



## 250 YEARS OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE AND ALBANIAN-AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP



**“The friendship between the Albanian people and the United States is one of history's rare examples of a relationship founded not upon geography or power, but upon a shared and enduring belief in liberty.”**

**The author**

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# **250 YEARS OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE AND ALBANIAN–AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP**

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**By Mal Berisha**

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## **Introduction**

As the United States of America commemorates the 250th anniversary of its Declaration of Independence on July 4, 2026, the world reflects upon the enduring significance of the document that gave birth to one of the most influential democratic nations in human history. Nearly two and a half centuries after its adoption, the Declaration of Independence continues to inspire peoples across the globe who cherish liberty, human dignity, self-government, and the universal right of nations to determine their own destiny.

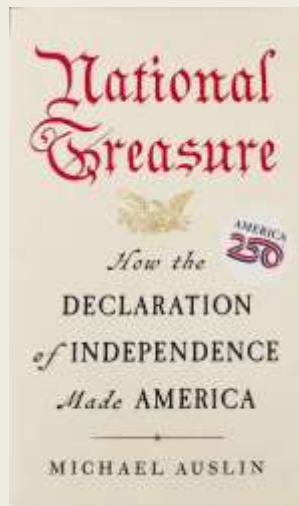
Among the peoples who found lasting inspiration in the American example were the Albanians. Although separated from the United States by geography, language, culture, and historical experience, they developed a profound admiration

for the principles upon which the American Republic was founded. Over time, that admiration evolved into one of the most sincere and enduring friendships between a small Balkan nation and one of the world's leading democratic powers.

This study explores the historical evolution of that remarkable friendship. It traces Albanian–American relations from their earliest beginnings through the contributions of missionaries, educators, diplomats, scholars, writers, journalists, statesmen, and countless other individuals whose vision, dedication, and friendship laid the foundations of an enduring partnership between the Albanian and American peoples. It also examines the decisive role played by the leaders and statesmen of the post–Cold War era, whose vision transformed a long-standing friendship into a strategic partnership founded upon shared democratic values, mutual trust, and common aspirations.

Yet the history of Albanian–American relations is far more than a diplomatic narrative. It is a story of shared ideals, mutual respect, and enduring human connections forged over more than a century. It is also a story of remarkable resilience. Wars, occupations, dictatorship, and nearly half a century without diplomatic relations failed to extinguish the admiration that generations of Albanians held

for the United States. When freedom returned to Albania in the early 1990s, that friendship re-emerged with extraordinary strength, demonstrating that it had never truly disappeared but had endured decades of enforced separation.

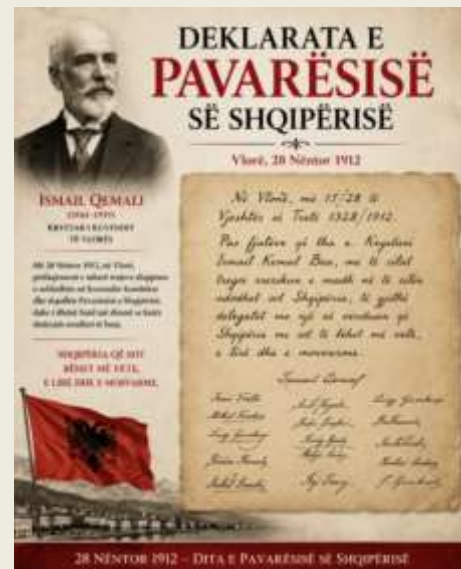


My inspiration for undertaking this study came from reading *National Treasure: “How the Declaration of Independence Made America”* by Michael Auslin. His work offers a compelling reminder that the Declaration of Independence is far more than a historic document preserved in the National Archives of the United States. It is a living testament to the principles of liberty, equality, self-government, and the inalienable rights of humanity. Those principles not only shaped the United States but also inspired generations of men and women—and countless nations—across the world, including the Albanian people in

their own long struggle for freedom, national independence, democracy, and their enduring friendship with America.

## ALBANIAN AND AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Although separated by 136 years, the American Declaration of Independence of 1776 and the Albanian



Declaration of Independence of 1912 were born of the same universal aspiration: the determination of a people to govern themselves in freedom and dignity.

The historical circumstances surrounding the two declarations were profoundly different. The American colonies proclaimed their independence from the British Crown and established a constitutional republic founded upon the principles of popular sovereignty, representative

government, and individual liberty. Albania, by contrast, declared its independence after nearly five centuries of Ottoman rule, at a time when the collapse of an empire and the competing ambitions of neighboring states threatened not only its political future but its very existence.

Despite these different historical settings, the two declarations were united by a common philosophy. Both affirmed the right of a people to determine its own destiny, rejected foreign domination, and sought to establish political legitimacy upon the consent and will of the nation rather than upon imperial authority.

For Albanians, the American experience became much more than a chapter of foreign history. It demonstrated that the ideals of liberty, constitutional government, and national self-determination could become the foundation of a modern democratic state. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, generations of Albanian patriots looked to the United States not only with admiration but also with hope, seeing in the American Republic an enduring example of the successful realization of those universal principles.

The history that follows is the history of how shared ideals gave birth to an enduring friendship between two peoples—a friendship built not upon strategic convenience or geographic proximity, but upon a common belief in

freedom, democracy, human dignity, and national self-determination.

## **FASCISM, COMMUNISM, AND THE IMPOSITION OF ANTI-AMERICANISM IN ALBANIA**

The Italian Fascist invasion of Albania in April 1939, followed by the German occupation during the Second World War, abruptly interrupted the country's independent political development. Yet the most profound rupture in Albanian–American relations came after the communist takeover in November 1944, when Albania fell under one of the most isolated and repressive totalitarian regimes in Europe.

For nearly half a century, diplomatic relations between Albania and the United States remained severed. The fundamental principles upon which the United States had been founded—individual liberty, political pluralism, free enterprise, freedom of conscience, and freedom of expression—were systematically denounced by the communist regime as ideological enemies. Any public expression of admiration for the United States, any contact with Americans, and often even the simple mention of America in a positive light could expose an individual to

surveillance, discrimination, imprisonment, internal exile, or even execution.

Yet ideology proved incapable of erasing memory. When communism finally collapsed in the early 1990s, the extraordinary enthusiasm with which Albanians welcomed the restoration of relations with the United States demonstrated that the friendship between the two peoples had never been extinguished.

## **FREEDOM WORKS AND THE END OF COMMUNISM IN ALBANIA**

The collapse of communist rule in Albania marked one of the most significant turning points in the nation's modern history. After nearly half a century of political isolation, ideological repression, and the systematic suppression of fundamental freedoms, the Albanian people embarked upon a difficult but determined path toward democracy and reintegration into the community of free nations.



The restoration of diplomatic relations between Albania and the United States symbolized far more than the renewal of official contacts between two governments.

This historic transformation was perhaps best captured in two simple yet unforgettable words: "**Freedom Works.**" They were spoken by James A. Baker III during the extraordinary reception that greeted him in Tirana on June 22, 1991. For hundreds of thousands of Albanians who filled the streets of the capital, those words were far more than a diplomatic message.

They became the affirmation of a dream that generations had preserved throughout decades of dictatorship and isolation. Secretary Baker's visit symbolized not only America's support for Albania's democratic transition but also the rebirth of a friendship rooted in shared ideals and sustained across generations.

## THE DECLARATION OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE AND ITS UNIVERSAL LEGACY

On July 4, 1776, representatives of thirteen British colonies assembled in Philadelphia and adopted a document that would forever alter the course of world history: the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America. More than the birth certificate of a new nation, it became one of the defining political texts of the modern age, transforming the principles of liberty and self-government into universal ideals.

Drafted principally by Thomas Jefferson and adopted by the Second Continental Congress, the Declaration announced the birth of a nation founded not upon dynastic privilege, inherited power, or imperial authority, but upon the revolutionary principle that governments derive "their just powers from the consent of the governed." In doing so, it challenged the prevailing political order of the eighteenth century and established a new moral foundation for legitimate government.

Its opening words remain among the most influential ever written:

*"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their*

*Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."*



These principles represented a profound departure from the political realities of their time. At an age when much of the world remained under monarchies, empires, and hereditary rule, the Declaration proclaimed that liberty was not a privilege bestowed by rulers but an inherent right belonging to every human being.

## **THE INFLUENCE OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE ON THE ALBANIAN PEOPLE: INSPIRED BY AMERICAN PRINCIPLES**

The ideals proclaimed in the American Declaration of Independence did not remain confined to the borders of the United States. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they inspired peoples throughout the world who sought liberty, constitutional government, national

independence, and the right to determine their own future. Among those peoples were the Albanians.

For a nation that spent centuries struggling to preserve its identity and ultimately secure its independence, the American experience represented far more than the success of another country. It demonstrated that the principles of liberty, representative government, and the sovereignty of the people could become the foundation of a modern democratic state.

As a result, Albanian admiration for America gradually evolved into something far deeper than diplomatic friendship. It became a relationship founded upon shared values, mutual respect, and a common belief in liberty, democracy, justice, and human dignity.

Few relationships between a great power and a small nation have been sustained so consistently by common ideals rather than by geography, economic interests, or political expediency.

## **THE FIRST ALBANIANS IN AMERICA AND THE BIRTH OF THE ALBANIAN–AMERICAN COMMUNITY**

The enduring friendship between the Albanian people and the United States were laid by ordinary Albanian men and women who crossed the Atlantic Ocean in search of freedom, opportunity, and a better future.

During the final decades of the nineteenth century, Albania remained under Ottoman rule. Economic hardship, political uncertainty, and limited educational and professional opportunities compelled many Albanians to seek a new life abroad. At the same time, the United States had emerged as a destination of hope for millions of immigrants from Europe and beyond.

Among the earliest known Albanians to arrive in the United States was a young Orthodox Christian from the city of Korça known as **Nikola**, whose arrival toward the end of the nineteenth century marked the beginning of organized Albanian immigration to America.

*Although the exact details of his life remain limited, Nikola occupies an important place in Albanian-American history as a symbolic pioneer whose journey marked the beginning of a migration that would profoundly influence both the Albanian national movement and the development of one of the world's most successful Albanian diasporas.*

The first Albanian immigrants settled primarily in the industrial centers of the northeastern United States, including Boston, New York, Worcester, Philadelphia, and other growing cities where employment opportunities were abundant.

Unlike many immigrant communities whose principal objective was economic advancement, Albanians in America quickly assumed a broader national mission. At a time when Albania had not yet secured its independence and when its very existence was threatened by the territorial ambitions of neighboring states, Albanian immigrants became energetic advocates for their country's national cause.

Their communities evolved into centers of political activism, cultural preservation, and patriotic engagement.

Thus, the Albanian–American community was born not simply as an immigrant community but as a community united by two enduring commitments: loyalty to the United States, the country that had offered freedom and opportunity, and unwavering devotion to the independence, dignity, and future of Albania. This dual commitment would become one of the defining characteristics of Albanian–American history and would shape the unique friendship between the two peoples for generations to come.

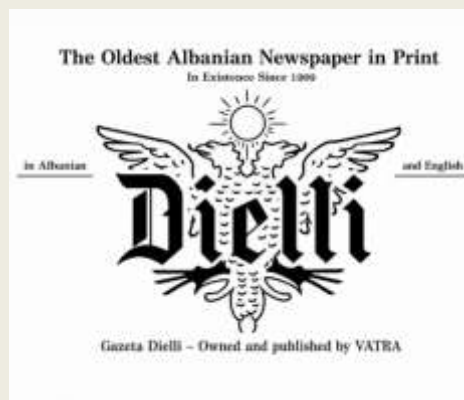
## THE ROLE OF THE PAN-ALBANIAN FEDERATION OF AMERICA “VATRA”



No institution has contributed more profoundly to the development of Albanian–American relations than the Pan-Albanian Federation of America, **VATRA**. Founded in Boston in 1912 through the vision and leadership of Fan S. Noli, Faik Konica, and other ardent Albanian patriots, VATRA united numerous Albanian associations throughout the United States into a single national organization dedicated to preserving Albanian identity while advancing the political interests of the Albanian nation.

Its establishment coincided with one of the most decisive moments in Albanian history. Although Albania proclaimed its independence in November 1912, the survival of the new state remained uncertain amid the Balkan Wars and the competing territorial ambitions of

neighboring countries. At this critical historical juncture, VATRA emerged as the principal representative of the Albanian national cause in the United States. Through public advocacy, diplomatic engagement, fundraising, publications, and close cooperation with American political, academic, religious, and intellectual circles, it succeeded in bringing the Albanian question before influential decision-makers in the United States and abroad.



Closely associated with VATRA was its official newspaper, **Dielli**, founded in 1909, three years before the Federation itself. More than a newspaper, *Dielli* became the intellectual and moral voice of the Albanian community in America. It informed, educated, and united generations of Albanian immigrants while fostering patriotism, civic responsibility, democratic values, and unwavering commitment to Albania's national cause. Together, VATRA and *Dielli* became inseparable institutions in the history of the Albanian-American community.

Throughout the twentieth century, VATRA served not merely as an ethnic organization but as an enduring bridge between two nations. It encouraged Albanian immigrants to become loyal and productive citizens of the United States while preserving their language, culture, historical memory, and deep attachment to their ancestral homeland.

The community that VATRA helped organize and inspire gradually developed into one of the most respected and successful Albanian diasporas in the world. Albanian Americans made themselves known in business, education, science, medicine, the arts, public service, entrepreneurship, and the armed forces, while continuing to support the aspirations of Albanians in Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and the Presheva Valley. Their achievements demonstrated that successful integration into American society could coexist with an enduring commitment to preserving national identity and serving the interests of the Albanian nation.

More importantly, VATRA became a lasting symbol of the friendship between the Albanian and American peoples—a friendship founded not merely on common interests, but on shared ideals of liberty, democracy, national dignity, and public service.

## THE ALBANIAN AMERICAN CIVIC LEAGUE AND THE MODERN ERA OF ALBANIAN–AMERICAN ADVOCACY



If the Pan-Albanian Federation of America, VATRA, became the principal voice of the Albanian immigrant community during the struggle for Albania's independence and survival in the early twentieth century, the closing decades of that century witnessed the emergence of another institution that would profoundly influence the modern history of Albanian–American relations.

That institution was the **Albanian American Civic League (AACL)**, founded in 1989 by former United States Congressman Joseph J. DioGuardi together with a group of Albanian Americans and American supporters of the Albanian cause. The establishment of the Civic League marked the beginning of a new era in Albanian-American advocacy—one characterized by direct engagement with the United States Congress, the Executive Branch, the media, and American public opinion.

Joseph DioGuardi, whose family originated from the historic Arbëresh communities of southern Italy, brought to

the Albanian cause not only a profound sense of historical identity but also the credibility and experience of a former Member of Congress. Under his leadership, the Albanian American Civic League became one of the most influential advocacy organizations in the history of the Albanian diaspora.

As Yugoslavia entered its violent process of disintegration during the late 1980s and 1990s, the Civic League emerged as one of the strongest American advocates for the Albanian population of Kosovo. Through congressional hearings, fact-finding missions, policy briefings, public campaigns, and continuous engagement with members of Congress and successive American administrations, the organization brought unprecedented attention to the systematic violations of human rights committed against Albanians under the regime of Slobodan Milošević.

An equally indispensable role was played by Shirley Cloyes DioGuardi. Through her research, publications, policy analysis, public advocacy, and tireless organizational work, she became one of the foremost American experts on Albanian affairs and an essential partner in advancing the Civic League's mission in Washington and internationally.

Together, VATRA and the Albanian American Civic League represent the two great institutional pillars of

Albanian-American history. VATRA gave organized expression to the aspirations of Albanians during the struggle for Albania's independence and statehood. The Civic League carried that tradition into a new era by championing the rights and freedoms of Albanians in Kosovo and throughout the Balkans.

## **THE AMERICAN FRIENDS OF ALBANIA: MISSIONARIES, EDUCATORS, WRITERS, DIPLOMATS, AND SCHOLARS**

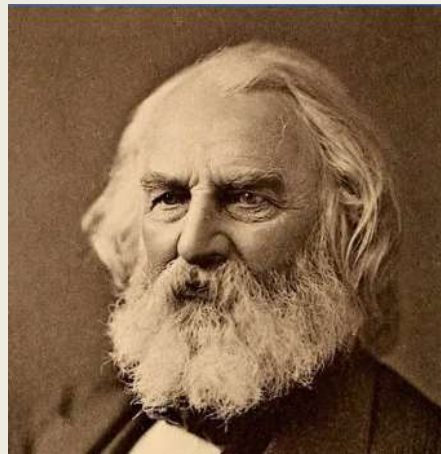
The history of Albanian-American friendship is the story of remarkable individuals—Americans who, over more than a century, discovered Albania, admired its people, defended its rights, educated its youth, studied its history, and gave voice to its aspirations. Through their lives and work, they transformed curiosity into understanding, understanding into friendship, and friendship into one of the most enduring relationships between the Albanian and American peoples.

They came from many different professions and backgrounds. Some arrived in Albania as missionaries, educators, diplomats, journalists, writers, scholars, poets, explorers, or humanitarians. Some spent only a brief period among the Albanian people, while others devoted decades—and in certain cases nearly their entire lives—to Albania and its future. Others never visited Albania at all, yet

through their writings, scholarship, advocacy, and public service they profoundly influenced the world's understanding of the Albanian nation.

Collectively, these remarkable men and women built a lasting moral, educational, cultural, and political bridge between the United States and Albania. Their individual contributions differed greatly, yet they were united by one common characteristic: each, in his or her own way, became a genuine friend of Albania.

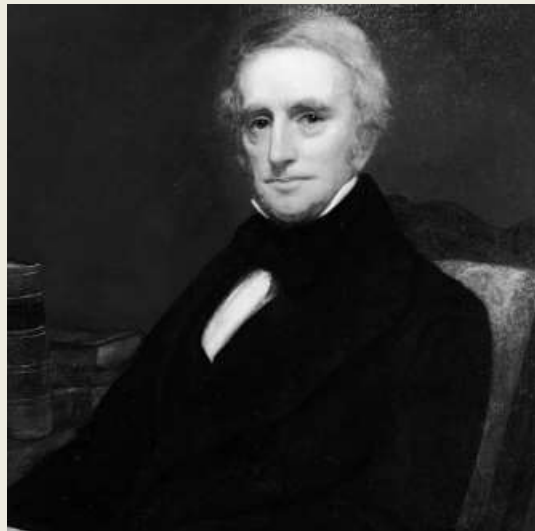
### **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**



One of the earliest and most distinguished American literary voices associated with Albania was the great poet **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**. Although he never visited Albania, Longfellow introduced the Albanian national hero, Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg, to American literature through his poem *Scanderbeg*. By portraying Skanderbeg as a

universal symbol of resistance against tyranny and the defense of freedom, Longfellow brought the Albanian national epic to generations of English-speaking readers.

### **Clement Clarke Moore**



In 1850, **Clement Clarke Moore** published in New York his book ***George Castriot, Surnamed Scanderbeg, King of Albania***. It represents one of the earliest substantial works published in the United States devoted entirely to the life and legacy of Albania's national hero, Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg.

## Charles Telford Erickson



Others came to know Albania not through literature but through service. Among them, few names occupy a more honored place than Charles Telford Erickson. Arriving in Albania in the early twentieth century, Erickson became far more than a missionary. He was an educator, humanitarian, advocate, writer, and one of the most devoted American defenders of Albania's right to exist as an independent nation. His work in establishing the Albanian-American School of Agriculture in Kavajë and his extensive writings on Albania remain among the most important American contributions to Albanian education and national development.

## Harry T. Fultz

Another towering figure was Harry T. Fultz, whose name became synonymous with modern technical education in Albania. Through the Albanian-American Technical School in Tirana, Fultz educated generations of young Albanians in practical knowledge, professional discipline, civic responsibility, and public service.

## Rose Wilder Lane



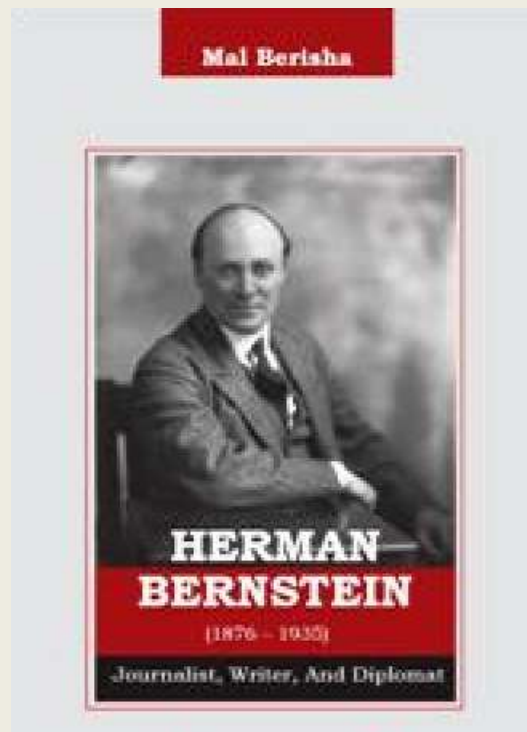
American women also made indispensable contributions to introducing Albania to the wider world. Among them, **Rose Wilder Lane** occupies a place of special distinction. Through her writings and journalism, she presented Albania to American readers as a nation of dignity, ancient traditions, and an enduring love of freedom. Her books ***The Peaks of Shala*** and ***Notes on Albania*** remain

among the most influential American works dedicated to Albania's landscape, culture, and national character.

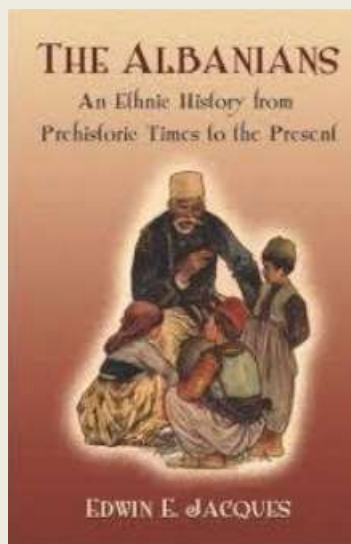
### **Dr. Edith Pierpont Stickney**

Dr. **Edith Pierpont Stickney** deserves particular recognition. Her scholarly work, *Southern Albania or Northern Epirus in European International Affairs, 1912–1923*, based on her doctoral research, offered one of the earliest balanced and meticulously documented studies of the diplomatic and political challenges confronting the Albanian state during its formative years.

### **Ambassador Herman Bernstein**



Among American diplomats, few figures occupy as distinctive a place as **Herman Bernstein**. Serving as United States Minister to Albania from 1930 to 1933, Bernstein represented far more than American diplomacy. He became a sincere friend of the Albanian people and an unwavering advocate of mutual understanding between the two nations.



## **Edwin E. Jacques**

Another American whose name is permanently associated with Albania is **Edwin E. Jacques**. Teacher, missionary, historian, and scholar, Jacques devoted decades to studying the Albanian people and their past. His monumental work, *The Albanians: An Ethnic History from Prehistoric Times to the Present*, remains one of the most

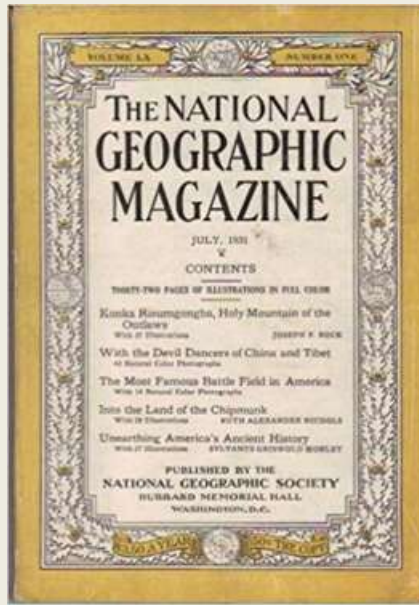
comprehensive histories of Albania written in the English language

### **Nicholas C. Pano and Bernd J. Fischer**

The American scholarly tradition has been further enriched by historians such as Nicholas C. Pano and Bernd J. Fischer, whose meticulous research has established Albania as a subject of serious international academic inquiry. Together with scholars including Theron J. Damon and Kenneth C. Danforth, they broadened and deepened international understanding of Albanian history, politics, and society.

### ***National Geographic Magazine vs vs Shqiptarët – Lisa mbi Truallin Ilir***

For more than a century, ***National Geographic Magazine*** has also played an important role in introducing Albania to millions of readers through travel writing, historical essays, scientific reporting, and exceptional photography. Its extensive archive constitutes one of the richest American journalistic collections devoted to Albania's history, geography, culture, and people. My own study, ***Shqiptarët – Lisa mbi Truallin Ilir***, represents the first comprehensive examination of this remarkable body of material and its contribution to the international image of Albania.



*The study of these individuals has also formed an important part of the author's own scholarly work over several decades, resulting in books, translations, documentary films, lectures, and archival research dedicated to preserving and bringing their legacy to wider public attention.*

Their legacy reminds us that the strongest bridges between nations are built through knowledge, service, mutual respect, and shared ideals.

## **THE POLITICAL ARCHITECTS THAT SHAPED THE ALBANIAN–AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP: FROM WOODROW WILSON TO THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP OF TODAY**

The history of Albanian–American friendship was shaped by generations of American political leaders whose vision and decisions profoundly influenced the destiny of the Albanian nation.

From President Woodrow Wilson's defense of Albania's independence after the First World War to the restoration of democracy in Albania, the liberation and independence of Kosovo, Albania's accession to NATO, and the strategic partnership that exists today, successive American administrations demonstrated a remarkable continuity of purpose. Although they belonged to different political parties and served in different historical circumstances, they shared a common conviction: that the Albanian people deserved the opportunity to live in freedom, democracy, peace, and security.

A complete list of American friends of Albania, including scholars, writers, missionaries, diplomats, military commanders, and public officials, is provided in **Appendix A** at the end of this study.

## **PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES WHO SHAPED ALBANIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS**

**Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924)**

**28th President of the United States (1913–1921)**



Few American statesmen hold a more honored place in Albanian history than President Woodrow Wilson. At the Paris Peace Conference, he firmly defended the principle of national self-determination and opposed any settlement that would have partitioned Albania among its neighbors. His principled stand was instrumental in preserving Albania's independence and territorial integrity.

For generations of Albanians, Wilson has been remembered as one of the principal defenders of their nation's survival. His leadership marked the first great political milestone in

Albanian–American relations and laid the moral foundation for the enduring friendship between the two nations.

**PRESIDENT HERBERT HOOVER (1874–1964)**  
**31st President of the United States (1929–1933)**



Long before he entered the White House, Herbert Hoover demonstrated a generous commitment to Albania's future. As a private citizen, he anonymously donated \$10,000 to support the American-Albanian Agricultural Institute established by Charles Telford Erickson in Golem, Kavajë. At Hoover's own request, this remarkable act of generosity remained unknown for many years.

His contribution reflected a belief that education and agricultural development were essential to the progress of a young nation.

**PRESIDENT JAMES EARL (JIMMY) CARTER (1924–2024)**  
**39th President of the United States (1977–1981)**



Following his presidency, Jimmy Carter continued to devote himself to international peace, democracy, and conflict resolution. During his two-day visit to Tirana in September 1993, he met with President Sali Berisha and Prime Minister Aleksandër Meksi.

The principal focus of his visit was the rapidly deteriorating situation in Kosovo and the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Carter's engagement reflected the growing concern of the American leaders for peace, stability, and human rights in the Western Balkans during a period of profound regional transformation.

**PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN (1911–2004)**  
**40th President of the United States (1981–1989)**



Ronald Reagan profoundly influenced the international environment that ultimately made Albania's democratic transition possible. His firm policy toward the Soviet bloc accelerated the decline of communist regimes throughout Eastern Europe, creating the conditions that would eventually lead to Albania's emergence from decades of isolation.

His admiration for humanitarian service was reflected in his decision to award the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Mother Teresa in 1985. The later decision of the United States Congress to grant her Honorary United States Citizenship further symbolized America's respect for one of the greatest humanitarian figures of Albanian origin.

**George H. W. Bush (1924–2018)**  
**41st President of the United States (1989–1993)**



President George H. W. Bush played a pivotal role in restoring Albanian–American relations after the collapse of communism. His administration welcomed President Sali Berisha to the White House, granted Albania Most-Favored-Nation trade status, and strongly supported the country's democratic transition. His historic "Christmas Warning" of December 1992 deterred the regime of Slobodan Milošević from using military force in Kosovo, marking a turning point in U.S. policy toward the region. In 1996, President Bush reaffirmed his friendship with Albania during a private visit, accompanied by Colin Powell, further strengthening the enduring partnership between the two nations.

**William Jefferson Clinton (1946– )**  
**42nd President of the United States (1993–2001)**



Among contemporary American presidents, Bill Clinton occupies a uniquely honored place in the hearts of Albanians, especially those of Kosovo. Under his leadership, the United States led North Atlantic Treaty Organization's intervention against the regime of Slobodan Milošević in 1999, ending the humanitarian catastrophe and ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. His decisive leadership paved the way for Kosovo's liberation and eventual independence. President Clinton also strengthened relations with democratic Albania, reinforcing the friendship between the two countries. For Albanians, he remains an enduring

symbol of freedom, humanitarian leadership, and America's steadfast commitment to justice.

**George W. Bush (1946– )**

**43rd President of the United States (2001–2009)**



President George W. Bush elevated Albanian–American relations to an unprecedented strategic level. In June 2007, he became the first sitting President of the United States to visit Albania, an event widely regarded as a historic milestone in bilateral relations. During his visit, President Bush reaffirmed America's strong support for Albania's membership in North Atlantic Treaty Organization and famously declared that Kosovo's independence was only "a

matter of time." His statement became a defining moment in Kosovo's diplomatic path toward independence. His presidency transformed the friendship between Albania and the United States into a mature strategic partnership based on shared democratic values, regional security, and Euro-Atlantic integration.

**Barack Hussein Obama II (1961– )**  
**44th President of the United States (2009–2017)**



Barack Obama continued the longstanding bipartisan American policy of support for Albania and Kosovo. His administration consistently reaffirmed that Kosovo's independence was irreversible, encouraged further

international recognition, and supported the strengthening of Kosovo's democratic institutions.

President Obama also reinforced strategic cooperation with Albania as a valued NATO ally and reaffirmed America's enduring commitment to peace, security, democratic governance, and stability throughout the Western Balkans.

### **PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP (1946–)**

**45th President of the United States (2017–2021) and 47th President of the United States (2025–)**



Donald Trump maintained close relations with Albania as a NATO ally while placing Kosovo high on the agenda of American diplomacy in the Western Balkans.

His administration appointed Richard Grenell as Special Presidential Envoy for the Kosovo–Serbia Dialogue and successfully brokered the Washington Economic Normalization Agreements of September 4, 2020.

These agreements promoted regional economic cooperation, infrastructure development, investment, and transportation links while reaffirming the United States' commitment to peace and prosperity in the region.

During his administration, Kosovo also established diplomatic relations with Israel, marking another significant milestone in its international recognition.

**Joseph Robinette Biden Jr. (1942– )**  
**46th President of the United States (2021–2025)**



Throughout more than five decades of public service as a Senator, Vice President, and President, Joe Biden has been one of the strongest American supporters of the Albanian people, particularly of Kosovo. During the 1990s, he became a leading voice in the U.S.

Senate condemning the policies of Slobodan Milošević and advocating decisive American leadership to stop ethnic cleansing through North Atlantic Treaty Organization

intervention. As Vice President and President, he consistently supported Kosovo's sovereignty, democratic development, Euro-Atlantic integration, and Albania's role as a reliable NATO ally, reinforcing the enduring U.S.–Albanian strategic partnership.

## **SECRETARIES OF STATE AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF ALBANIAN–AMERICAN RELATIONS**

Throughout the modern era of Albanian–American relations, successive Secretaries of State of the United States transformed the strategic vision of American Presidents into practical diplomacy.

Through their leadership, they guided the restoration of relations after the fall of communism, supported Albania's democratic transformation, defended the rights of the Albanian people in Kosovo, strengthened regional peace and stability, and deepened the strategic partnership that today unites Albania and the United States.

## **James A. Baker III**

**61st United States Secretary of State (1989–1992)**



Few moments in Albanian–American relations are remembered more vividly than the visit of Secretary of State James A. Baker III to Tirana on June 22, 1991—the first ever by a U.S. Secretary of State. Arriving during Albania's transition from communist isolation to democracy, Baker was welcomed by hundreds of thousands of Albanians. His memorable declaration, "Freedom Works," became a lasting symbol of hope and democratic transformation. More than a diplomatic milestone, the visit marked the rebirth of Albanian–American friendship and reaffirmed the United States' commitment to Albania's democratic future, opening

a new era of freedom, partnership, and close bilateral relations.

**Madeleine Albright (1937–2022)**

**64th United States Secretary of State (1997–2001)**



Few American diplomats occupy a more honored place in the hearts of Albanians than Madeleine Albright. As Secretary of State during the Kosovo crisis, she was one of the principal architects of the diplomatic strategy that led to North Atlantic Treaty Organization's 1999 intervention against the regime of Slobodan Milošević. Her unwavering commitment to human rights, international law, and the protection of civilians helped end the campaign of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. For Albanians, Albright remains a symbol of moral courage, principled leadership, and

America's enduring commitment to freedom, justice, and human dignity.

**Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton (1947– )**  
**67th United States Secretary of State (2009–2013)**

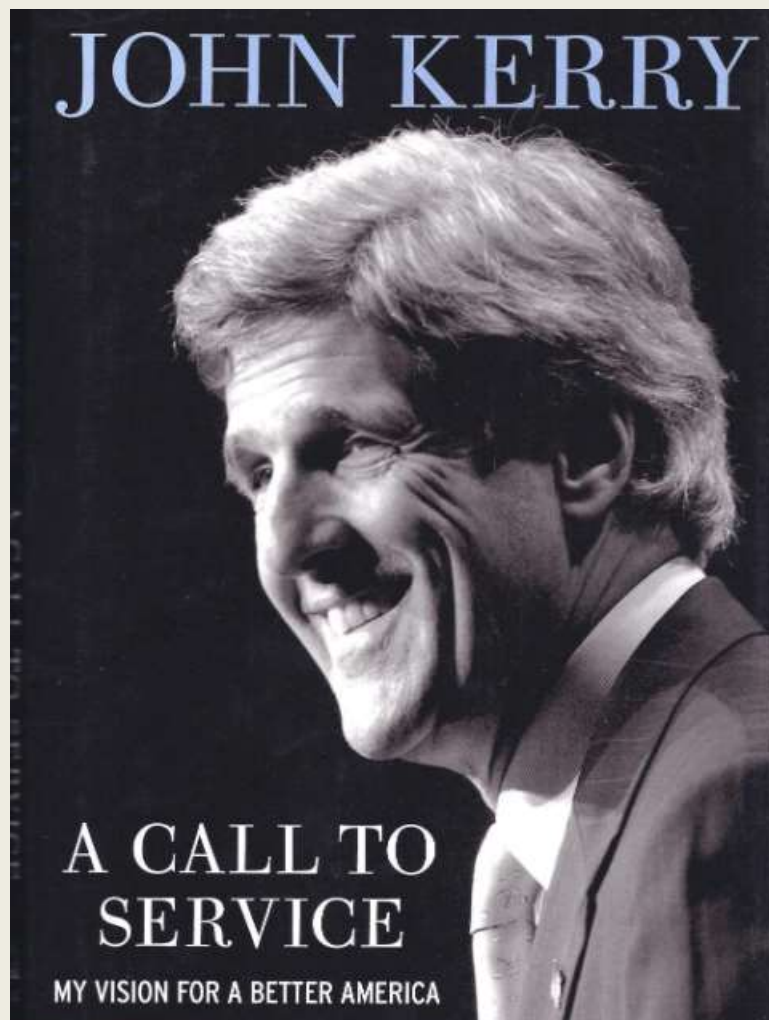


Hillary Rodham Clinton further strengthened the strategic partnership between the United States and Albania during a period of Albania's consolidation as a North Atlantic Treaty Organization ally and its continued progress toward Euro-Atlantic integration. During her official visit to Tirana on November 1, 2012, marking the centennial of Albania's independence, she praised the country's democratic achievements and encouraged continued reforms. Secretary

Clinton declared that Albania had the potential to become "a model not just for Europe, but for the world." Her visit reaffirmed America's enduring support for Albania's democracy, regional leadership, and Euro-Atlantic future.

**John Forbes Kerry (1943– )**

**68th United States Secretary of State (2013–2017)**



John Kerry continued the longstanding bipartisan American policy of close cooperation with Albania and unwavering support for peace and stability in the Western Balkans. During his visit to Tirana on February 14, 2016, Secretary Kerry reaffirmed Albania's importance as a trusted North Atlantic Treaty Organization ally and praised its constructive role in promoting democratic development, regional cooperation, and international security. He also reiterated strong U.S. support for Albania's Euro-Atlantic integration. His visit confirmed that the post-Cold War strategic partnership had matured into one of the strongest bilateral relationships between the United States and any nation in the Western Balkans

## **THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND THE DEFENSE OF THE ALBANIAN CAUSE**

The history of Albanian–American relations demonstrates that American support for the Albanian people was never the achievement of a single individual, administration, or political party. Rather, it emerged from a remarkable bipartisan tradition sustained by Presidents, Secretaries of State, Senators, Members of Congress, diplomats, military leaders, and civic advocates who, over more than a century, recognized the Albanian people's

aspirations for liberty, democracy, national self-determination, and equal rights.

Senators and Members of Congress helped transform the Albanian question from a little-known regional issue into an important priority of United States policy in the Balkans.

The following statesmen represent some of the most distinguished congressional champions of the Albanian cause. Their bipartisan leadership remains one of the strongest foundations of the enduring friendship between the Albanian and American peoples.

**Robert Joseph (Bob) Dole (1923–2021)**

**United States Senator from Kansas (1969–1996)**



**Bob Dole—the congressional pioneer who brought Kosovo to America's attention.**

Few American legislators occupy a more honored place in modern Albanian history than Senator Bob Dole.

At a time when the plight of Kosovo Albanians received little international attention, he emerged as one of the earliest and strongest advocates for their human rights.

His historic visit to Kosovo in August 1990 drew worldwide attention to the repression under the regime of Slobodan Milošević.

Dole's leadership laid the foundation for bipartisan congressional support that ultimately contributed to Kosovo's liberation and eventual independence.

**Thomas Peter (Tom) Lantos (1928–2008)**

**Member of the United States House of Representatives  
Chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs**

**Tom Lantos—the moral voice of human rights.**



A Holocaust survivor and one of America's foremost defenders of human rights, Congressman Tom Lantos was a steadfast advocate for the Albanians of Kosovo. He exposed the systematic repression of Kosovo Albanians and supported stronger American engagement in the Balkans. In 1990, he became the first Member of the U.S. Congress to visit Albania after decades of communist isolation. Deeply moved by Albania's rescue of its Jewish population and refugees during the Holocaust, he developed a lasting

admiration for the Albanian people. His moral leadership made him one of Albania's greatest American friends.

**Eliot Lance Engel (1947–2026)**

**Member of the United States House of Representatives  
(1989–2021)**

**Chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs**



Eliot Engel—the tireless congressional champion of the Albanian cause.

During more than three decades in Congress, Eliot Engel became one of the strongest advocates for Albanians in Kosovo, Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and the Preševo Valley.

Working closely with Albanian-American organizations and community leaders, particularly the prominent activist of the Albanian national cause, Harry Bajraktari, he helped keep the Albanian cause a consistent priority in the United States Congress.

As Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, he strongly supported Kosovo's liberation and independence, Albania's democratic development, NATO integration, and the advancement of peace, democracy, human rights, and Euro-Atlantic integration throughout the Western Balkans, earning the enduring gratitude of Albanians worldwide.

**Benjamin Arthur Gilman (1922–2016)**  
**Member of the United States House of Representatives**  
**Chairman, House Committee on International Relations**



Benjamin Gilman—the architect of bipartisan congressional support. Congressman Benjamin Gilman was among the most influential supporters of the Albanian cause during the years preceding Kosovo's liberation and Albania's democratic consolidation. As Chairman of the House Committee on International Relations, he brought the concerns of Albanians in Albania and Kosovo before Congress through hearings, fact-finding missions, legislative initiatives, and oversight of U.S. foreign policy. A steadfast advocate of democracy, human rights, and regional stability, Gilman helped build bipartisan support for greater American

engagement in the Balkans, earning a lasting place among the foremost congressional friends of the Albanian people.

## **THE ALBANIAN-AMERICANS: BUILDERS OF AN ENDURING FRIENDSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES**

**The history of Albanian–American relations was shaped not only by American support for the Albanian people, but also by generations of Albanians and Albanian-Americans whose leadership, scholarship, diplomacy, public service, philanthropy, journalism, entrepreneurship, artistic achievement, and civic engagement strengthened the bonds between the two nations.**

**Across different periods and professions, they preserved Albanian identity, introduced Albania to American public opinion, defended Albanian rights and aspirations, promoted democratic values, and fostered mutual understanding between the Albanian and American peoples.**

**The individuals presented in the following pages illustrate the remarkable breadth of the Albanian contribution to one of the most enduring friendships in modern international relations.**

## FAN S. NOLI (1882–1965)



Few Albanians have exercised a greater influence on Albanian–American relations than Fan S. Noli. Priest, statesman, scholar, writer, translator, diplomat, and visionary leader, he devoted his life to serving both the Albanian nation and the Albanian-American community. He founded the Albanian Orthodox Church in America and co-founded the Pan-Albanian Federation of America, VATRA, while leading its newspaper, *Dielli*, uniting Albanian immigrants around the ideals of independence, education, democracy, and civic responsibility. As a statesman, diplomat, and a well-known intellectual, Noli profoundly enriched Albanian culture through his writings and

translations. More than any contemporary, he transformed the Albanian community in America into an organized civic force, laying the institutional and moral foundations of enduring Albanian–American friendship.

### **Faik Konica (1875–1942)**

### **Diplomat, Writer, and Intellectual Voice of Modern Albania**



Faik Konica was one of the principal founders of Albanian–American relations and among Albania's greatest men of letters. As co-founder of the Pan-Albanian Federation of America, VATRA, and editor of *Dielli*, he worked closely with Fan S. Noli to unite the Albanian diaspora and advance Albania's independence. Later, as Albania's Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States, he strengthened diplomatic relations while cultivating influential American

friendships. Through his skillful literary, journalistic, and diplomatic career, Konica became one of the foremost architects of modern Albanian thought and enduring Albanian–American friendship.

## **RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND THE SPIRIT OF INTERFAITH HARMONY**

Among the most distinctive characteristics of the Albanian nation is its longstanding tradition of religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Despite belonging to different faiths—Muslim, Bektashi, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic—Albanians have consistently placed their national identity above religious divisions, creating one of Europe's finest examples of interfaith harmony.

The Albanian-American community preserved this tradition in the United States, where churches, mosques, and tekkes served not only as places of worship but also as centers of education, cultural preservation, and national unity, while safeguarding the Albanian language and promoting mutual respect among all faiths.

**Father Arthur Liolin**  
**Chancellor of the Albanian Orthodox Archdiocese in**  
**America**

***-Guardian of the Legacy of Fan S. Noli***



**Few contemporary Albanian-American religious leaders have done more to preserve the spiritual, cultural, and national identity of the Albanian diaspora than Father Arthur Liolin. As Chancellor of the Albanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America, he has faithfully continued the legacy of Fan S. Noli by promoting the Albanian language, history, and cultural heritage. An educator, scholar, translator, and cultural advocate, Father Liolin has strengthened both Albanian identity and the enduring friendship between the Albanian and American peoples.**

**Baba Rexhepi (1901–1995)**

**Spiritual Leader of Albanian Bektashism in America**

Baba Rexhepi was among the most respected Albanian-American religious leaders of the twentieth century. As founder of the Albanian Bektashi Tekke in Taylor, Michigan—the first Bektashi tekke in the Western Hemisphere—he promoted peace, religious tolerance, compassion, and coexistence. Under his leadership, the Tekke became a major spiritual and cultural center, preserving one of Albania's most distinctive religious traditions and exemplifying the Albanian values of moderation, harmony, and mutual understanding.

## **FATHER PETER POPA**

### **Roman Catholic Priest and Albanian American Community Leader**

Father Peter Popa has long been recognized as one of the leading Roman Catholic priests serving the Albanian-American community. Through his pastoral ministry, he has promoted the Christian values of faith, peace, compassion, and service while ministering to Albanian Catholics from Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and the wider Albanian diaspora. His ministry has consistently emphasized reconciliation, mutual respect, and national unity, reflecting the enduring Albanian conviction that religious diversity strengthens rather than divides the nation.

## **Imam Isa Hoxha**

### **Leader of the Albanian-American Islamic Community**

Imam Isa Hoxha has played an important role in the religious and civic life of the Albanian-American Muslim community. Through his leadership, he has consistently promoted moderation, interfaith dialogue, and peaceful coexistence. By encouraging mutual respect and cooperation among different faiths, he has helped preserve one of the Albanian nation's defining values—its longstanding tradition of

religious tolerance and harmony—while strengthening understanding among diverse religious communities in the United States.

## **ALBANIAN-AMERICAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ARTS, CULTURE, TECHNOLOGY, AND THE CREATIVE SPIRIT**

Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Albanian-Americans have made distinctive contributions to the cultural and technological life of the United States.

As photographers, filmmakers, actors, musicians, artists, innovators, and creative professionals, they have achieved international recognition while proudly preserving their Albanian heritage.

Their accomplishments have enriched American society and served as powerful instruments of cultural diplomacy, strengthening international awareness of Albania, its rich cultural heritage, and the Albanian-American community.

## Gjon Mili (1904–1984) Pioneer of Modern Photography



Among the most distinguished Albanian-Americans in the arts, Gjon Mili occupies a unique place in the history of modern photography. After emigrating to the United States in 1923 and studying electrical engineering at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he revolutionized photography through the innovative use of electronic flash and stroboscopic lighting. As a leading photographer for LIFE magazine for more than four decades, he created iconic images of many of the twentieth century's greatest figures, including Pablo Picasso's celebrated "light drawings," securing his place among America's foremost photographers.

**STANLEY JOHN ("STAN") DRAGOTI (1932–2018)**  
**Film Director, Producer, and Advertising Pioneer**



***Pioneer of American Cinema and Advertising***

Stan Dragoti was one of the most accomplished Albanian-Americans in the fields of cinema and advertising. An award-winning film director, producer, and creative executive, he gained national recognition for helping create the legendary **"I Love New York"** advertising campaign, one of the most successful public marketing campaigns in American history. In Hollywood, Dragoti directed several successful motion pictures, including *Mr. Mom*, *The Man with One Red Shoe*, and *Love at First Bite*. Through his creativity and professional excellence, he made significant contributions to American

popular culture while bringing honor to the Albanian-American community.

**JOHN BELUSHI (1949–1982)**  
**An Icon of American Comedy**



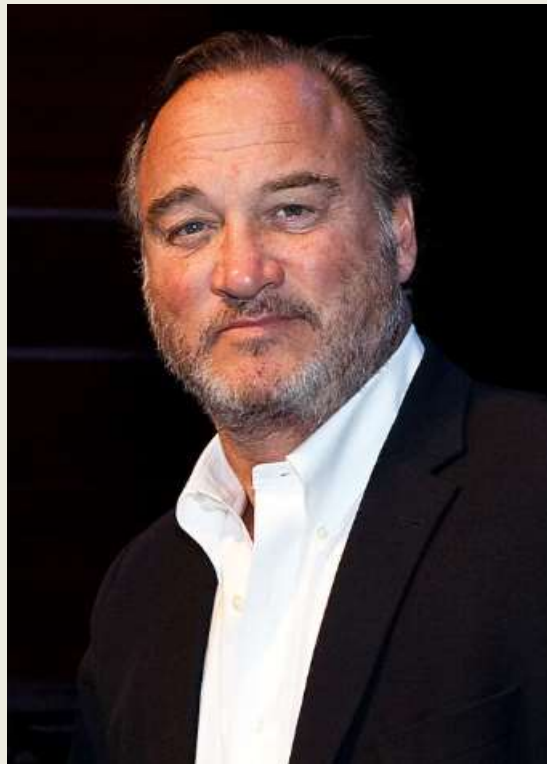
**John Belushi** remains one of the most influential comedians and entertainers in the history of American television and film. Born in Chicago to Albanian immigrant parents from Korçë, he achieved international fame as one of the original cast members of *Saturday Night Live* and through unforgettable performances in *National Lampoon's Animal House* and *The Blues Brothers*.

His extraordinary talent, originality, and lasting influence transformed American comedy and secured his place among the most celebrated Albanian-Americans in the performing arts. Although his life ended tragically at a young age, his artistic legacy continues to inspire generations of performers and audiences.

**JIM BELUSHI (1954– )**

**Actor, Musician, and Cultural Ambassador**

**Actor, Humanitarian, and Proud Son of Albanian Immigrants**



Following in the footsteps of his brother John, Jim Belushi established an outstanding career as an actor, comedian, musician, and producer. Born in Chicago to Albanian immigrant parents, he became widely known for his starring role in the long-running television series *According to Jim*, as well as numerous film, television, and stage performances. Throughout his career, Belushi has spoken proudly of his Albanian heritage and has actively supported humanitarian, cultural, and charitable initiatives benefiting Albania and Kosovo. His enduring commitment has made him one of the most respected cultural ambassadors of the Albanian-American community.

### **ELIZA PATRICIA DUSHKU (1980– )**

**Actress, Producer, and Humanitarian**



Eliza Dushku is a well-known Albanian-American actress and producer. Born in Boston, Massachusetts, to an Albanian-American father whose family originated from Korçë, she achieved international recognition through leading roles in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Angel*, *Bring It On*, *Tru Calling*, and *Dollhouse*.

Throughout her career, Dushku has proudly acknowledged her Albanian heritage and has helped promote a positive image of the Albanian-American community through her artistic accomplishments, humanitarian engagement, and public advocacy.

## **FADIL BERISHA**

### **Fashion Photographer and Cultural Ambassador**



Fadil Berisha is one of the most internationally acclaimed Albanian-American fashion photographers. Born in Kosovo and later establishing his career in the United States, he has photographed numerous world-renowned celebrities, fashion icons, and beauty pageant winners. For many years he served as the official photographer of both the **Miss Universe** and **Miss USA** organizations.

Beyond his remarkable artistic achievements, Berisha has consistently promoted Albanian culture, supported young Albanian talent, and contributed to humanitarian and charitable causes. Through his work, he has become one of the most recognizable Albanian-American figures in international fashion and photography.

## **MUSIC: FROM OPERA TO CONTEMPORARY POPULAR CULTURE**

Music has become one of the most visible expressions of Albanian cultural achievement on the international stage. Through the extraordinary accomplishments of artists such as Ermonela Jaho and Bebe Rexha, Albanian and Albanian-American talent has reached audiences across the world, demonstrating that artistic excellence can serve as a powerful instrument of cultural diplomacy and international understanding.

## **ERMONELA JAHO (1974– )**

**International Opera Soprano and Cultural Ambassador  
One of the World's Leading Operatic Sopranos**



Among contemporary Albanian artists, few have done more to enhance Albania's international cultural reputation than **Ermonela Jaho**. Through an exceptional operatic career spanning the world's leading stages, she has become one of the most acclaimed sopranos of her generation and one of Albania's foremost cultural ambassadors.

Born in Tirana, Jaho received her early musical education at the Conservatory of Tirana before continuing her studies at the **Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia** in Rome.

Following success in several prestigious international competitions, she launched an excellent career characterized by extraordinary vocal artistry, dramatic intensity, and profound emotional interpretation. Her performances in roles such as **Violetta** (*La Traviata*), **Cio-Cio-San** (*Madama Butterfly*), **Suor Angelica**, **Adriana Lecouvreur**, **Thaïs**, and **Anna Bolena** have earned worldwide critical acclaim.

Jaho has appeared at many of the world's foremost opera houses, including the **Metropolitan Opera**, the **Royal Opera House**, **Teatro alla Scala**, the **Opéra national de Paris**, the **Vienna State Opera**, the **Teatro Real**, and the **Bayerische Staatsoper**. Her performances have firmly established her among the leading operatic artists of the twenty-first century.

International critics have praised not only the beauty and expressive power of her voice but also her exceptional ability to convey the emotional depth of the characters she portrays. *The Economist* described her as "**the world's most acclaimed soprano**," while *The New York Times* observed that she "**sings the sound of the soul**." Such assessments reflect the extraordinary esteem she enjoys within the international operatic community.

Her artistic achievements have been recognized through numerous international honors, including appointment as **Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres** by the French Republic, **Artist of the Year** at the 2023 International Classical Music Awards, **Best Female Singer** at Germany's OPER! Awards, and **Best Foreign Artist** at Spain's Opera XXI Awards.

She also serves as an ambassador for **Opera for Peace** and **Opera Rara**, while remaining actively engaged in humanitarian and educational initiatives.

Beyond her artistic accomplishments, Ermonela Jaho has become one of the most distinguished cultural representatives of the Albanian nation.

Through her performances and unwavering pride in her Albanian heritage, she has introduced international audiences to the richness of Albanian culture and demonstrated how music can transcend national boundaries in promoting mutual understanding and friendship among peoples.

**Bleta "Bebe" Rexha (1989– )**  
**Albanian-American Singer, Songwriter, and Global Cultural Ambassador**



Albanian-American Singer, Songwriter, and Global Cultural Ambassador

Among the most internationally successful Albanian-Americans of the twenty-first century, Bebe Rexha has achieved worldwide recognition as a singer, songwriter, and performer. Born in Brooklyn, New York, to Albanian parents with roots in Dibër and Gostivar, she first gained prominence as a songwriter before launching a highly successful solo career marked by chart-topping hits and international collaborations. Throughout her career, she has proudly celebrated her Albanian heritage, becoming a source of inspiration for Albanians worldwide. By promoting Albanian culture and identity through her global platform, Bebe Rexha

has enhanced the visibility of the Albanian-American community and exemplifies the diaspora's enduring contribution to American culture and cultural diplomacy.

## **SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND EXPLORATION**

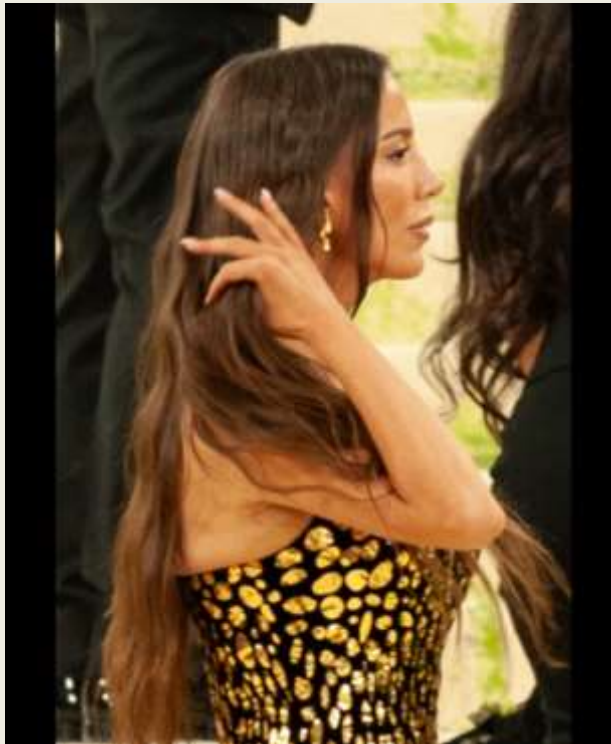
The achievements of Albanian-Americans extend beyond public service, diplomacy, and the arts into science, technology, engineering, and space exploration.

Through innovation, intellectual excellence, and professional accomplishment, they have contributed to major scientific and technological advances of the modern era.

Their success reflects both individual talent and the opportunities provided by American education, research, and innovation, while serving as a source of pride and inspiration for Albanians around the world.

**Mira Murati (1988– )**

**Pioneer of Artificial Intelligence and Technology  
Innovator.**



Among the most influential Albanian-born innovators of the twenty-first century, Mira Murati has helped shape the global development of artificial intelligence. Born in Vlorë, Albania, she pursued her education in Canada and the United States before joining Tesla and OpenAI. As OpenAI's Chief Technology Officer, she played a central role in developing ChatGPT, DALL·E, and GPT-4. In 2025, she founded Thinking Machines Lab to advance transparent and beneficial AI. Her pioneering leadership has made her a global technology

leader and an inspiration to future generations of engineers, scientists, and entrepreneurs.

**William G. Gregory (1957– )**  
**The First Albanian-American Astronaut**



William G. Gregory, is the first American astronaut of Albanian descent. Born in Lockport, New York, to a family originating from Korçë, he pursued a distinguished career as a U.S. Air Force officer, test pilot, engineer, and NASA astronaut. Selected by NASA in 1990, he piloted Space Shuttle Endeavour during the STS-67 mission in 1995, contributing to important astronomical research. As the first Albanian-American in space, Gregory symbolizes the

Albanian-American contribution to the scientific and technological advancement of the United States.

## **Conclusion**

If this study succeeds in bringing readers closer to the remarkable history of Albanian–American friendship, it will have fulfilled the purpose that has guided my scholarly work for many years. More importantly, I hope it will encourage future generations of Albanian and American scholars to continue exploring this extraordinary relationship, whose history still offers invaluable lessons about liberty, democracy, mutual respect, human dignity, and the enduring power of shared ideals.

As the United States celebrates the 250th anniversary of its Declaration of Independence, may this enduring friendship continue to flourish, inspiring future generations to preserve the values upon which it was built and to strengthen the ties that unite our two nations in the service of peace, democracy, and human freedom.

Today, Albanian-Americans can be found in every walk of life in the United States. What is particularly impressive is the eagerness of the younger generation to pursue higher education and professional excellence. It would be difficult to find a university, college, or academy in the United States

that does not have students of Albanian origin. Their growing presence in academia reflects not only the community's strong commitment to education but also its successful integration into American society while preserving a deep sense of pride in its Albanian heritage.

**Finally, history records the actions of governments, but it is people who build enduring friendships between nations.**

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**End**

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### **Appendix A – American Friends of Albania**

Alfonse D'Amato – United States Senator; Ambassador  
William E. Ryerson – United States Ambassador and  
Diplomat; Benjamin Gilman – Member of the U.S. House of  
Representatives and Chairman of the House Committee on  
International Relations; Bill Clinton (William J. Clinton) –  
42nd President of the United States; Bob Dole – United  
States Senator; Christopher H. Smith – Member of the U.S.  
House of Representatives; Christopher Hill – United States  
Ambassador and Diplomat; Chuck Schumer – United States  
Senator; Dana Rohrabacher – Member of the U.S. House of  
Representatives; Eliot Engel – Member of the U.S. House of  
Representatives and Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs

Committee; Frank G. Wisner – United States Ambassador and Diplomat; George H. W. Bush – 41st President of the United States; George W. Bush – 43rd President of the United States; Hillary Rodham Clinton – United States Secretary of State; James Baker – United States Secretary of State; James Rubin – Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs and Department of State Spokesman; Jimmy Carter – 39th President of the United States; Jim X. Saxton – Member of the U.S. House of Representatives; John Kerry – United States Secretary of State; John McCain – United States Senator; Joseph J. DioGuardi – Former Member of the U.S. House of Representatives and Founder of the Albanian American Civic League; Joseph Lieberman – United States Senator; Joseph R. Biden Jr. – 46th President of the United States, former Vice President, and former United States Senator; Lee Hamilton – Member of the U.S. House of Representatives and Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Madeleine Albright – United States Secretary of State; Peter King – Member of the U.S. House of Representatives; Richard Holbrooke – United States Ambassador and Special Envoy; Richard Lugar – United States Senator; Ritchie Torres – Member of the U.S. House of Representatives; Robert Menendez – United States Senator; Sandy Berger – United States National Security Advisor; Shirley Cloyes

## **Appendix B – Albanian-Americans who made history in the United States.**

Agim Karagjozi, Agim Aliçkaj, Agim Rexhaj, Anton Logoreci, Artur Lyolyn, Anthony Athanas, Arshi Pipa, Bruno Selimaj, Dem Balidemaj, Ekrem Bardha, Elez Biberaj, Elia Tromara, Fadil Berisha, Fan S. Noli, Faton Bislimi, Faik Konica, Florin Krasniqi, Frank Shkreli, Gjon Sinishta, Gjon Bucaj, Harry Bajraktari, Idriz Lamaj, Jim Xhema, Joseph J. DioGuardi, Kostë Çekrezi , Kristo Floqi, Kristo Kirka, Llambi Chikozi, Mark Gjonaj, Nicholas C. Pano, Peter Prifti, Qerim Panariti, Ruben Avxhiu, Sabit Bytyçi, Sergio Bytyçi , Sami Repishti, Sotir Peci, Stavro Skendi, Thanas Tashko, Vehbi Bajrami , etj.

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Presented by:  
Mal Berisha:

Former Ambassador  
of the Republic of  
Albania to the United  
Kingdom of Great  
Britain and Northern  
Ireland, and to the  
Republic of Ireland  
Holder of the  
decoration **Knight of  
the Order of  
Skanderbeg**



**"Nothing should escape the eye and ear of the Albanian diplomat when it comes to the fate and interests of his nation."**  
Mal Berisha

[www.Malberisha.com](http://www.Malberisha.com)



**Thank you for your time and attention!**