



CONSULATE GENERAL OF SPAIN MIAMI

May 2013

Nation of Spain Recognizes Jay I. Kislak for Extraordinary Contributions to Preserving Common Heritage and Strengthening Spain/United States Ties

Miami, Fla. – His Majesty the King of Spain Juan Carlos I has granted Jay I. Kislak the Encomienda of the Order of Merit Civil, one of the country’s most prestigious honors.

“This well-deserved distinction is an official recognition on the part of Spain for the extraordinary work Jay Kislak has done to preserve our common heritage and to strengthen the ties between Spain and the United States,” said Cristina Barrios Almazor, Consul General of Spain in Miami.

Mr. Kislak is one the few United States citizens ever to receive the Encomienda Award, which was established in 1926 to recognize extraordinary services performed for the good of Spain.

The award was bestowed upon Mr. Kislak by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain José Manuel García-Margallo. The special presentation was also attended by the Ambassador of Spain to the United States Ramón Gil-Casares, representatives of the federally established St. Augustine 450th Commemoration Commission (which Mr. Kislak chairs), and several of Mr. Kislak’s colleagues and family members.

“I am surprised and humbled to receive this generous recognition from the people of Spain,” said Mr. Kislak. “I have long been enthralled by the dramatic history that links our countries, and it has been my privilege and pleasure to play a part in preserving, protecting and sharing the artifacts and stories that enable us to better understand one another and ourselves.”

In addition to building a successful business enterprise, Mr. Kislak, with his wife, Jean, established the nonprofit Jay I. Kislak Foundation for the conservation and study of materials related to the cultures and history of the early Americas. In his more than 50 years of collecting, Mr. Kislak assembled one of the world’s most significant private holdings of materials related to the early Americas. Among them, a five-page letter written in 1528 to Emperor Charles V by Spanish priest Bartolomé de las Casas, an outspoken defender of the rights of native people; an important document by Hernán Cortés, the conquistador who vanquished the Aztecs; and two of the earliest printings of the letter sent by Christopher Columbus to the Spanish sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella.

In 2004, more than 4,000 Kislak books, manuscripts, art works and other objects became a gift to the nation as the Jay I. Kislak Collection at the Library of Congress. The Kislak Collection is on permanent display, open to the public in the magnificent Thomas Jefferson Building in Washington, D.C.

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(Above, left to right) Jay I. Kislak was presented with the prestigious Encomienda of the Order of Merit Civil by José Manuel García-Margallo, Spain's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation; and was congratulated by Cristina Barrios Almazor, Consul General of Spain in Miami.

(Photo: Pablo Blázquez)

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