



The American-Scandinavian Foundation Celebrates its 100th Anniversary at Centennial Ball

*Royalty from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark and Presidents of Finland and Iceland
were Guests of Honor at this milestone event*

New York, NY (October 25, 2011) - Amid the pomp and circumstance of a historic evening, Nordic-American friendship was on full display as Scandinavian Heads of State, European royalty, top diplomats, and distinguished members of the U.S. and Nordic cultural, educational, business, and philanthropic communities celebrated the 100th Anniversary of The American-Scandinavian Foundation at its Centennial Ball in New York City.

Some 1,200 guests attended the black-tie affair in recognition of the ASF's 100 years of building cultural and educational bridges between the United States and the Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden.

Special Guests of Honor were: Their Majesties King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia of Sweden; Their Majesties King Harald V and Queen Sonja of Norway; His Excellency Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, President of Iceland, and Mrs. Dorrit Moussaieff; Her Excellency Tarja Halonen, President of Finland; and Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary of Denmark.

"The Centennial Ball offered us an opportunity to reflect on the 100-year history and achievements of our unique organization and to celebrate the mutual respect and understanding between the United States and Nordic countries," said Edward P. Gallagher, President of The American-Scandinavian Foundation. "We were deeply grateful for the presence of our honored and distinguished guests at this extraordinary celebration."

On behalf of the Scandinavian royalty, King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden – the ASF's longest serving Patron – spoke about the strong links between Nordic countries and the United States, and the organization's work in furthering "understanding and appreciation of Scandinavian thought and culture in the U.S."

"That we all cherish our relationship with the United States may not be surprising when considering the fact that there are 11 million Americans of Scandinavian ancestry here in the U.S., sharing fundamental values to our societies," said King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden. "The desire to protect and enhance these common bonds was the basis for the founding of the American Scandinavian Foundation," said King Carl XVI Gustaf.

The ASF has served as a leading cultural institution in promoting Nordic culture in the U.S. since its founding in 1911 by Danish-American industrialist Niels Poulson and a small group of Scandinavians and Americans. King Carl XVI Gustaf's great-grandfather, King Gustav V, served as a founding Patron of the ASF, with King Haakon VII of Norway and King Christian X of Denmark.

Richard E. Oldenburg, Co-Chair of the ASF's Board of Trustees, presented each Guest of Honor with a crystal commemorative statue to celebrate the 100th anniversary and in appreciation of their presence at the ASF Centennial activities.

The Honorable Barry White, US Ambassador to Norway, delivered welcome remarks and extended congratulations to the ASF on its 100th anniversary from President Barack Obama. A special videotaped message was delivered by President William J. Clinton, and a letter of congratulations was presented from President George W. Bush on the milestone celebration.

Proceeds from the evening gala will support the Foundation's ongoing efforts to promote Nordic-American exchange and culture. ASF President Edward P. Gallagher announced the Second Century Fund, which builds on the previously established ASF Centennial Fund, to dramatically expand the organization's programming into the next century. "In the coming year, we will be continuing to grow this Fund, to ensure the continuing vitality of all our programs of educational and cultural exchange," said Gallagher.

A special video presentation of former Fellows and Interns who have participated in the ASF programs highlighted the exchange programs' tremendous impact around the world. Each year, the ASF awards nearly \$1 million in fellowships and grants to individual students, scholars, professionals, and artists for study and research in the United States and abroad. To date, more than 30,000 Americans and Scandinavians have participated in the ASF exchange programs.

Actress Liv Ullmann served as Masters of Ceremonies for the Centennial Ball. Tony Award winner and powerful baritone Brian Stokes Mitchell performed American classics, including "The Impossible Dream" from the Broadway show *Man of La Mancha*.

Following the program, the Ball concluded with a festive party of dancing led by Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary of Denmark.

ABOUT: Since its founding in 1911, the ASF has been dedicated to promoting mutual understanding through educational exchange between the U.S. and the Nordic countries.

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