions, and won a 2014 Tony Award for “A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder.” Master of ceremonies for the event will be Hena Daniels, the daughter of immigrants from Pakistan who lives in Greenwich and spent 10 years as a television news reporter and anchor for WFSB Channel 3 in Connecticut. Ms. Daniels is now a freelance news reporter for WPIX TV and Newspath in New York City. Also being honored for their contributions to the community are Ilya Tsvok of West Hartford and Atena Ancuta of Fairfield.

Immigrant Day is sponsored by the Connecticut Immigrant and Refugee Coalition (CIRC) and the Secretary of the State’s Office. CIRC is an association of ethnic and social service organizations working to promote the rights and opportunities of immigrants and refugees in Connecticut, and to foster their civic participation.

April 21, 2015 – 18th Annual Immigrant Day Honorees

	<u>Country of Origin</u>	<u>CT Residence</u>
<u>Honorees</u>		
Darko Tresnjak*	Ukraine	Hartford
Gordon Scott	Jamaica	Hartford
Andrzej Mazur	Poland	Farmington
Oni Chukwu	Nigeria	Orange
Dr. Pauline Olsen	Ireland	Farmington
Dr. Naseema Merchant	Pakistan	Middletown
Morad Garakani	Iran	New Haven
Ilya Tsvok	Ukraine	West Hartford
Dilton Dornelas	Brazil	West Hartford
Atena Ancuta	Romania	Fairfield
Gioi Tran	Vietnam	Bridgeport
Jorge Perez	Cuba	New Haven

*keynote speaker