

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Albana Orgocka, Co-Chair

Albana is a social worker and a philosopher by training, currently working for Loring, Wolcott & Coolidge Office as an estate administrator. Prior to this position Albana worked for the law office of M. Virginia McDermott, and for the International Social Services, American Branch in NY, where she provided professional casework services and consultation to over 30 international Social Service branches and correspondents worldwide as well as served as liaison between domestic and foreign social service systems in cases of international child welfare, custody matters, parental child abduction and family reunification. Albana has also volunteered as a social worker at the International Institute of Boston for over a year and a half during which time she provided support and services for Kosovo individuals and families as well as counseling and advocacy for them on a daily basis. Currently she co-chairs the Massachusetts Albanian-American Society founded to provide a wide array of social services for the Albanian-American community in Massachusetts. Albana was honored in 2006 with the Woman of the Year award by the Albanian-American Women's Organization Motrat Qiriazhi for her work in the Albanian American community in Massachusetts. Albana is a Fulbright Scholarship recipient and holds a Master of Science degree in Social Work from Columbia University.

Mark Kosmo, Co-Chair

Mark is currently a co-chair of MAAS/BESA, and the Chief Financial Officer of the Mentor Group -- a Boston-based Research Institute. He lived in Albania from 1996-1999 working as an independent consultant. Prior to moving to Albania, Mark worked for nine years for the World Bank in Washington D.C. as an economist focusing on energy, environmental, and natural resource management issues all over the world, including in Albania. He was a Professor of Economics at Dartmouth College from 1983-1985. Earlier in his career, Mark worked at several Washington-based economic policy institutes such as the Brookings Institution, Urban Institute, and World Resources Institute. Mark is a past member of the Board of Trustees of the National Albanian-American Council, and continues to serve on its Advisory Board. Mark was honored in 2006 as the recipient of the Individual Achievement Award from the Boston Mayor's Office of New Bostonians, for his contribution to the Albanian American community in Boston. Mark holds a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Wisconsin, and did his undergraduate degree in Economics and Mathematics at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst.

Katherine Vlladesi, Secretary

Katherine currently works as a Paralegal for the law firm of Barron & Stadfeld, P.C. dealing with Real Estate Law. She was an officer of Beta Alpha Psi (BAP) at Suffolk University, the largest fraternity for Beta Alpha Psi in Massachusetts, and provided community services in Boston, California and Connecticut. As a member of the organization, she also worked within the organization to ensure and assist the members of Beta Alpha Psi to find jobs when they graduated. Katherine holds a Bachelor's degree in Accounting from Suffolk University Business School of Management, and is currently a third year law student at Suffolk Law School with a concentration in Financial Services.

Filgen Prifti, Treasurer

Filgen currently works as an Investment Operations Analyst for John Hancock Financial Services in Boston. At his current position, Filgen supports the development of all investment manager performance measurements and reporting, using a range of internal and external resources and

investment software. Prior to that, he worked as an International Income Analyst for the Global Department at Investors Bank and Trust/State Street Bank in Boston. Filgen served as Acting Treasurer of MAAS/BESA beginning in October 2008. Filgen holds a Bachelors of Science in Business Administration with a Major in International Business and a Minor in Management from Suffolk University.

Agron Alibali

Agron Alibali is a Visiting Fellow at the Center for Democracy and Development focusing on Southeastern Europe. A native of Albania, Agron's research has centered on issues of legal and electoral reform, human and minority rights and development, and reform of banking and financial institutions in Southeastern Europe. Agron is a graduate of the University of Tirana Law School and Boston University School of Law where he received an LL.M. He has worked at the Albanian Ministry of Justice, John Hancock Financial Services, as a consultant for the World Bank, and as an Adjunct Professor at Bryant University, where he taught banking and business law. He has promoted and pursued several projects in Southeastern Europe, including curriculum development, constitutional and electoral reform, environmental law, and bilateral university partnerships. As a Visiting Researcher at Harvard Law School in 2000, he researched and presented work on Kosovo's Legal Status after NATO's Intervention and on the Legal Status of Ethnic Minorities in the European Union. Through his work with local NGO's in Albania, Agron has contributed in further developing international environmental law especially in connection with various compliance mechanisms of international financial institutions. In 2008, Agron was nominated as a candidate member with the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee at UN Office in Geneva, Switzerland.

Fatmir Beja

Fatmir is an economist by training with extensive experience in accounting. He has held a number of accounting positions with Kelly Services, Omega Mortgage Company, Acme Wholesale, Inc & Royal Food Import Company. Aside from being a distinguished accountant, Fatmir has been and continues to be a tireless community activist. He was a member of the Steering Committee of the Albanian Language and Heritage School where he undertook several challenging initiatives that helped open the school. He has served in the Albanian School Board and has been an active member of the MAAS/BESA Board of Directors for the last year. Fatmir holds a BA in Economics from the University of Tirana

Vera Gjata

Vera has been a small business owner since 2001, and previously worked for Massachusetts Mental Health as a computer programmer, and as a financial specialist for Proctor & Gamble Company. Vera has been an active member of the Chameria Association in Albania since its beginning in 1991 until 1999 when she came to the United States. During this time, she was in charge of the Art and Culture Committee and also a dancer of the cham-dancing group. In 2002 together, with other activists, Vera founded the Chameria Human Rights Association -- a not-for-profit organization, whose main goal is the recognition and implementation of the rights of Cham people to return to their homes in Greece. Currently, Vera is the Vice President of the Chameria Human Rights Association. Vera has also been a member of the Bashkimi Dancing Group where she performed as a dancer and later as the business manager for the group working on the conservation and propagation of the rich culture, language, traditions, customs, folklore, and other cultural aspects of the Cham people. Vera considers this cultural heritage as a valuable asset for the world. Vera studied economics and finance at the University of Tirana, and law at the Alexander Xhuvani University of Elbasan. After arriving in Boston, Vera also attended Clark University and received a master's certificate in Advanced Enterprise Web Development.

Alban Kalaja

Alban currently works as a Mechanic Technician for AstraZeneca in Westborough, Massachusetts. Prior to that, he has worked as Prosecutor for the District Attorney's Office of Tirana. He has been member of MAAS/BESA since its inception and served in its Advisory Board. Alban holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Construction Engineering for Civil and Industrial Constructions from Polytechnic University of Tirana and a Bachelor of Arts in Law from the Law School of the University of Tirana.

Enkeleida Kapia

Enkeleida Kapia is a PhD Candidate and a Lecturer in Applied Linguistics at Boston University. Her work is focused on issues related to cognitive, language, literacy and educational development of children and adults in monolingual and multilingual contexts. She also co-directs the Institute for Developmental Studies in Albania. Prior to her current positions, she taught linguistics and literacy development courses at University of Massachusetts. Raised in Albania, she now lives in Cambridge, where she still enjoys walks by the Charles in sub-freezing weather. Enkeleida was an Open Society Institute and Philanthropic Educational Organization scholar for several years and has an MA in Neurolinguistics from Boston University. She received her BA from University of Wisconsin in Linguistics and French.

Arber Muhameti

Arber graduated recently in Computer Science from Salem State College in Salem Massachusetts, and previously studied at the American University of Bulgaria. Arber designed the MAAS/BESA web-site and continues to be responsible for its updating and maintenance, and ensuring that it gives a modern presentation of the organization. He also works for a number of other organizations as a free-lance web designer and programmer. Arber joined "Bashkimi Dance" in September 2008, and continues to be one of its most active members.

Orgeta Qirici

Orgeta was born in Albania and moved to the United States in 1995. She is a graduate of Tufts University with a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Psychology. Orgeta was a member of Tufts Psychology Society, which promotes a universal awareness of the themes and trends in psychology, guided students in forming career goals and provided information for internships and post-graduate work. Orgeta has been a member of MAAS/BESA since 2008 and was part of the organizing committee of Albanian Flag Day in 2008. She is the co-owner of a small business where she serves as the general manager and is responsible for maintaining good customer relations.

Rezarta Reso

Rezarta Reso was born in Tirana, and graduated from the University of Tirana in 1986 in Literature and Linguistics. She later worked in the Encyclopedia Publishing House in Albania, and directed and hosted children's programs on Albanian TV for 18 years. She graduated from Becker College in 1999 for Early Childhood Education and received a Masters in Library and Information Science from the University of Rhode Island in 2005. Rezarta has worked in several public schools in Worcester. Currently, she is the Young Adult Reference Librarian at the Worcester Public Library, where she also organized the first Albanian collection in the Worcester Public Library with more than 700 titles including books, magazines, CDs, and papers.