



January 18, 2022

**Fontbonne University Opens Center for Bosnian Studies on  
30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Independence Day**

**ST. LOUIS** (Jan. 18, 2022) – The opening of Fontbonne University's [Center for Bosnian Studies](#) on Tuesday, March 1, will coincide with the 30th anniversary of Bosnia and Herzegovina's independence day. Dedication of the center's new space in the [Jack C. Taylor Library](#) will recognize the long-term support of [Midwest BankCentre](#) as lead sponsor of the country's most significant historical and cultural preservation of the Bosnian war, genocide and diaspora.

With its mission aimed at countering hate, promoting diversity and inclusion, and preventing future genocides, the Center for Bosnian Studies creates a permanent home for preserving historic collections and resources for future generations. Its physical and digital collections include unique items and artifacts, as well as a large selection of secondary materials in the library's circulating collection.

Since 2015, Midwest BankCentre has provided funding support for what began in 2006 as the Bosnia Memory Project at Fontbonne University, launched by Fontbonne Professor Ben Moore. The bank's support has been leveraged to obtain grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and other resources. Midwest BankCentre, which employs and serves many Bosnian-Americans, received the center's inaugural [Community Leader Award](#) in 2018.

**The Center for Bosnian Studies' Work**

The Center for Bosnian Studies is a historical and cultural preservation initiative at Fontbonne University that creates an enduring record of the

experiences of Bosnian genocide survivors and their families. It is especially focused on those living in metropolitan St. Louis.

“To promote tolerance in our society and counter the narratives of hate and discrimination that fueled the genocide in Bosnia,” said Dr. Adna Karamelic-Oates, director of the Center for Bosnian Studies, “we must preserve and keep telling the stories of those who survived. As the Bosnian community in St. Louis grows and evolves, the work of the Center will be an invaluable resource - not just for students and scholars, but for second and third-generation Bosnians seeking to better understand their legacy and how St. Louis became home.”

In 2020, the project was renamed the Center for Bosnian Studies to reflect its increasing role as a hub of knowledge and resources on Bosnia and Herzegovina. It includes an ongoing oral history project, special collections, and a growing digital collection of resources on Bosnia and Herzegovina and its diaspora. The Center for Bosnian Studies also hosts [events](#) to raise awareness about the country and the Bosnian diaspora and participates in research endeavors focused on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

“St. Louis has the largest Bosnian community outside of Bosnia-Herzegovina, with some 60,000 members, virtually all of whom immigrated as refugees from the Bosnian war and genocide. This community has had an enormous impact on stabilizing and revitalizing several neighborhoods that were previously in decline, and Midwest BankCentre has been happy to be part of their success through our banking services and loans,” said **Marsha Benney**, chief financial officer and a member of the Fontbonne University board of trustees. “Our Bosnian-speaking team members have played a big part in this success. We believe deeply in the work of Fontbonne University’s Center for Bosnian Studies and are delighted to celebrate this latest milestone in creating a permanent home for the center.”

###

### About [Midwest BankCentre](#)

A mainstay of the greater St. Louis community banking scene since 1906, Midwest BankCentre employs a staff of about 280 working at 18 bank locations

in the City of St. Louis, St. Louis, Jefferson and St. Charles counties in Missouri and St. Clair County in Illinois. Its current assets exceed \$2.3 billion and deposits total more than \$1.7 billion. The bank empowers people, enables businesses and energizes neighborhoods through the strength of its financial services, including personalized consumer and business banking, business cash management, mortgage lending, home equity loans, financial planning and investments, insurance and digital banking.

**About [Fontbonne University](#)**

Fontbonne University is a private, Catholic liberal arts university located in St. Louis, Missouri, committed to a transformative education and inspiring students to become global citizens who think critically and act ethically to create a more just world. The university was founded in 1923 by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. For more information, visit [www.fontbonne.edu](http://www.fontbonne.edu).