



VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM
MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

SUMMER 2019 NEWSLETTER

Baltic Leaders Celebrate Independence

One hundred years ago, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe declared their independence amid collapsing empires. A generation of Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Poles, and others from the region set out to determine their own future and enjoyed independence until the Nazis and Soviet communists conspired in 1939 to invade and then occupy their homelands. In the 1980s, Europe's Captive Nations led the dismantling of the Soviet Union and are once again free, prosperous, and vital members of the free world.

On November 14, 2018, we convened hundreds of friends of freedom in Washington, DC's Union Station for the Triumph of Liberty Annual Conference and Gala Dinner, to remember the victims, celebrate the heroes, and commit ourselves to defending the independence of freedom-loving people of Central and Eastern Europe.

In sum, we hosted a three-panel conference, welcomed a Presidential Message marking November 7 as the National Day for the Victims of Communism, received a congratulatory letter from Vice President Mike Pence, enjoyed a choral performance featuring Baltic music, premiered two new educational videos, awarded our Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom to three Baltic leaders, and accepted a \$10 million gift for our museum project.

Our celebration culminated with a gala dinner at Union Station. Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Peter Pace, USMC (Ret.), gave keynote remarks. We awarded our Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom to former Lithuanian



Left to right: H.E. Tunne Kelam, founding member of the Estonian National Independence Party and laureate of VOC's Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom; Marion Smith, VOC executive director; H.E. Sandra Kalniete, leader of the Latvian independence movement and Medal of Freedom laureate; and General Peter Pace, USMC (Ret.), former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and keynote speaker at the Foundation's annual gala dinner on November 14, 2018, at Union Station in Washington, DC.

president Valdas Adamkus, Latvian independence movement leader Sandra Kalniete, and founding member of the Estonian National Independence Party Tunne Kelam.

The dinner concluded with a special video message from Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki announcing a \$10 million gift from the Polish government to help build a world-class museum in the capital of the free world to honor the victims of communism. In his message, Morawiecki said, "The museum will ensure that future generations fully appreciate the difference between collectivist oppression and a free society."

Thank you to all those who joined us to mark this occasion, both in person and in spirit.

"The museum will ensure that future generations fully appreciate the difference between collectivist oppression and a free society." – Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki

Delegation Flags VOC Mission for Lithuanian Government

On November 28-29, a VOC delegation traveled to Vilnius, Lithuania, to present our Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom to former president Valdas Adamkus and to promote our museum project. VOC Executive Director Marion Smith and Chief of Staff David Talbot met with Foreign Minister Linas Antanas Linevičius, First Deputy Chancellor of the Government of Deividas Matulionis and Chair of the Transatlantic Subcommittee Žygmantas Pavilionis, and Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom recipients Vytautas Landsbergis and Emanuelis Zingeris, during a presentation before members of the Lithuanian Parliament about the importance of historical memory and the need for a museum for the victims of communism in Washington, DC. Smith was featured in local media, including an interview on Catholic radio and a joint interview with Adamkus and Pavilionis on Delfi TV. The delegation was given a tour of the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, an institute created by the Supreme Council in 1992 to study the crimes committed by the Nazi and Soviet regimes during their 50-year occupation, and to commemorate the victims of those atrocities and the heroes of the Lithuanian resistance.



Marion Smith (right) presents to the Lithuanian Parliament's Transatlantic and Democracy Subcommittee on the importance of historical memory and the need for a museum for the victims of communism in Washington, DC.



Marion Smith presents the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom to former President of Lithuania Valdas Adamkus (middle right), alongside US Ambassador to Lithuania Anne Hall (middle left), and Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Antanas Linkevičius (far left).



Marion Smith explains VOC's mission and the legacy of the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom to the Lithuanian people on Delfi TV, one of the country's most popular television channels.



VOC's Marion Smith and David Talbot receive an exclusive tour of the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, an institute created by the Supreme Council in 1992 to study the crimes committed by the Nazis and Soviets during their 50-year occupation.

VOC Partners with Lithuanian Commission on Nazi and Soviet Crimes

On December 7, a delegation of Lithuanian MPs led by His Excellency Emanuelis Zingeris, a hero of his country's post-communist transition, visited VOC headquarters to sign a memorandum of understanding between VOC and the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania. The commission was established in 1998 by Lithuanian president Valdas Adamkus to investigate the crimes committed by the Nazis and Soviets during five decades of occupation from 1940 to 1990. Its members comprise dozens of leading scholars, historians, and representatives of non-governmental organizations tasked with researching those crimes and publicizing their findings to help strengthen democracy, civil society, and respect for human rights. It is chaired by Zingeris, a leading member of the Lithuanian Seimas and laureate of VOC's Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom.



New Local Commission Launched in St. Louis

On February 7-9, VOC Executive Director Marion Smith flew to St. Louis, Missouri, at the invitation of Kim McGrath, the city's Democratic Central Committeewoman, to investigate concerns about the growing presence of communists in local politics. Smith met with a group of local business owners, union leaders, veterans, and Democratic Party officials who briefed him on the Workers Education Society, a far-left activist group that had infiltrated their party and whose president, Tony Pecinovsky, was running for the Board of Aldermen (city legislature). Pecinovsky—a member of the National Board of the Communist Party USA—had rallied local communist sympathizers and was polling within striking distance of the well-loved Democratic incumbent, Carol Howard. Communist agitators had also sent hate mail to a local antique-store owner, demanded she remove an American flag from her storefront, then smashed her store window with a brick—tied to a threatening note displaying the hammer-and-sickle and word “Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.” Pecinovsky eventually lost with 48% of the vote.



Rep. John Shimkus (R-IL) speaks to high school teachers on the importance of knowing the story of the Soviet deportations in the Baltic States.



Lithuanian Consul General Mantvydas Bekešius (far right) and others celebrate Lithuanian independence.



Left to right: Prof. Włodzimierz Batóg, VOC Polish Studies Senior Research Fellow; Dr. Murray Bessette, VOC Director of Academic Programs; and Daiva Navarrette, honorary consul of Lithuania and co-founder of the Lithuanian World Arts Council; answer audience questions at a private screening of the film *Ashes in the Snow* about the Soviet deportations in Lithuania as part of our teacher professional development workshop in St. Louis on March 30.

In response, VOC was invited to convene a “local commission” meeting on March 30, bringing together community leaders and local legislators to discuss next steps. Attendees included Rep.

John Shimkus (R-IL), Missouri House Representatives Tony Lovasco and Lacy Clay, and Board of Aldermen President Lewis Reed. In tandem, VOC hosted a professional development workshop for middle and high school teachers, and a public screening of the film *Ashes in the Snow*, which tells the story of Soviet deportations of Lithuanians and is based on the bestselling novel by Ruta Sepetys, a VOC advisor. That evening, Marion Smith gave remarks at the Lithuanian Independence Celebration hosted by the Lithuanian American Community of Greater St. Louis, following a keynote by the consul general of the Republic of Lithuania in Chicago, Mantvydas Bekešius, and preceding remarks by Daiva Navarrette, honorary consul of Lithuania and co-founder of the Lithuanian World Arts Council.



At the first meeting of VOC's St. Louis Local Commission, on March 30, community leaders and local legislators discuss ways to counter a groundswell of collectivist activity driven by radical activists in their city.



VOC's Marion Smith gives remarks at the Lithuanian Independence Celebration hosted on March 30 by the Lithuanian American Community of Greater St. Louis.

At the UN: Spotlighting China's Human Rights Abuses

On November 6, Director of Government Relations Kristina Olney represented VOC as an NGO observer at a special meeting of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland, to review the human rights situation in China.

During China's third Universal Periodic Review, a UN mechanism to evaluate the human rights records of member states, 24 countries—including Australia, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States—submitted questions about China's mass incarceration of religious minorities in concentration camps, banning of foreign journalists, and alleged torture and cultural genocide.

After the review, Olney spoke in front of the Palais des Nations at a demonstration of thousands of Muslim Uyghurs, Tibetan Buddhists, and other religious minorities from more than 27 countries. Other speakers included Dolkun Isa, president of the World Uyghur Congress; Jampa Tsering Samdho, a Tibetan parliamentarian in exile; and representatives of the Tibetan and Uyghur communities, who offered personal testimonies of persecution by the Chinese Communist Party.

While in Geneva, Olney also participated in the 2018 Geneva Forum hosted on November 2 by the Central Tibetan Administration, the India-based government-in-exile of independent Tibet. The forum brought together a select group of human rights experts, academics, diplomats, and activists to discuss the human rights situation in China, the plight of Uyghurs and Tibetans, and Chinese challenges to UN human rights institutions.



VOC's Kristina Olney (right) and a representative of the Central Tibetan Administration attend the United Nations' third Universal Periodic Review of the People's Republic of China as NGO observers.



Kristina Olney addresses thousands of Uyghurs, Tibetans, and other minorities at a rally in front of the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, on November 6 to protest persecution by the Chinese Communist Party during a UN review of China's human rights situation.



Kristina Olney and members of the Central Tibetan Administration with Dolkun Isa, President of the World Uyghur Congress (center, with gray tie) at the 2018 Geneva Forum, a conference to discuss China's abysmal human rights record, the plight of Uyghurs and Tibetans, and the challenges China poses to UN human rights institutions.

VOC Research Supports Verdict on Chinese Communist Crimes

VOC China Studies Research Fellow Matthew Robertson appeared as an expert witness before the Independent Tribunal into Forced Organ Harvesting from Prisoners of Conscience in China, held in London on December 8-10. Robertson briefed the seven-member panel—chaired by Sir Geoffrey Nice, a former judge who helped prosecute Slobodan Milošević for war crimes in Yugoslavia—on his research into evidence that China’s hospital and prison systems have collaborated to harvest organs from political prisoners. The tribunal issued a unanimous interim judgment that this atrocity has been taking place “beyond any reasonable doubt” for a “substantial period of time” on a “very substantial” scale.



The China Tribunal panel (left to right): historian Prof. Arthur Waldron, Malaysian lawyer Andrew Khoo, Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery Martin Elliott, Sir Geoffrey Nice, businessman Nicholas Vetch, Iranian Human Rights Lawyer Shadi Sadr, and American lawyer Regina Paulose.



Matthew Robertson, VOC China Studies Research Fellow



VOC gave expert testimony before an independent tribunal held in London on December 8-10 to investigate the practice in China of killing political prisoners for their organs.

Triumph of Liberty Annual Dinner and Conference

On November 14, we convened a three-panel conference gathering 18 renowned scholars, dissidents, journalists, and policymakers to discuss communism's past, present, and future in Central and Eastern Europe and around the globe.

PAST: The first panel focused on the vital role American leadership played in confronting communist regimes in the 20th century.

PRESENT: The second panel addressed how former captive states still grapple today with the bitter legacy of decades of Soviet occupation, and how they must confront security threats to their freedom and independence.

FUTURE: The third panel centered on the enduring challenges posed by communism in the 21st century.



VOC Chairman Lee Edwards delivers conference remarks.



Tara Thu Nguyen, Tanh Nguyen, Nam Loc Nguyen, Jaden Lam Phan, David Talbot, Minh Tam Do, and Vien Dang.



Živilė Kriščiūnienė, Lyra Puišytė-Bostroem, H.E. Zygimantas Pavilionis, H.E. Rasa Juknevičienė, Rep. John Shimkus, Kristina Olney, Tadas Kubilius, and David Hobbs.



Left to right, back to front: Ashlee Davis, Buddy Anderson, Włodzimierz Batóg, Gwen Balmes, Nicholas Bartulovic, Elad Vaida, Jonathan Davis, Ben Walters, Cheryl Yu, Naphtali Rivkin, Briggs Burton, McBryde Campbell, David Talbot, and Marion Smith.

November 14, 2018 • Washington, DC

“For more than two decades, the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation has remembered the victims of communism and honored the heroes who are advancing the cause of freedom in our day.”

– Vice President Mike Pence

Presidential Message and Letter from Vice President

For the second year in a row, President Donald Trump issued a message declaring November 7 the National Day for the Victims of Communism. We also welcomed a letter from Vice President Mike Pence commending our work, joining us in celebration, and congratulating the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom recipients.

Baltic Choral Performance

The power of song to build community has long been an important cultural factor in the Baltic countries—never more so than in 1989, as two million Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians sang in peaceful defiance of Soviet tyranny during the Baltic Way protests. To honor this, we began our gala dinner with a concert of Baltic choral music, inspired by Baltic poetry and sung by the professional choir The Thirteen. The lyrics described the beauty of the landscape in these formerly captive countries.

Video Premiere

During the dinner we screened a short video of the Baltic Way protests, including aerial footage of the 420-mile human chain. We also premiered two short animated videos as part of our new explainer series aimed at young Americans. “Who is VOC?” unpacks the growing urgency and relevance of our mission to teach truth, keep memory, and pursue justice. “Why Anticommunism Is Nonpartisan” explains how Americans from across the political spectrum have historically always united behind our cause to promote freedom, justice, and peace.

Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom

We awarded our Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom to three heroes of Baltic independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union: former Lithuanian president Valdas Adamkus (pictured, right), Latvian independence movement leader Sandra Kalniete, and founding member of the Estonian National Independence Party Tunne Kelam. Each of them gave remarks on his or her lifelong devotion to fighting communism and pursuing freedom in the former bloodlands.

Keynote Address

Our keynote speaker was General Peter Pace, USMC (Ret.) (pictured, right), who shared his personal story of rising from combat veteran in the jungles of Vietnam to 16th chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Pace recounted the principles that helped carry him through times of immense strain and peril and stressed the importance of courage, friendship, and a moral compass in confronting the challenges of one's era.

Polish Government Museum Gift

The gala dinner concluded with a special video message from Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki (pictured, right) announcing a \$10 million gift from the Polish government to help build a world-class museum in the capital of the free world to honor the victims of communism. The museum, he said, is critical to “ensure that future generations fully appreciate the difference between collectivist oppression and a free society.”



Meet the Foundation's Newest Class of Interns

Christina Eastman

From: Long Beach, CA

Education: BA in violin performance, BA mechanical in engineering, University of Rochester

Career Goals: Confront abuses of human rights and religious liberty at both the national and international levels.

Currently Reading: John Marshall: The Man Who Made the Supreme Court, by Richard Brookhiser



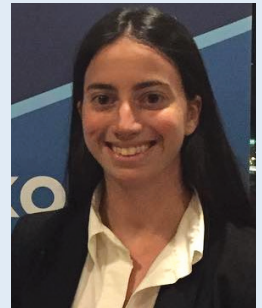
Susannah Pearl-Katz

From: New York, NY

Education: BA in international studies, Dickinson College

Career Goals: Research assistant at a think tank working on international relations, focused on human rights in East Asia, especially North Korea.

Currently Reading: Without You, There Is No Us, by Suki Kim



Max Schaeffner

From: Marblehead, MA

Education: Senior at American University studying international relations

Career Goals: Continue pursuing a career in international relations, particularly security and human development.

Currently Reading: Basic Economics, by Thomas Sowell



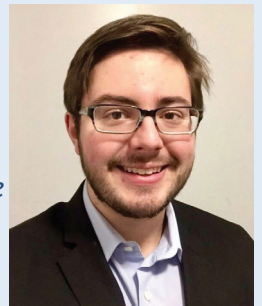
Kyle Parker

From: Phillipsburg, NJ

Education: Studying history and political science at George Washington University

Career Goals: Continue working in nonprofits devoted to public education.

Currently Reading: Wolf Hall, by Hilary Mantel



Gift Match Programs

Did you know you can double the impact of your support through a gift match program? Your employer may be willing to match any donations you make in support of the Foundation, one-for-one. To see if your employer will match donations, please contact your employer or the VOC office at 202.629.9500.

Current participating companies:



Planned Giving Options

Did you know you can support the Foundation through a bequest? If you would like to make a planned gift, you can use the following language:

"I give, devise, and bequeath to the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation in the City of Washington, DC, [dollar amount, percentage, or percent of the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate] to be used for its work fulfilling its mission to educate this generation and future generations about the ideology, history, and legacy of communism."

If you would like to discuss a potential planned gift, please contact Abraham Armstrong, Assistant Director of Development, at abraham.armstrong@victimsofcommunism.org or 202.629.9500.

Driving the National Conversation, Debunking ‘Democratic’ Socialism



Smith on Fox Business

On March 7, VOC Executive Director Marion Smith appeared on the Fox Business show Varney & Co. to discuss the rising popularity of socialism among millennials and the socialist crisis in Venezuela. Smith argued that “since the Bolshevik Revolution, 40 countries have experienced communist rule, with over 100 million people killed as a matter of policy in peacetime by their governments, and every single experiment ended up as a collapsed economy or a totalitarian police state.”

OP-EDS

Cuba’s New Constitution Is the Same as the Old One – Undemocratic

by Marion Smith • February 26, 2019

“[Cuba’s] so-called reforms are little more than a colorful new paint job on the same rusty old Communist architecture. The structure underneath is still a totalitarian state that bans political parties, imprisons and harasses dissenters, and denies the Cuban people’s most basic human rights.”



Call Out North Korea’s Human Rights Record

by Marion Smith • February 28, 2019

“North Korea’s oppression at home is tied to its aggression abroad. Nations that tyrannize their own citizens rarely have qualms about attacking their neighbors, which is precisely why human rights must be part of the denuclearization discussion. You cannot divide foreign and domestic policy in Communist thought.”

NATIONAL REVIEW

Trump in Hanoi was no Reagan in Reykjavik

by Marion Smith • March 1, 2019 **Los Angeles Times**

“The failure of the Hanoi summit should rouse the Trump administration to renew its call for freedom and democracy in North Korea. . . . By refocusing attention on Pyongyang’s cruel ideology and oppression, he will put renewed pressure on Kim Jong Un and bring new inspiration to the cause of freedom, not just in North Korea, but across Asia and the world.”

AOC Needs a Refresher Course on the History of Socialism

by Marion Smith • March 15, 2019 **THE DAILY CALLER**

“Whether they know it or not, [Alexandria] Ocasio-Cortez, [Bernie] Sanders, and their comrades are following in the Marxist tradition of abusing language for their own political goals. They think that by setting the terms of the debate — capital vs. labor, rich vs. poor — they will win the argument and, eventually, control America itself. . . . Our best weapon is history itself, which is littered with examples of socialist failure.”

To our supporters . . .

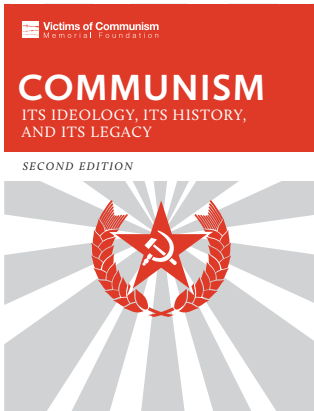
Thank you! Every event, every meeting, every counter-challenge we make to communism’s horrible influence, every boost to dissident truth-telling—every bit of VOC’s work as reported in this newsletter—is made possible by the generosity of our donors who value our mission: To educate future generations about the ideology, history, and legacy of communism. We are grateful for your support.

Teaching the Human Cost of Communism

Film Tour: *Ashes in the Snow*

In early 2019, at four of our professional development workshops for middle and high school teachers, VOC piloted a new content module focused the Baltic deportations. The content was developed thorough our partnership with bestselling author Ruta Sepetys, whose novel, *Ashes in the Snow*, about the Baltic deportations, has been made into a film by the same

title. The new workshop model included a private screening of the film, a discussion with the author, and custom materials to accompany our flagship curriculum, *Communism: Its Ideology, Its History, Its Legacy*. The workshops reached more than 200 teachers in Nashville, Denver, Los Angeles, and St. Louis.



*Bestselling author Ruta Sepetys fields questions from high school teachers after a screening of her book-turned-movie, *Ashes in the Snow*, in Nashville, Tennessee.*



Case Western Reserve University



On October 29, VOC Director of Academic Programs Dr. Murray Bessette moderated a panel hosted by professor Dr. Laura Tartakoff at Case

Western Reserve University. Around 40 students, faculty, and community members heard from Defense Forum Foundation President Suzanne Scholte and Freedom Society President Maria Werlau about the human cost of the communist regimes in North Korea and Cuba. The next day, both speakers travelled to Bay High School in Bay Village, Ohio, where Elias Gorman (a 2018 VOC Teacher Fellow) arranged for them to speak to more than 400 students about the current human rights situation in both countries, after which they were interviewed by four students for a podcast.



Dissidents Condemn the Castro Legacy in Cuba

On December 10, VOC co-hosted an expert panel with Freedom House contrasting pre-revolu-

tionary Cuba's role in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with the Castro regime's six decades of brutal human rights violations. Panelists (left to right): Frank Calzon, executive director of the Center for a Free Cuba; Mario Félix Leonart Barroso, a Baptist missionary in Cuba; Sirley Ávila León, a Cuban dissident and laureate of VOC's Human Rights Award; and John Suarez, Freedom House's program director for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Merita McCormack at Oakcrest School



At the request of two alumni of our National Teacher Seminars, Cecelia Escobar and Kathleen Ouyang, VOC organized a talk by local ally and witness Merita McCormack to Oakcrest School for girls on March 25, in Vienna, Virginia, describing what life was like growing up in communist Albania.



University of Georgia

On February 23, Dr. Murray Bessette spoke to Young Americans for Liberty at their University of Georgia chapter in a talk

called "So You Think You're a Socialist?," explaining the gap between socialism's false promises and its grim realities.

Honoring Cardinal Joseph Zen, “Conscience of Hong Kong”

On January 28, more than 200 guests gathered in Washington, DC, to help the Foundation honor Cardinal Joseph Zen, Bishop Emeritus of Hong Kong, with the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom. Cardinal Zen is a vocal proponent of human rights in Hong Kong and China. Called the “new conscience of Hong Kong,” he has criticized the Vatican’s deal with the Chinese Communist Party to accept Party-approved Bishops into the

leadership of the Catholic Church in China, among other issues. After accepting the Medal from VOC Chairman Dr. Lee Edwards, Cardinal Zen remarked: “I want to remember many of those heroes who are suffering at this moment in China or Hong Kong for voicing their claim for respect of their dignity, for freedom, and for democracy—those well-known and those anonymous heroes.”



VOC and Cardinal Zen briefed Speaker Nancy Pelosi and other policymakers on the grave human rights situation in China.



Left to right: VOC Chief of Staff David Talbot, Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom recipients Chen Guangcheng and Cardinal Joseph Zen, and VOC Executive Director Marion Smith.



Left to right: VOC Director of Government Relations Kristina Olney, Co-Chair of the Victims of Communism Congressional Caucus Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ), VOC Trustee Randal Teague, VOC Chairman Lee Edwards, Amb. Sam Brownback, Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom recipient Cardinal Joseph Zen, VOC Trustee Don Ritter, ScD, and former Congressman Frank Wolf.



Gen. Peter Pace, USMC (Ret.), a Cold War veteran and former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, delivers the keynote address at the Triumph of Liberty gala dinner in Union Station in Washington, DC on November 14, 2018.

SAVE THE DATE • NOVEMBER 8, 2019

TRIUMPH OF LIBERTY

GALA DINNER

Celebrating
**THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL**

&

**TRUMAN-REAGAN
MEDAL OF FREEDOM CEREMONY**

Honoring



HIS EXCELLENCY JOACHIM GAUCK
Former President of Germany

6:00 p.m. Reception • 7:00 p.m. Dinner

Union Station
50 Massachusetts Avenue Northeast
Washington, District of Columbia 20002

Black Tie Optional

triumphofliberty.com