

• NEWS-IN-ENGLISH



John Koskinen IRS Commissioner Retires

New York, NY
Amerikan Uutiset
Robert Saasto, Esq.

On December 20, 2013, the U.S. Senate confirmed John Koskinen to head the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. No democrats voted against him and five Republicans voted for confirmation. He commenced his official duties on January 6, 2014 at the IRS headquarters in Washington D.C. On November 9, 2017, his term in office ended.



Recently retired IRS commissioner John A. Koskinen and president of FALA, Robert Saasto, Esq.

During his tenure in office, the I.R.S. budget fell 18% and the enforcement staff reduced 23%. John spent a considerable portion of his time defending the agency in Congressional Hearings. In an e mail to the author hereof, John Koskinen stated that "It is true that the supposedly formidable Freedom Caucus failed in all their attempts to impeach me, fire me, do away with my pension or not pay me at all. Wonderful group. As I told the New York Times, survival is its own reward."

In the New Times interview article, John expressed concern that "the coarse treatment he received from members of Congress could discourage future public servants from taking such jobs." He never considered resigning!! True Finnish SISU.

John Koskinen had worked with Donald Trump starting in 1975 when John worked for Palmieri Company, an asset management firm. He negotiated with Trump, who was then 29 years old, on the details of the sale of the Commodore

Hotel in NYC. John described Trump then in a New York Times interview as "irrepressible, energetic and fun to deal with". During his tenure in office, the IRS was able to keep Trump's tax returns private as the law requires, despite the fact that "We had people offering millions of dollars for them... hard copies of the returns are in a locked cabinet in a special office at the I.R.S. headquarters."

The article in Amerikan Uutiset

The following com-

ments are extracts from the article that John Koskinen wrote which was published in the Amerikan Uutiset:

"I have always been proud of my Finnish roots. Both my mother's and father's parents came from Finland to the USA at the beginning of the 1900s. My father's parents, Johan Alfred Koskinen and Ida Maria (formerly Poikonen), emigrated from Karstula, in Central Finland, to Cleveland, Ohio in 1905. My father Yrjo Koskinen was born in Cleveland and met my mother Irja there. (My mother was born in Chisholm, Minnesota where her parents settled upon arrival from Finland and she moved to work in Cleveland after high school.) I was born in 1939 in Cleveland which had an active Finnish community. When we visited my mother's home in Minnesota, a highlight was a visit to the family sauna.

In 1994, my confirmation as the Deputy Director for Management in the White House generated enough publicity that I

came to the attention of Judge John Pessala (executive director and co-founder with Robert Alan Saasto Esq., of the New York City based, Finnish American Lawyer Association, or FALA). The Judge called me to say that he recognized my Finnish name, and asked me to join FALA.

When I was nominated by President Obama in the summer of 2013 to be the IRS Commissioner, Robert Saasto sent me an E-mail, congratulating me and inviting me to a FALA dinner he would arrange whenever I was able to come to New York. When I subsequently wrote Robert that I would be visiting the IRS offices in New York in March, he arranged for a cocktail reception and dinner at the Estonia House, in New York City. I was delighted when I found that approximately 50 FALA members and guests had gathered in my honor, presenting me with a plaque that recognized my career in public service.

Prior to the award dinner, Robert, who had he-

come one of my most enthusiastic supporters, connected me with Finnish reporters who wrote articles in numerous Finnish newspapers about my career and my Finnish background.

Robert connected me with a FALA member, W. Bruce Matson, who lives in Seattle.

After considerable effort, Bruce was able to uncover a tremendous amount of information about my Koskinen and Poikonen relatives in Karstula and Saarijärvi. It was this incredible chain of events that led to me being put into direct contact with my relatives in Finland whom I had never known anything about before.

As a result, when I learned that there was going to be a Poikonen family reunion in Karstula, I decided that there would never be a better time to make my first trip to Finland. "

As stated to the author, John plans to remain in retirement this time by having his wife answer the phone.