

## **James C. Temerty Presents 2018 Sheptytsky Award to The Honorable Ronald S. Lauder**

*Speech of James C. Temerty, Chairman of the Board of the Ukrainian Jewish Encounter, upon presenting the Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky Award for 2018 to The Honorable Ronald S. Lauder on 27 September 2018 at the Ukrainian Institute of America in New York City.*

It's a great honor for me to be here participating in this ceremony. I have a number of reasons for feeling that way.

First of all because it's held in memory of one of the great figures of 20<sup>th</sup> century Ukraine, the Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky, who did so much, as we heard, to save Jewish lives during the Holocaust in Nazi-occupied Ukraine.

Secondly, because we are among friends committed to the cause of Ukrainian-Jewish and Ukraine-Israel solidarity, cooperation and dialogue.

Thirdly, because we are here with our colleagues, Borys Lozhkin, and his team from the Jewish Confederation of Ukraine, our longtime partners in presenting the Sheptytsky Medal and Award, which was initiated by the Jewish Confederation of Ukraine and Rabbi Yaakov Dov Bleich, the chief Rabbi of Kyiv.

And fourthly, and most importantly, because we are honoring Ronald Lauder, a great leader of the global Jewish community and a friend of Ukraine and of the Jewish community in Ukraine.

This gathering, in essence, is what is intended by the name of our organization—Ukrainian Jewish Encounter.

The UJE, as we call ourselves, has been an active partner of both the Jewish Confederation of Ukraine and the World Jewish Congress in a number of commemorations and events.

In two days, we will be commemorating the 77<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the murders of nearly 34,000 Jews at the hands of Nazis at the ravine known as Babyn Yar in Kyiv. Two years ago, we worked hand-in-hand with the Jewish Confederation of Ukraine and the World Jewish Congress in a major government and non-governmental commemoration of the act of unspeakable horror that was Babyn Yar.

This summer, we cooperated with the World Jewish Congress and with Borys Lozhkin and his team in a conference in Kyiv focused on celebrating Israel's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary by discussing Israel's experience of nation-building and its relevance to the Ukraine of today. In August, we and the World Jewish Congress cooperated in a conference focused on Yiddish literature and culture that was held in Chernivtsi, Chernowitz, Ukraine, where 110 years ago a major conference was convened to address these very same topics.

Although there are persistent anti-Semitic acts in Ukraine, as is the case in most nations, I'm happy to note that the predominant tenor of Ukrainian-Jewish relations there and in the diaspora is one of mutual respect and regard. To strengthen this process, we must both honestly address the past and build a future together focused on cooperation and rooted in the fact that a huge proportion of Israelis and the Jewish diaspora can trace their roots to the territory of Ukraine.

Let us build common bonds and understanding by working to ensure that the Jewish and Gentile communities of Ukraine cooperate based on the values of freedom, national sovereignty, safety, and national security to which they and the good people of Israel aspire.

There is no better representation of this aim than this medal and award in honor of Andrei Sheptytsky, a moral leader who embodied the best values of tolerance and of the dignity of the human spirit and of all peoples.