

Communiqué, 13 December, 2005

Victor-André Masséna
New president of the Fondation Napoléon



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After eighteen years in office, the baron Gourgaud has decided to stand down as president of the Fondation Napoléon, although he will continue to serve as a trustee. As a result of his decision, he presented his resignation to the Board of Trustees on 13 December, 2005.

The Board of Trustees has elected Victor-André Masséna, Prince d'Essling, Duc de Rivoli, as president of the Fondation. The Prince became a trustee in 2002 and was elected Vice President in January 2005.

During the same meeting the Baron Gourgaud was appointed President of Honour of the Fondation Napoléon. Bernard Chevallier, chief curator of the Musée de Malmaison et Bois-Préau was elected Vice Président.

In concert with Prince Masséna, the board of trustees thanked the Baron Gourgaud for all that he had done leading the Fondation Napoléon since 1987. Founder of the institution after the devolution of the Lapeyre bequest, he tirelessly worked to make the Fondation a place for the widest possible public, recognised for its historical competence and its activities in the preservation of Napoleonic heritage.

Born in 1950, Victor-André Masséna qualified as a lawyer and worked at the Paris bar from 1973 to 1978. After an MBA from INSEAD, he worked initially in the export arm of Aérospatiale before moving on to other companies. Becoming manager of the DREE and commercial and economic adviser to the French embassy in Bosnia-Herzegovina, he worked to set up French aid operations during the war, notably with reference to the assistance brought to the inhabitants of Sarajevo. After the Dayton/Paris peace accords in December 1995, he was appointed deputy Chief Representative for the UN in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in charge of development and reconstruction (1996), then becoming deputy to Carl Bildt, special representative for the UN Secretary General for the Balkans (1999). Victor-André Masséna is today a consultant.

A descendant of one of Napoleon's marshals, he has always had a great interest in history in general, and in military history in particular, as is shown by his impressive book collection. He is Vice Président of the board of trustees of the Musée de l'Armée.