



Press Release, Page 1 of 4

In Memory of a Legend: 'Graf Kilowatt' Born 130 Years Ago

- › **Successful racing driver, Count Alexander Joseph 'Sasha' Kolowrat Krakowsky born 29 January 1886**
- › **'Graf Kilowatt' won numerous prestigious races between 1904 and 1914 with motorbikes and automobiles produced by the Laurin & Klement brand**
- › **ŠKODA Museum Director: "Kolowrat was one of the most important figures in motorsport at the turn of the 20th century"**

Mladá Boleslav, 29 January 2016 – Graf Alexander Joseph Kolowrat-Krakowsky was born 130 years ago. The successful racing driver and Board Member at Laurin & Klement made a huge contribution to the successful development of the largest automobile manufacturer in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. He also achieved great motorsport successes.

"Sasha Kolowrat was one of the most important figures in motorsport at the turn of the 20th century," explains Andrea Frydlová, Director of the ŠKODA Museum. "The impressive winning streak in prestigious international races and competitions was crucial for the future development of Laurin & Klement and later for ŠKODA. The successful career of Count Kolowrat and his colleagues from the factory team of Laurin & Klement is retold in a new exhibition at the ŠKODA Museum, which covers 115 years of the Mladá Boleslav brand's success in motorsport."

The member of one of the oldest noble families in Bohemia was born in Glen Ridge (New Jersey, USA) and grew up in the West Bohemian village of Týnec near Klatovy. His first motorcycle, a one-cylinder Laurin & Klement, was given to him by his father on passing his A-levels. He received a car made by the Mladá Boleslav brand two years later.

Kolowrat began his motorsport career in motorcycle racing. The Count's first win was in September 1906 in the <65 kg motorcycle category of a hill climb near the Austrian spa town of Semmering. This was also the location of his victory one year later at the wheel of a Laurin & Klement car. In 1908, he won the first year of the race Zbraslav-Jíloviště in the two-litre class; the following year he went up against 102 rivals in the German Prince-Heinrich Rally. Kolowrat was also instrumental in the Laurin & Klement team's success in the challenging St. Petersburg-Sevastopol race, keeping the upper hand in competing for the Karpathenpokal (1911). Kolowrat, who was also known as 'Count Kilowatt' for his energetic personality, not only stood out for his fast and safe driving style but also due to his exceptionally solid physique. His racing career was interrupted by the outbreak of World War I in 1914.

In motorsport circles, Count Kolowrat's name is most frequently associated with the Alpine Rally – a challenging race of up to 2932 kilometres. Kolowrat took poll position



Press Release, Page 2 of 4

from the very first year (1910); in 1912, 1913 and 1914 he crossed the finish line without a single penalty point. The Alpine Rally had to be completed without stop gaps; the engines were constantly running. In addition, the drivers were given time limits for the completion of individual stages, with a referee travelling as a passenger in each racing car. The engine, transmission and other important vehicle parts were sealed, so they could not be replaced. Racers were given penalty points for late arrivals or starts, as well as unfair behaviour during the race. With all of those challenges, Sasha Kolowrat certainly knew his way around Laurin & Klement automobiles, often dominating the competition.

At the age of 24, the racing driver and entrepreneur became a member of the then ten-member Board of Directors for the automobile manufacturer in Mladá Boleslav. Kolowrat retained his stake in the company even after the First World War – at that time he was already a citizen of former Czechoslovakia. Following his marriage to Russian Princess Sophia Trubetskaya, he abandoned his racing career and dedicated his professional life to cinematography, working from then on with legendary stars like Marlene Dietrich and director Michael Curtiz (Casablanca).

At the height of his second career, Sasha Kolowrat fell ill with cancer of salivary gland at the age of 40. He later died of the disease on 4 December 1927 in Vienna. A street in Vienna was named after him in 1975; in honour of Count Kolowrat, it bears the name Kolowratgasse. Posthumously, the Count returned to the silver screen in 1956 in Alfréd Radok's 'Grandpa Automobile', based on the book by Adolf Branald.

ŠKODA has been successful in motorsport for the past 115 years. Narcis Podsedníček kick started the company's racing history, participating in the Paris-Berlin race in June 1901 on a Laurin & Klement motorcycle. Be it on the racing track or in rallies, ŠKODA has celebrated title wins throughout the world. Historical highlights include multiple title wins in the FIA European Rally Championship (ERC), the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC) and the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC), as well as the victory in the European Touring Car Championship in 1981. ŠKODA has also triumphed in the oldest and most famous rally in the world: ŠKODA rally cars have won several class titles in the legendary Monte Carlo, which has been held since 1911.

Nowadays, ŠKODA continues this proud racing tradition with the ŠKODA Fabia R5 rally car. Immediately after the first season with this car, factory team Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson (S/S) scored the fourth APRC championship title in a row for ŠKODA. The Fabia R5 has also won a further five national titles for the brand. In 2016, the factory driver teams Pontus Tidemand / Jonas Andersson (S/S), Jan Kopecký / Pavel Dresler and Esapekka Lappi / Janne Ferm (FIN / FIN) will be competing in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) with the ŠKODA Fabia R5.





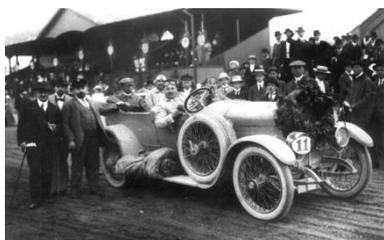
Press Release

, Page 3 of 4

For more information:

Vítězslav Kodym,
Sponsorship & Classic Communications
P +420 326 8 11784
vitezslav.kodym@skoda-auto.cz

Media images:



In Memory of a Legend: 'Graf Kilowatt' Born 130 Years Ago

Kolowrat took poll position in the Alpine Rally from the very first year (1910); in 1912, 1913 and 1914 he crossed the finish line without a single penalty point.

[Download](#)

Source: ŠKODA AUTO



In Memory of a Legend: 'Graf Kilowatt' Born 130 Years Ago

The young Count Kolowrat always spreading cheer: even in the Bosnia drive in 1908.

[Download](#)

Source: ŠKODA AUTO



In Memory of a Legend: 'Graf Kilowatt' Born 130 Years Ago

The maximum total weight of the driver teams was also stipulated in the regulations. Heavysset Kolowrat therefore often took his younger brother Heinrich (photo) along as his "co-driver".

[Download](#)

Source: ŠKODA AUTO



In Memory of a Legend: 'Graf Kilowatt' Born 130 Years Ago

Board Member Kolowrat (right) was a worthy representative of the L&K company. This shot of the company's stand at the Prague Motor Show in 1914 shows him standing with General Director Václav Klement (links) and Field Marshall Prince Lobkowitz.

[Download](#)

Source: ŠKODA AUTO





Press Release

, Page 4 of 4

ŠKODA AUTO

- > is one of the longest-established vehicle production companies in the world. In 1895, the Czech headquarters in Mladá Boleslav began producing bicycles, followed by the production of motorbikes and cars.
- > currently offers the following models in the range: Citigo, Fabia, Rapid, Octavia, Yeti and Superb.
- > in 2015 delivered more than 1 million vehicles to customers worldwide.
- > has belonged to Volkswagen since 1991. The Volkswagen Group is one of the most successful automotive groups in the world. ŠKODA, in association with the Group, independently manufactures and develops vehicles, as well as components, engines and gear transmissions.
- > operates at three locations in the Czech Republic, produces in China, Russia, Slovakia and India mainly through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan through local partners.
- > employs over 25,900 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.

