



Croatian Scholarship Fund

DEVELOPING LEADERS THROUGH EDUCATION

Remembering Nina Jurjevic: A Visionary of Heart and Purpose



In 2025, the Croatian Scholarship Fund lost one of its brightest lights, Nina Jurjevic, a founding member whose vision, integrity, and compassion shaped the organization from its very beginning in 1989.

Over her 35-year tenure, Nina served in numerous leadership roles, including President, and was instrumental in growing CSF from a handful of students to supporting more than 140 each year. Her passion was rooted not just in administration, but in personal connection. She took great joy in student selection, mentoring, and helping each scholar believe in their potential.

Born in Zagreb in 1941, Nina moved with her family to Oakland, California, at the age of 15. After completing her education at St. Elizabeth High School and California State University, Hayward, she went on to build a remarkable career in real estate. She worked with William Mathews & Co., Prudential, and Coldwell Banker, earning multiple Top Salesperson awards and training new agents. Known for her honesty, elegance, and no-nonsense professionalism, she was respected by clients and peers alike.

Her business acumen extended beyond real estate. For ten years, Nina successfully ran a Pioneer Chicken franchise with her family, a testament to her entrepreneurial courage and versatility. Those who knew her admired her intelligence, humility, and strength. One friend described her simply: "She was humble, kind, and the most honest person I know."

Nina's summers were often spent in Lumbarda, Korčula, with husband Ante, children and grandchildren, where her home became a gathering place for friends and family. There, as in life, she created harmony through generosity and wisdom. Her enduring legacy is woven into every scholarship, every success story, and every young person given a chance through CSF. Nina pushed us all to dream bigger, reach farther, and serve with heart. Her spirit continues to inspire the mission she so deeply loved. ■



Photo gallery continued on back page...



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The Croatian Scholarship Fund is a non-profit organization that provides university scholarships to students in Croatia and Bosnia & Herzegovina.

Dear CSF Friends,

As I enter my third year as President of the Croatian Scholarship Fund, I am filled with gratitude and pride for what we've accomplished together. This year, 160 students received CSF support, a record that reflects both the generosity of our donors and the efficiency of our new automated systems, introduced by Zeljko Pavic. These updates have allowed us to serve more students while maintaining close oversight and personal connection.

In reflecting on 2025, one loss stands out deeply: the passing of our beloved board member, Nina Jurjevic. Nina was the embodiment of wisdom, courage, and dedication. She gave her time and heart freely to CSF and our students, and her influence will forever remain part of who we are.

Our mission remains as vital as ever. Though I once hoped Croatia's economic recovery might lessen the need for CSF, the opposite has proven true. Many families still struggle, and the demand for scholarships continues to grow. Without your support, countless talented students would not have the chance to fulfill their promise.

Since our founding, CSF has supported 584 regular students, 39 Grgich interns, 25 Grgich graduate students, and 15 Rados endowment recipients, each one a testament to the power of community and compassion.

Thank you for another remarkable year of impact and hope.

Sretan i blagoslovljen Božić,

~ **Barbara Jagiello**,
CSF President



In loving memory of our dedicated CSF Leaders



Joseph Cindrich, PhD, served the Croatian Scholarship Fund with exceptional dedication, offering more than two decades of leadership as a board member and trusted advisor. His steady guidance, professionalism, and vision helped

strengthen the organization during its formative years, working closely with CSF's founders to build a culture of accountability and purpose. As a devoted educator who taught at Universities such as San Diego State and Western Illinois, he believed deeply in the power of learning and dedicated his career to helping students reach their fullest potential—an inspiration that aligned perfectly with CSF's mission to provide scholarships for students in Croatia to pursue higher education. Joe's legacy of service, love of Croatia, compassion, and unwavering commitment will remain an enduring part of CSF's mission. ■



In May, CSF lost another beloved member Bob Wilson, husband to our current president, but not without a meaningful legacy in our organization. For years he was not only a generous sponsor of CSF

students but also an active advisor and volunteer. Most notably, Bob spent countless hours reviewing financial reports and offered clear, reliable and thoughtful guidance to our Board. A retired engineer and passionate sailor, Bob kept the Golden Rule - engraved in his boat and embraced by many faiths - as a guiding principle of his life. His loss is deeply felt, and he will be remembered with gratitude and affection by all who knew him. ■



A Glass of Harmony: An Afternoon of Music, Culture, and Community



Ivan Galić giving insight to the music

This spring, the Croatian Scholarship Fund hosted "A Glass of Harmony", an unforgettable celebration of music, culture, and community. It was an afternoon that beautifully embodied what CSF stands for: connection, creativity, and purpose.

At the center of the event was Ivan Galić, a gifted concert pianist from our Excellence Program, whose performance left guests spellbound. His music filled the room with emotion and hope, reminding everyone that their support directly fuels young talent and opportunity.

The event also featured a lively performance by the Sidro tamburitza band, followed by the moving harmonies of the women's a cappella group Klapa Zora. Guests sipped Croatian and local wines, enjoyed shared laughter, and even experienced a surprise performance by our host Lydia Vidovich's father, whose impromptu song drew a standing ovation and joyful tears. The afternoon felt like a reunion of hearts, bridging generations through shared heritage and song.

We extend a heartfelt thanks to all who attended, our generous wine sponsors - Vidovich Winery, Sunce Winery, Opolo Winery, Konoba Wines - and finally, our dedicated committee of volunteers who made every detail shine

Events like "A Glass of Harmony" remind us that supporting education is about much more than academics. It's about nurturing dreams, celebrating culture, and strengthening the bond between our communities in North America and Croatia. 🇷🇺

~ Josipa Verkić

****And the harmony continues: Ivan has since been invited to compete at the International Mozart Competition in Salzburg in February 2026.**

Bravo, Ivan. And thank you to all who help make moments like this possible.



Admin/Student Liaison, Josipa Verkić, and Barbara Jagiello, greeting guests at the door



CSF Student Coordinator, Marijana Pavić, with the gracious host, Lydia Vidovich



CSF Board member, Liz Buljan, with the guest of honor, Ivan Galić



SIDRO entertaining guests with their festive songs



CSF Advisor, Marina Sertić, with CSF President, Barbara Jagiello



Klapa Zora sings a medley of traditional Dalmatian songs



Nela Kusalo keeping the wine flowing for our guests



Record Number of Students in CSF Program:

This year CSF accepted 42 new students into the program. We had a large applicant pool and were grateful that we could accept and provide financial assistance to such a large number of highly qualified and financially deserving students. We are also in the process of accepting 7 new students for Dragica Radoš Memorial Program and 6 for Miljenko Grgich Memorial Program. This makes a total of 175 students that are receiving scholarships for the 2025/2026 academic year. This is a record number and would not be possible without our generous student sponsors, endowment programs and generous donations. CSF is grateful for this wonderful support. Collectively we are making a huge difference in educating a large group of Croatian students that would otherwise have great difficulty financing their college education. ■

We would like to share a few excerpts taken from newly elected student applications:

Natalia Bartolić

University of Zagreb
Major: Economy
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Dragan Boban

University of Zagreb
Major: Physics Research
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Patricija Colnar

University of Rijeka
Major: Biotechnology
Sponsor: Tatjana Grgich Memorial

Emma Crnjak

University of Zagreb
Major: Law
Sponsor: Stanko Barle

Marta Česić

University of Zadar
Major: Speech Therapy
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Brigita Filić

University of Rijeka
Major: Speech Therapy
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Katja Forgić

University of Osijek
Major: Law
Sponsor: Judge Edward Damich

whose professional path I deeply admire, are my sponsor. Your example is an inspiration to me as I begin my own journey in the field of law. I sincerely appreciate your generosity and belief in young people like me who are striving to make a positive difference in society."

Gabrijela Franjić

University of Zagreb
Major: Pedagogy
Sponsor: Tomislav Kundić

Nikolina Galić

University of Mostar
Major: Law
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Lana Grubišić

University of Split
Major: Computer Science
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Mateo Gudelj

University of Split
Major: Electrical Engineering & Information Technology
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Nicol Herceg

University of Banja Luka
Major: Dental Medicine
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Rahela Ikić

University of Split
Major: Civil Engineering
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Romana Ivanković

University of Zagreb
Major: Law
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Sebastina Ivelja

University of Mostar
Major: Music
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Noa Jaković

University of Zagreb
Major: Psychology
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Korina Jambrušić

University of Zagreb
Major: Business Administration
Sponsor: Ivan Stolnik

Nina Kačan

University of Zagreb
Major: Architecture
Sponsor: EatPrayMove Travel

Josipa Katalenić

University of Zagreb
Major: Mathematics
Sponsor: Tomislav Kundić

Lea Klai

University of Rijeka
Major: Pharmacy
Sponsor: Tatjana Grgich Memorial

Valerija Kličnović

University of Zadar
Major: Speech Therapy
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Marta Kujundžić

University of Rijeka
Major: Pharmacy
Sponsor: Dr.'s Iva & Ivan Lukac



Receiving this scholarship means so much to me. It's not only going to help me financially but also it motivates me to be the best student I can and one day give back to my community. Knowing that someone like you believes in my potential brings me joy and determination. Thank you once again for your kindness and generosity!



"The Croatian Scholarship Fund means a great deal to me – not only as financial support, but as a symbol of encouragement and trust. I am especially honored and grateful that you, as a distinguished judge and someone



Magdalena Kvesić
University of Split
Major: Chemical Engineering
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Lana Lukić
University of Zagreb
Major: Electrical Engineering
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

"I've always found it fascinating how electricity powers everything around us, from the smallest devices to entire cities. That curiosity was the reason I chose electrical engineering. My family has always been supportive and has always been there for me. This scholarship means a lot to me because I worked really hard throughout high school to achieve good results and prepare myself for university. Words can't explain how grateful I am for this scholarship."

Ružica Majić
University of Split
Major: Medicine
Sponsor: Đurđica & Ivan Nenadić

Petra Martinović
University of Split
Major: Electrical Engineering
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Dragana Marušić
University of Zagreb
Major: Mechatronics & Robotics
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Nika Mataić
University of Zagreb
Major: Pharmacy
Sponsor: Nina Jurjević Memorial - Rick & Carolyn DeBie

"Since I was a child, I've always enjoyed learning. Math, languages, science, and art have all fascinated me. After exploring many areas of study and competing in various subjects, I realized that STEM and biomedical sciences appeal to me the most. That's why I chose to study Pharmacy at university. In the future, I hope to work in research and development in the pharmaceutical industry – a field that seems dynamic and meaningful to me. With my academic ambitions and extracurricular activities, I need quite a bit of support. That's why this

scholarship means so much to me – it allows me to cover my expenses and fully focus on my degree."

Damjan Mikulić
University of Split
Major: Electrical Engineering, Information Technology & Computer Science
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Mihael Miloslavić
University of Zagreb
Major: Informatics, Engineering
Sponsor: Stanko & Nicole Barle

Mario Mozara
University of Zagreb
Major: Economy
Sponsor: Tomislav Kundić

Pavao Mrazek
University of Music in Zagreb
Major: Instrumental Piano
Sponsor: Stanko & Nicole Barle



Odlučio sam studirati u Hrvatskoj zbog povezanosti sa svojom domovinom, hrvatskim jezikom i ljudima koji me ovdje okružuju. Također, nakon studija želja mi je nastaviti raditi u Hrvatskoj. Ova stipendija mnogo mi znači prvenstveno kao financijska podrška, jer bez nje vjerojatno ne bih imao dovoljno sredstava da si priuštim studiranje na ovako specifičnom fakultetu, na kojemu su troškovi jednog studenta često puno veći od ostalih fakulteta. Osim financijske, ova stipendija mi je i emotivna podrška jer znam da netko cijeni moj rad i zalaganje te da me želi i dalje u tome podržati."

Lovro Oslaković
University of Zagreb
Major: Mechanical Engineering,
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Marko Palavra
University of Split
Major: Civil Engineering
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Ana Ramadan
University of Zagreb
Major: Psychology
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Marin Šaltić
University of Split
Major: Nautical Maritime
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Nera Tomrlin
University of Zagreb
Major: Medicine
Sponsor: Dr.s Iva & Ivan Lukac

Ana Turić
University of Split
Major: Civil Engineering
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Tamara Vitković
University of Rijeka
Major: Physics
Sponsor: Ivana Stolnik

Lijana Vrbnjak
University of Rijeka
Major: Physics
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Lea Ivona Vrdoljak
University of Zagreb
Major: Aeronautics & Space Technology
Sponsor: Tomislav Kundić

Magdalena Zdunić
University of Rijeka
Major: Pharmacy
Sponsor: Mr & Mrs Emil & Lenore Maionchi

Ivan Žulj
University of Zagreb
Major: Mechanical Engineering
Sponsor: Tony Ujdur Memorial

Dragica Krog Radoš Endowment

Dragica Krog Radoš Scholarship Fund – Offers 5-year scholarships to Music Academy and Theatre Arts students at various Universities throughout Croatia.

This is an endowment program established by Mr. Damir Radoš in memory of his mother Mrs. Dragica Krog Rados. Currently there are 14 students in the program and 7 new students are in process of being selected for this year. This makes it a total of 21 students receiving scholarships for the 2025/2026 academic year. ■

The following students are currently enrolled at the Zagreb Music Academy through this Endowment program:

2022

Ivan Habazin, Music Theory
Luka Komljenović, Flute
Margareta Pitić, Violin
Josip Rudelić, Flute

2023

Lovro Komes, Saxophone
Antonija Tudorović, Violin
Antonela Krpan, Musicology
Emma Kovačević, Piano
Nikola Vilus, Tamburine

2024

Petra Jozinović, Violin
Greta Mikec, Musicology
Petar Mumlek, Violin
Magdalena Rogić, Violin
Lovro Žagar, Composition

GRADUATES 2025



Lucia Andročec
*University of Zagreb
Organization &
Informatics
Sponsor: Tomislav Kundić*



Gloria Bojo
*University of Zagreb
Dentistry
Sponsor: Kathryn Dixon*



Karla Buhovac
*University of
Mostar
General Medicine
Sponsor: Đurđica
Nenadić*



Valentina Car
*University of
Rijeka
Helath
Sponsor: Ivana
Stolnik*



Goran Dabić
*University of Juraj
Strossmeyer, Osijek
Medicine
Sponsor: Judge
Edward Damich*



Martina Salamunović
*University of
Zagreb, Medicine
Sponsor: Tatjana
Grgich Memorial/
Violet Grgich*

We had fourteen students that graduated this year, twelve received Masters degrees and two Baccalaureate degrees. Two medical students were extended for an additional year as it takes six years to complete a Medical School in Croatia. We wish our graduates all the success in their chosen careers. ■■

Graduates express their gratitude and appreciation:

"Looking back, I feel incredibly grateful for the support I received throughout my studies, and I want to express my deepest thanks to you. The scholarship I was awarded played a crucial role in making my education possible – without that financial support, I'm not sure I would have been able to pursue and complete my degree. Your generosity and encouragement truly made a difference in my life."

~ **Gloria Bojo**

"I want to thank you for everything and for making my dreams come true. I am honored to have been your scholarship recipient. Once again, I thank you for the opportunity, support, and trust. I hope that in the future, through my work and contribution to society, I will justify this valuable support that you have given me."

~ **Goran Dabić**

"I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for being with me all these six years. I tell everyone about this scholarship. My sponsors, specifically Mrs. Nenadić, are a wonderful woman, I want to thank her from the bottom of my heart. I only have words of thank you for all of you!"

~ **Karla Buhovac**

"I'm proud to inform you that I have become a member of the Croatian Medical Association, and I am currently in the process of joining the Ministry of Defense with the goal of becoming a military doctor and officer of the Croatian Army. I sincerely thank you and the Croatian School Foundation for all your efforts and support over the years."

~ **Martina Salamunović**

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support over the past three years and for your trust in me. Without your help and support, it would have been difficult for me to graduate from college, so I thank you for enabling me to take a step forward in my education."

~ **Lucia Andročec**

Student Reflections: Voices of the Future

Each year, we ask our students to share their thoughts about what the Croatian Scholarship Fund means to them. Their words are the truest reflection of our mission, and a beautiful reminder of why we do what we do.

"I'm here with some good news! I successfully completed my first year of college, with a weighted average of 4.82. Mathematics was a bit of a struggle for me and I was one point short of an excellent grade. The new academic year has started and I feel motivated. I hope this one will be even better than last."

~ **Marko Vrančić**, University of Zagreb

"In mid-June I successfully completed all my exams with an average grade of 4.1. Now I am looking forward to the start of the new academic year and will soon be leaving for Osijek!"

~ **Rafaela Jagatić**, University of Osijek



Rafaela, 2nd from right, and family

"I just finished my third year of study, and I am about to enroll in my fourth year. I hope to continue working as I have been doing so far.

Once again, I would like to thank you and your organization. This is a great contribution to us students and studying would probably be much more difficult if we did not have this opportunity."

~ **Damir Rozić**, University of Mostar

"The CSF scholarship has changed my life. It gave me the courage to pursue a medical degree knowing that someone believed in me."

~ **Anamarija**, University of Zagreb

"Receiving this scholarship meant more than financial help. It gave me confidence that my hard work matters."

~ **Luka**, University of Split

"CSF is not just a fund. It's a family that celebrates every success and lifts us through every challenge."

~ **Katarina**, University of Dubrovnik

To all our current students and alumni: thank you for inspiring us every day. You remind us that education, when paired with opportunity, can change not just one life, but entire communities.

CSF/Miljenko Grgich Endowment

CSF/Miljenko Grgich Endowment Program offers scholarships and internships to students in the Viticulture and Enology Program at the University of Zagreb. This year four students received scholarships and three graduates were selected for the internship program. We are pleased to share students comment and expression of gratitude to Mr. Grgich and CSF.

Grigich Intern Corner

"I am doing my internship at Ballantine Vineyards, which owns three vineyards in different locations, with a total area of about 100 acres. In addition to its own production, the winery also deals with "custom crush" production, i.e. it provides grape processing, fermentation and wine care services up to bottling. Production is predominantly based on red grape varieties, however, sparkling wine and white wines from Chenin blanc and Malvasia bianca varieties are also produced.

My work at the winery includes a lot of different things, which is very good for improving knowledge in different areas. This includes receiving and processing grapes, topping barrels, cleaning and preparing tanks, presses and other equipment, taking care of wooden barrels, working with a forklift, pumping over during the fermentation of red wines, etc. Ultimately, I can say that I am very satisfied with the overall experience!"

~ **Loris Derenčinović**



Every scholarship tells a story, not just of academic success, but of transformation, perseverance, and purpose.

Two of our distinguished alumni, Luka Antunović and Dr. Matija Lesković, embody how the Croatian Scholarship Fund's mission continues to ripple outward, shaping lives and strengthening the Croatian community at home and abroad.

Luka Antunović — Building Justice and Opportunity

When Luka Antunović received his CSF scholarship, he was a young law student in Zagreb, driven by ambition but uncertain about how to fund his future. "Their faith in me gave me confidence to work harder," Luka recalls, of his sponsor Joan Kumparak. "It wasn't just about money; it was about knowing someone cared about my potential."

After earning his law degree and passing the Bar Exam, Luka founded his own practice. Today, more than a decade later, he serves as the Managing Partner of ZBA Law Firm, leading a team of 25 across four offices in Croatia and Slovenia. His firm has become known for excellence and mentorship, a reflection of the support Luka once received himself.

"Every time I help a young lawyer find their footing, I think about the scholarship that once lifted me," he says. "It changed how I define success, not as what I achieve, but what I can give back."

Luka now works with clients around the world, helping them navigate Croatian citizenship, investment, and business opportunities.



Dr. Matija Lesković — From Scholar to Cellarmaster

For Dr. Matija Lesković, the scholarship marked the beginning of a journey that would take him from Croatia's vineyards to South Africa's research labs and, eventually, to Austria's storied wineries.

Supported by the Miljenko "Mike" Grgich Endowment, Matija earned his Ph.D. in Winemaking at Stellenbosch University, where he explored the science and artistry of wine on an international stage.

"It wasn't just about research," he says. "It was about understanding how tradition, innovation, and community come together, much like the CSF itself."

Today, Matija serves as a Junior Cellarmaster at Weingut Esterházy, a renowned Austrian winery celebrated for its craftsmanship. He applies his scientific training daily, refining his skills while helping produce world-class wines.

Yet his heart remains deeply tied to Croatia. Matija regularly collaborates with winemakers back home and contributes to the magazine Vinske Zvijezde, sharing his expertise and vision for the future of Croatian winemaking.

"The CSF scholarship was more than financial support," he says. "It was an investment in the kind of person I wanted to become."

A Legacy That Grows

Both Luka and Matija remind us that the Croatian Scholarship Fund's impact doesn't end at graduation. It lives on in every client advised, every wine crafted, every student inspired. Through them, the spirit of generosity and excellence continues to flourish, building a bridge from opportunity to achievement, from Croatia to the world.

Photo Gallery continued from front page



Nina, instrumental in chairing the extensive silent auction for CSF's Dinner Galas at the Croatian American Cultural Center in Sacramento

Save the Date

**Stay tuned for the CSF's Golf
Tournament in Morgan Hill
coming up next
Spring, 2026!**



Did you know that CSF is now on LinkedIn?

See where our students are now. Check out the Alumni Section. We just started a project to get our alumni to join our page, and we have had some great feedback. Please follow and read the article on our page to learn more about it:

<https://www.linkedin.com/school/croatian-scholarship-fund/>



Fund RAISING DRIVE

CSF is a non-political, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and all contributions are tax-deductible. Now you can send your donation/scholarship payments utilizing Zelle (bank to bank fund transfer). **Please take a moment to fill out this response card.**

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