

## **Robert Alan Saasto Finnish American Activities**

### **1987 to 1997**

**Imatra Hall, attorney advising Board and Members on legal issues including by-law changes to preserve the building for Finnish “causes” upon its demise. Master of Ceremony at the annual Beauty Contest, Mothers Day, Juhannus and other events at the Hall.**

**1991 Finlandia Street sign obtained via application to Community Board and New York City Council approval. Dedication speech during 100<sup>th</sup> year celebration at Imatra Hall.**

**1990 New Yorkin Uutiset, commenced advertising and advising Board members informally and then formally as a Board member in 1994 acting as Treasurer and then as their attorney representing the Board to close the paper and transfer the entity and readership to the American Uutiset in Florida.**

### **1990 to date**

**Correspondent in New York contributing articles to the American Uutiset, Finnish American Reporter, Raivaaja (paper in Massachusetts now closed), Eteenpain (paper now closed), Tyomies (now closed); and financially supporting the Amerikan Uutiset with advertisements and otherwise.**

**1992 Suomi Seura invitation (accepted) to appear for newspaper interviews including appearance on TV program Hyva Huomenta Suomi to publicize the Roots in Finland program encouraging Finnish expatriates to return to “search their roots” due to availability of records on computers. Articles submitted to all papers noted above, entitled “Search Your Roots and Become Famous”.**

### **1993 to date**

**Sibelius Masonic Lodge member in NYC. 1995 Master of the Lodge, almost entirely Finnish Americans from NY, NJ, and CT. In 2015 as President of the Board of Trustees secured donations exceeding \$75,000 from the Lodge to Suomi Talo, Kerho Talo, St. Andrews Lutheran Church and other Finnish entities in Florida.**

**1997 Attorney for the Imatra Hall in selling the building to the Resurrection Church with personal loans to the Church to enable it to buy and continue as an entity to benefit the community as opposed to becoming an apartment building rental.**

### **1997 to 2012**

**Created the Imatra Foundation, an IRS charitable foundation, without fee, from the proceeds of the sale of the Imatra Hall and acted as the President of the Board during which time over \$400,000 was given to “Finnish causes”. The last project was the creation of a booklet Memories of Finnish Harlem to preserve the history of the large community of Finns who lived there, with its peak in the 1960s.**

**1997 to 2007**

**Trustee of Mettala Foundation, a private charitable trust created under a Will to promote “Finnish causes”, during which time over \$400,000 was donated to promote “Finnish causes”, one being a scholarship exchange program between Fordham Law School and Helsinki Law School which existed for 5 years, whereby a candidate selected by the Helsinki Law Dean nominated a Finnish law student to attend the Fordham Graduate law program at the expense of the foundation.**

**2002 to date**

**President and co-founder of the Finnish American Lawyers Association (FALA) created as a networking and social forum for Finnish and Finnish American lawyers resulting in over 80 members from many USA states, Finland and other countries. Numerous events held in both Helsinki and New York.**

**2004 FALA President Saasto on front cover of Lakimies Uutiset, (Lawyers’ News) the leading and foremost monthly magazine distributed to lawyers and judges throughout Finland, with article featuring his Finnish roots, endeavors and law practice.**

**2014 FALA Honors FALA member John Koskinen, IRS Commissioner under President Obama at Estonia House in NYC**

**2003 to 2010**

**Finlandia Foundation NY Chapter Board for three years and MC of annual dinner dance 2006 to 2010 when President Ahtisaari appeared and was honored.**

**2015 Tour of Ellis Island and Liberty Island with Jenni Haukio First Lady of Finland**

**2019 Presentations of History of Finnish Americans in USA and NYC to Foreign Affairs Committee Members of Finnish Parliament and to Political Party Delegates from Finland**

**2019 to date**

**Finntown co-ops: secured 24 plaques at entrances in Sunset Park Brooklyn NY honoring the Finnish Americans who built the buildings and brought the concept of co-op ownership to the USA**

**2021 Tour of Finntown in Sunset Park Brooklyn New York with President of Finland Sauli Niinisto**

**2021 Tour of Finntown in Sunset Park Brooklyn New York with 13 Honorary Consuls from around the USA**

**2022 Tour of Finntown in Sunset Park Brooklyn New York with Finlandia Foundation National members from around the USA**