

**Remarks by Andrew O. Melnykovich
Director of Communications
Kentucky Public Service Commission**

**Recipient of the 2019
*Terry Barnich Award for Promoting International Cooperation among Utility Regulators and
Development of Professional Regulation***

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Thank you.

As many of you will recall, the eminent Greek philosopher Andreas Thanos, delivered the definitive tribute to Terry Branich upon receiving this award several years ago, I am not going to attempt to feebly follow in his footsteps. Suffice it to say that Terry Barnich represented what is best about NARUC and this country, and it is a privilege to be linked with him through this award honoring his memory.

So I will thank the people who made it possible for me to be here today thanking them.

First, my wife Debbie, who is out there in the audience. She has been patient with my frequent absences, both when travelling abroad and to NARUC meetings, and when hosting delegations. Particularly last year, when I was absent more than usual, she kept things together at home while facing the additional challenge of caring for a very geriatric dog. Without her unstinting support, I would not have been able to commit the time that I have to NARUC's international work.

Second, I owe a great debt to the commissioners and staff at the Kentucky PSC, who have both supported my efforts and filled in for me during my time away from the office. Thank you to Commissioner Mathews for nominating me for the Barnich Award, and to Chairman Schmitt and Vice Chairman Cicero for their endorsement. I also must recognize the late Chairman David Armstrong, who was responsible for getting me involved with NARUC's international programs. In 2010, he volunteered the Kentucky PSC as a partner for the Republic of Georgia's Energy Regulatory Commission and gave me the job of coordinating the activities at our end. I found that I enjoyed the work and that I had an ability to connect with the Georgians on both a professional and personal level. After being part of our first delegation to Georgia, I was pretty well hooked.

In 2013, when Chairman Armstrong became chair of this committee, he asked me whether I was interested in taking on the task of chairing the staff subcommittee. I said I would look into what the position entailed and would think about it. His response was "You don't understand. I am not asking you. You're it." So here I am.

Which brings me to the commissioners who succeeded Chairman Armstrong. Every one of them – Eric Callisto, Anne Hoskins and David Danner – has been an unalloyed pleasure to work with, as have been all of the committee vice chairs. Participating in NARUC meetings made me vastly better at my day job and has brought me many friendships.

I would be remiss if I didn't also thank the commissioners and commission staff with whom I have travelled on NARUC activities and the regulators from other countries whom I have met. I have learned from all of them.

Next, I want to acknowledge NARUC's international staff. Erin Hammel has done an incredible job of building a hugely effective and influential program that is globally recognized for its excellence. I am eager to see its continued success. I also want to thank one staff member in particular – Jargalan Jambaldorj, rightly known as “Queen Jargalan,” formerly of the DC staff and now working out of a satellite office in Ulan Bator, Mongolia. I met Jargalan when she came to Kentucky with the second group of Georgians to pay us a visit. When she found out that I speak Ukrainian, Jargalan immediately recruited me for the Ukraine partnership, which she coordinates to this day. As a result, I have been lucky to make four trips to Ukraine and to connect with the homeland of my parents in ways that I never dreamed possible.

Which brings me to my final thank you: to my parents, who sadly did not live long enough to know of my international work for NARUC. I think they would have enjoyed hearing about it very much.

My parents were teenagers in western Ukraine, then a part of Poland, during the Second World War. They lived through successive invasions by the Soviets and the Nazis, ultimately fleeing ahead of a second Soviet advance and ending up in the American zone of occupation in Germany. There they spent four years in displaced persons camps before being admitted to the United States as refugees.

While always grateful for the opportunities that allowed them to build successful lives and careers in this country, my parents were nonetheless a bit disappointed that many of the native-born Americans they met seemed to know little about the rest of the world, and even less about their homeland. (I dare say Ukraine has a bit higher profile these days). So my parents worked very hard to preserve their cultural heritage and to share it with others. We spoke Ukrainian at home and in public, often to my profound embarrassment when I was in my teens. With the hindsight of advanced age, I now am deeply appreciative of the fact that I not only learned to speak the language, but to read it and write it as well.

Beyond immersing me in my Ukrainian heritage, my parents exposed me to other cultures. Their circle of friends and colleagues included people from every corner of the world. Growing up in that kind of environment was the best possible preparation for taking part in NARUC's international program. For that I thank them.

Finally, I thank my parents for instilling in me a belief in the importance of making connections across barriers of language, culture, race, religion and nationality. Because of their experiences, my parents felt that crossing – indeed breaking down – those barriers was the only way to prevent a repetition of the horrors they had witnessed in their youth. Thus, for me the opportunity to participate in NARUC's international programs also has been an opportunity to honor my parents by trying to do my part in bridging some of the world's divides.

Of course, the primary purpose of NARUC's international programs is to build the capacity and competency of utility and energy regulators around the world. In that cause, it has been a resounding success.

But I think an equally significant and lasting contribution has been to establish meaningful personal relationships between ourselves and our counterparts in other countries, not just as utility regulators, but as fellow inhabitants of this planet. NARUC's international work exemplifies our country at its best and personifies the highest American ideals and values. It has never been more valuable than it is today.

I cannot adequately express how rewarding it has been for me to participate in NARUC's international work and how appreciative I am for the opportunities to do so. It has been the most personally satisfying aspect of my career. To be recognized for my contributions to NARUC's international program is the most meaningful honor I could ever hope for. I am humbled and profoundly grateful to be selected to receive the Terry Barnich Award. Thank you.