

A lifetime of stories

A local Ukrainian man has witnessed a lot during his lifetime and has been traveling the area discussing his experiences and talking about a recent book he published.

By **BRYAN ROTH**

Messenger Post Staff

Izyaslav Darakhovskiy hasn't seen it all, but he's pretty close.

Growing up in Ukraine, Darakhovskiy spent time in a Nazi concentration camp near Vinnitsa and, after World War II, was accepted into a university there. Following tours with the military from 1956 to 1959 in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kirgizstan, he eventually became a professor at the Academy of Sciences in Molodova where he was involved with economic reforms under Mikhail Gorbachev, who was General Secretary of the Communist Party in Russia.

After moving to the United States in 1992 and learning English, Darakhovskiy now lives in Rochester and has become a lecturer who shares his stories and knowledge. So, when a group of friends asked him about his life story years ago, it made sense that it could all go down onto paper.

Since releasing "Under Three Empires: The Thorns and Roses of a Life," Darakhovskiy has made numerous appearances around the area, giving book signings in Pittsford and talking with students and residents at Monroe Community College and Rochester Institute of Technology.

"Ten years before I completed the book, I didn't speak the language at all," said Darakhovskiy, 71. "But when you're going to express your feelings and your emotions, I found it a little bit easier for me to do ... this book."

Charles Theis, a Webster resident and student at MCC, who helped Darakhovskiy put together a presentation there in early October, said when he met Darakhovskiy, he was amazed with his story.

"He's a real tribute to the human spirit of not giving up," he said. "When people come to this country we make them jump through hoops so they can stay here and to come to America with his age and no (English) ... it's amazing to me."

In addition to his academic work, Darakhovskiy also spent time as an economic adviser for the United Nations. His son, Henry Darakhovskiy, said that it was a rare occasion when his father wasn't keeping himself busy with work, but that's one of the things Henry said he admires about Darakhovskiy, especially his father's focus when it came to writing a book about his experiences.

"He has gone through hell and high water in his life: holocaust, famine, discrimination, emigration and many other things," said Henry Darakhovskiy, 40. "I believe he has achieved great things in his life so far, but to me it seems he always had to do twice more than others to do it."

Izyaslav Darakhovskiy's granddaughter, Ilene, 14, agreed, noting that she's most impressed with what her grandfather was able to overcome during World War II, including watching his own grandfather get killed and losing 11 other family members in the Holocaust.

While putting together his memoirs, Izyaslav Darakhovskiy said he hoped that readers would take into account his experiences to realize how unique and broad life can be for everyone.

"It's a kind of testament of how people were able to overcome a lot of difficulties and finally (come out on top)," he said.

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Izyaslav Darakhovskiy, currently a Rochester resident, came from Ukraine in 1992 to the United States, where he wrote a book that chronicles his life from his time as a boy in Nazi concentration camps to working under Mikhail Gorbachev.

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Izyaslav Darakhovskiy, right, displays his proof of citizenship as a resident of the United States. Darakhovskiy came to the U.S. in 1992 from Ukraine and wrote a book about his life experiences in Eastern Europe.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Valentina Darakhovskiy, left, poses with son Henry and Izyaslav Darakhovskiy, after Izyaslav was named as a professor at the Academy of Sciences in Molodova, Ukraine in 1982. Izyaslav Darakhovskiy published a book about his life experiences from growing up in Eastern Europe to his time in the United States after he moved here in 1992.

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