

*Welcome to Philadelphia
on the Semisesquicentennial of the
Declaration of Independence*



Poles in the American Revolution

HOTEL MARRIOTT OLD CITY, PHILADELPHIA, PA
AUGUST 12 - 15, 2026

HOSTED BY THE
POLISH HERITAGE SOCIETY OF PHILADELPHIA

The American Council for Polish Culture
wishes to acknowledge and thank the
Polish Embassy in Washington, D.C.
for co-financing the Semiquincentennial Convention of 2026
in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from Polish diaspora funds



Embassy
of the Republic of Poland
in Washington, D.C.

Bogdan Klich, Charge d'affaires a.i. - Head of Mission
Dorota Markiewicz-Zemke, Minister-Counselor, Deputy Head of Mission
Katarzyna Smoter, Consul General, Head of Section



August 12, 2026

Dear Members of the American Council for Polish Culture,

In this year of the American Semiquincentennial, it is our pleasure as representatives of the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia to greet you on arrival to the 78th Annual Convention of the American Council for Polish Culture (ACPC) and welcome you to Philadelphia, the city of Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affection.

The convention will celebrate the participation of Poles in the American Revolution among whom are Generals Thaddeus Kosciuszko and Casimir Pulaski. Both spent time in Philadelphia during the War for Independence and are memorialized with statues in the city. The place where Kosciuszko stayed is now a museum, the Kosciuszko House Memorial administered by the National Park Service.

We also want to send our congratulations to the outstanding contributors to the cause of the Polish Community who will be honored with awards at the Banquet given at the conclusion of the convention. Their names and accomplishments are listed in another part of this book.

However, it is a great sorrow to mention that one of our valued members, Dr. Janusz Romanski, a leading engineer and a pillar of many Polish American organizations in the city and beyond, will not be with us for this convention having passed away in July of this year. May he be remembered during our deliberations.

Please enjoy the hospitality of the city and its many historical and entertainment sites. We look forward to another successful and fruitful ACPC Convention.

Sincerely,

Deborah M. Majka and Peter Obst
Co-Chairs of the 78th ACPC Convention

Contents

Page	Item
1	Welcome Letter
3	Congratulatory Letters
8	Kosciuszko House Memorial
9	ACPC Executive Committee
12	ACPC Award Recipients
19	Sembrich Competition Winner
20	Diplomatic Speakers
21	Lunchtime Speakers
22	Poles in the American Revolution
23	Dining and Churches in Philadelphia
24	Convention Schedule
25	Ads from Sponsors and Friends
38	Ralph Modjeski - Bridge Engineer
40	Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia

The ACPC 2026 Convention Committee

Chairs: Deborah M. Majka, Peter J. Obst

Members: Joseph Buss, Fran Staniszevska Herr,

Tiffany Loomis, Theresa Romanowska,

Jewls Teneva Rogowska, Liz Konieczny Whitman

Officers of the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia

President - Jewls Teneva Rogowska

Vice-President - Tiffany Loomis

Treasurer - Deborah M. Majka

Corresponding Secretary - Peter Obst

Recording Secretary - Liz Whitman

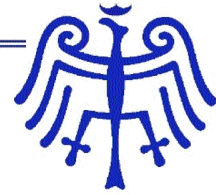
Directors: Michael Hrabowski, Agnieszka Simon, Joseph Buss,

Diana Blichasz, Aleksandra Ziolkowska-Boehm, Ph.D.,

Vincent Rospond, John Wisniewski, Margaret Zaleska, Ph.D.



American Council for Polish Culture



August 12, 2026

Dear ACPC Members, Delegates and Friends,

Welcome to the 78th Annual Convention of the American Council for Polish Culture.

As we join all of America in celebrating the 250th birthday of our nation, it is very fitting that we gather in Philadelphia, a city where it all began. Since as the American Council of Polish Culture we wish to focus on the part played by heroic Poles in the fight to make our country free, our host, the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia chose as the theme of this year's Convention *Poles in the American Revolution*. One of the most prominent among those Poles was Tadeusz Kościuszko who arrived to our shores 250 years ago and we will recall this anniversary at a special ceremony in his Philadelphia home within a short distance from the hotel where we are meeting. We will also dine at the Carpenters' Hall, famous as the meeting place of the First Continental Congress in 1774, where colonial delegates organized a united resistance against British rule. Talk about being right in the midst of history!

Thank you Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia for bringing history and Polish part in it to the forefront. I especially wish to mention your efforts over the years to identify numerous sites in Philadelphia with special markers, informing visitors that they are either named after Polish heroes or were built by them, from statues of Generals Kosciuszko and Pulaski fighters in the American Revolution, to the Benjamin Franklin Bridge built by the Polish engineer Ralph Modjeski, son of the famous Shakespearean actress Helena Modjeska (Modrzejewska).

Thank you also for scheduling the Recital by the ACPC Sembrich Vocal Competition Winner at the Curtis Institute of Music. It should be noted that Marcella Kochańska Sembrich, the great Polish soprano after whom our competition is named, served as the founding director of the vocal department at the Curtis in 1924. In recognition of her immense contribution to the school's first decade, she was awarded one of the very first Honorary Doctor of Music degrees by Curtis. What a thrill it will be for the 2026 ACPC Sembrich Award winner, mezzo soprano Christine Boddicker, to step on stage at the newly built Gould Hall, knowing that the legendary Maestra Sembrich taught many exceptional singers just a few steps away.

Of course, there will be business sessions that conventions are wont to have, with plans for more events in the ongoing semiquincentennial and discussions of past and new programs meant to promote our Polish culture in America. We are an organization with membership spread "from sea to shining sea" so our programs are varied and there is always much to talk about.

Finally, it is my pleasure to congratulate this year's recipients of the ACPC Awards who will be honored at the Annual Awards Banquet. And to all of those who came from near and far, best wishes for an enjoyable and productive Convention and a pleasant stay in historic Philadelphia.

Celia Larkin
President, American Council for Polish Culture



Embassy of the Republic of Poland
in Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C., August 12, 2026

***Dear Members of the American Council of Polish Culture,
Dear Guests of the Convention in Philadelphia,***

I wish to welcome you on the threshold of a significant event, namely the annual Convention of the American Council of Polish Culture.

This year's Convention takes place in Philadelphia, thereby acquiring special historical significance. It is held in the year of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America, the document that initiated the process of establishing an independent American state. This is an exceptional moment that allows us to reflect on the shared history of Poland and the United States and on the role that Poles played in the fight for American freedom. In this spirit, the Convention commemorates the contribution of Poles to the American War of Independence, particularly the heroic deeds of Generals Tadeusz Kościuszko and Kazimierz Pułaski, who devoted their military talents and lives to the cause of American liberty. Their legacy remains an enduring symbol of Polish-American brotherhood in arms. In this context, I consider the discussion on the status and situation of the Kościuszko House National Memorial, planned as part of the Convention, to be particularly important. It is a unique trace of the material heritage of the shared Polish-American history of the struggle for the independence of the United States.

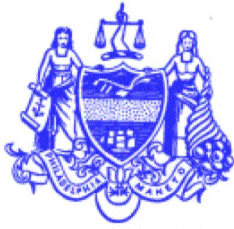
I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia, the Host of this year's Convention, for the tremendous effort invested in preparing this exceptional event. Your commitment, determination, and organizational capabilities make it possible to create a space in which the American Polonia can celebrate its identity, heritage, and contribution to the development of both nations. I am pleased that the Convention is co-financed by our Embassy from Polish-American funds. This is an expression of recognition for the mission of your Association and the role of the Convention, as well as proof of the enduring support that the Embassy provides to Polish communities throughout the United States.

Dear Members of the Convention, your role today is of particular importance. As members of the American Council of Polish Culture, you undertake an extraordinary mission of transmitting and preserving the Polish heritage in America, bringing information about Poland and Poles to the American community across the entire country. This is an immensely important mission that builds lasting bridges between our nations and strengthens the bonds between Poland and the Polish-American community.

I wish all participants fruitful deliberations, inspiring meetings, and unforgettable moments during this year's Convention. May this exceptional year—the 250th anniversary of American independence—be for all of us an occasion to continue building bridges between our nations.

With appreciation,


Bogdan Klich
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Republic of Poland
in the United States of America



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 686-2181
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CHERELLE L. PARKER
Mayor

August 12, 2026

Greetings!

It is a pleasure and privilege to welcome you to the American Council for Polish Culture Foundation Annual Convention, hosted by the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia (PHSP). The convention will take place from August 12 to August 15, 2026.

Since its founding in 1948, the American Council for Polish Culture (ACPC) has furthered its mission to foster an interest in Polish history and culture, and to share that with American society. ACPC has established numerous programs including scholarships, shows and exhibitions in pursuit of their mission. More than 40 Polish culture-oriented societies and clubs all over the United States are part of the organization and many are joining together this summer at the convention.

This year the convention will honor and highlight the participation of Poles in the American Revolution, which Philadelphia is proudly marking as the Semiquincentennial is celebrated in our city and nation in 2026. In particular, the participation of Generals Thaddeus Kosciuszko and Casimir Pulaski will be honored, as their roles were integral to the success of the Revolutionary War and they each lived in Philadelphia during that time. Statues and historical markers are located in Philadelphia memorializing them, which I hope you have a chance to visit during your time at the convention.

Several outstanding contributors to the Polish Community will be honored at the conclusion of the convention during the Grand Banquet this year, including Deborah Majka (Lifetime Achievement Award); Janusz Romanski (Cultural Achievement Award); Paul Krzywicki (Cultural Achievement Award); Donna Chmara (Founders Award); and Ryszard Poremski (Founders Award).

As the first World Heritage City in the nation, Philadelphia is extremely proud of its diversity and the rich contributions that many different groups of people have made to our population, culture, arts, history, and more. Notably, Philadelphia has another special connection to Poland as it shares a Sister City relationship with Torun, Poland.

On behalf of the City of Philadelphia, I wish you a most memorable, successful, and enjoyable Annual Convention in Philadelphia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cherelle L. Parker".

Cherelle L. Parker
Mayor



KANCELARIA PREZYDENTA
RZECZYPOSPOLITEJ POLSKIEJ
PODSEKRETARZ STANU
Agnieszka Jędrzak

Warszawa, 12 czerwca 2026 roku

Pani Cecilia Larkin

Prezes Amerykańskiej Rady Kultury Polskiej

Szanowna Pani Prezes,

On behalf of the President of the Republic of Poland, Karol Nawrocki, and myself, I would like to congratulate you on summing up the next twelve months of activity of the Council, which has existed since 1948.

This year's summation is exceptional, as it falls on the 250th anniversary of the signing of the United States Declaration of Independence. It's worth remembering that we, Poles, have been an important component of American society from the very beginning of settlement on the continent. In the first half of the 17th century, Polish craftsmen in Jamestown not only were the driving force of the center's economy, but they were the ones who declared the first strike on American soil, opposing the decisions of the English. In the subsequent War of Independence,

In the years 1775–1783, famous and distinguished soldiers fought as volunteers for the United States: Tadeusz Kościuszko, co-founder of the Military Academy at West Point, and Casimir Pulaski, considered the creator of the American cavalry.

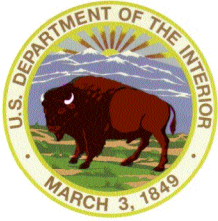
During World War II, approximately one million soldiers of Polish descent fought under the banner of the United States, demonstrating that they were willing to pay the ultimate price for the freedom of nations to self-determination. Today, we realize our Polish-American brotherhood in arms within the framework of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Ladies and Gentlemen, one of the honorable tasks of the Polish diaspora is to recall the historical threads and values that connect it with the citizens of its country. The American Council for Polish Culture's role in promoting the contribution of Poles to the development of American civil society and striving for its worthy commemoration is certainly worth noting. For this, I extend my sincere thanks. I am also immensely grateful to all the esteemed organizations associated with the Council for their efforts to bring our traditions and culture closer to Americans. Your daily work, effort, and commitment are invaluable.

In the context of Madam President's personal achievements in supporting the democratic opposition in Poland in the 1980s, it is impossible not to mention the advocacy of Poles in the US, including institutional ones, such as those of the Polish American Congress, for the Solidarity movement and the overthrow of communism. During the most difficult moments of their history, our compatriots in Poland could always count on the Polish diaspora, and the Polish state will never forget this.

I wish you many more fruitful years of activity and assured you of my kindness and support for your endeavors.

Łączę wyrazy szacunku
Agnieszka Jędrzak



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
143 S. 3rd Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106



7.B (INDE-SUPT)

August 13, 2026

Greetings,

I'm pleased to welcome you to Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial, one of 433 national parks across the United States, as part of the 2026 American Council for Polish Culture Foundation Annual Convention.

Your convention is occurring at a significant moment throughout Philadelphia and across the United States as the country celebrates the 250th anniversary of the nation. A compelling and engaging historical figure within this nationwide celebration is the life and military service of Thaddeus Kosciuszko during the American Revolutionary War.

The Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial, located at 3rd & Pine Street in Philadelphia, serves as a window into the legacy of Kosciuszko, reminding us of his important contributions to the Continental Army and of the universal struggle for liberty and freedom around the world.

Kosciuszko lived in this brick home for six months from 1797-98 while recovering from wounds suffered in the Polish uprising. He entertained guests such as Chief Mihsihkinaahkwa of the Miami Tribe and then-Vice President Thomas Jefferson. His home ultimately became part of the National Park System in 1972 and today it continues to education the public about his life and success as a military engineer, statesman, strategist and freedom fighter.

On behalf of the National Park Service, I warmly welcome you to Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial and encourage you to visit and explore all that historic Philadelphia has to offer, including Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell and the numerous other attractions at Independence National Historical Park.

Sincerely,

Lauren Gurniewicz
Chief of Interpretation
National Parks of Philadelphia

Thaddeus Kosciuszko House Memorial



(l. to. r) The house as it was in 1967, with Edward Pinkowski in front, and in 2016.

Cheering crowds and booming cannon salutes greeted General Thaddeus Kosciuszko on his arrival to Philadelphia in August, 1797. Exiled from his beloved Poland, his only wish was to return to his "second country." Though his many American friends urged him to make a new life and home in the United States, Kosciuszko stayed here less than a year. Turbulent events would draw the General back to Europe in May, 1798.

Instructed to find "a dwelling as small, as remote, and as cheap" as possible, Kosciuszko's secretary, Julian Niemcewicz, chose Mrs. Ann Relf's boarding house in Society Hill (on the corner of 3rd and Pine Streets).

Still suffering from battle wounds received during the Polish Insurrection, Kosciuszko rarely left his bedchamber. He amused himself through reading, hobbies, and entertaining visitors. Persons of all backgrounds were welcomed here by Kosciuszko. For some visitors, exciting discoveries in science, discussions about social reforms, and the fierce American political scene were the topics of the day. Others stopped by to share a relaxing game of chess or whist. Young ladies enjoyed having their portraits painted by the General.

For five months this room was Kosciuszko's home. Recreated from an inventory found in Thomas Jefferson's personal papers, the room reflects Kosciuszko's political and personal interests, as well as his vagabond lifestyle. The objects in the room are period pieces similar to those owned by Kosciuszko.

For many years the house stood in derelict condition until its significance was recognized by Edward Pinkowski, Philadelphia's preeminent Polish-American historian. Supported by Polish-American organizations and entrepreneur Edward Piszek who believed in keeping the General's memory alive, he presented his information before the United States Congress and the house became a site administered by the National Park Service. After renovation, it opened in 1976 as a museum devoted to Kosciuszko.



President

Cecilia Larkin

Cecilia "Celia" (Kolowska) Larkin was born in Poland in the Mazury region. Her father died when she was nine years old and a few years later, she came to the United States with her mother and three sisters. The family lived in Detroit, Michigan, and became part of the city's sizeable Polish community. The girls went to Catholic schools where some of the teachers spoke Polish; their mother was active in church organizations. Celia graduated from Wayne State University with majors in art and literature.

While in college, she began working at the Polish Varieties radio program on station WJLB (later moving to WMZK-FM), first as an after-hours receptionist, then as an announcer, and eventually as producer and director along with her husband Jan Marian Kreutz. She wrote, produced and broadcast ten hours of programming weekly consisting of music, world and community news, and interviews with visiting guests from the international Polish Diaspora. The program's audience was over 100,000 listeners. She also worked part time at the Polish newspaper Dziennik Polski as translator and writer. She exhibited her art work in individual and group shows. After the death of her husband, she continued directing the radio program for two years and then moved to Washington, DC.

Celia was actively involved in Polish American organizations in Detroit, such as the Friends of Polish Art and the Polish American Congress. She was on the organizing committee of the 1978 ACPC Convention, acted as official photographer and wrote reports on various events. Once in Washington, she joined the Polish American Arts Association and was for a time the co-editor and then editor of the Polish Heritage, published by the American Council for Polish Culture. She was also on the board of the Metropolitan Washington Division of the Polish American Congress.

Her active involvement in Polish organizations was curtailed when she accepted a government job in which her Polish language skills and knowledge of Polish culture were put to great use. For several years, she played a key role in a project which provided support to the democratic opposition movement in Poland during the 1980s that led to the overthrow of communism in 1989. She received exceptional performance awards and the Career Intelligence Medal. The project and her role in it were described in the book *A Covert Action* by Seth G. Jones, published in 2018.

After retiring, Celia again became active in the PAAA where she took on the duties of the membership chair, was elected to the board of directors, chaired various events, became the editor of the newsletter, and finally was elected president in 2016. In 2021, she organized the ACPC Convention which the PAAA hosted in the historic Arts Club of Washington. In the ACPC, she served on the Nominating Committee, chaired the Music Committee and its Marcella Kochanska Sembrich Vocal Competition, and was on the Polish Heritage Committee. She was elected ACPC President in 2023.

Celia lives with her husband Richard Larkin and their two cats, Molière and Tartine, in Vienna, Virginia. They support local arts organizations and enjoy the cultural life in the nation's capital, attending concerts, theater plays and visiting galleries. The cats simply add to the décor of the house while meowing in fluent Polish and French.



First Vice President

Mark Szpak

Mark P. Szpak was elected as First Vice-President at the ACPC's Annual Convention in Buffalo, NY, in 2025. He graduated from Harvard College and Harvard Law School, worked as a staffer on Capitol Hill and clerked for a federal judge in Washington, D.C., and then practiced law for 35 years at Ropes & Gray, a leading international law firm based in Boston, MA. In his practice, he worked on a wide array of cases assisting corporate and institutional clients in disputes and investigations before courts and agencies across the United States and abroad. In the latter part of his career,

Mark specialized in privacy and cybersecurity matters; he represented companies in some of the largest data breach cases of their time, and the National Law Journal awarded him its "Cybersecurity Trailblazer" recognition in 2015. Now retired, Mark has been a lead contributor to a legal treatise on cybersecurity, and he devotes most of his time to various non-profit boards on which he serves.

Apart from his professional experience, Mark's Polish heritage is at the core of his personal background. His parents were born in Poland (outside Tarnów and then-Lwów) but were separated from their families during World War II and emigrated to the United States after the war. Mark and his six siblings were raised in the Polish-American community in Manchester, New Hampshire, where they belonged to St. Hedwig Parish and attended St. Casimir School. Upon graduating college, Mark received a Michael C. Rockefeller Travelling Fellowship to live in Poland for a year (1977-1978), allowing him to meet his wonderful babcia for the first time, along with many aunts, uncles, and cousins. During the fellowship year, he helped harvest turnips and potatoes on his uncle's family farm in Opole, led English conversation classes at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, and worked in the Tatra Mountains for a month herding sheep and learning how to make oscypki (sheep milk cheese!).

Mark has returned to Poland many times since then. In the early 2000s, his son and daughter participated in the ACPC Youth Leadership Conferences held in Washington, D.C., and spent summers in Poland in the Jagiellonian's Polish language programs. In 2023, Mark traveled twice to Poland by invitation, to participate in the World Copernican Congress celebrations in Torun and as a presenter at a legal conference in Lublin.

Mark has been an active member of numerous Polish-American organizations for many years and received the "Amicus Poloniae" recognition from Polish Ambassador Janusz Reiter in 2006. He helped form the Polish Cultural Foundation of Boston in 1998 and has served as an officer from that time, including as President since 2020. Mark has also been a member of the Bractwo Kurkowe in the United States since 2023, participating in events like the Pulaski Parade in New York City in 2024 and the special 1000th Year Anniversary Celebration of the Coronation of King Boleslaw Chrobry in Chicago in 2025. With the ACPC, he has served as Recording Secretary from 2024 to 2025 and as chair of its Constitution and Bylaw Committee since 2021, among other roles.

Mark notes that "service to Polonia is deeply important to me, as a way of honoring my Polish family and community, to which I am immeasurably indebted. But more importantly, service to Polonia is a way to exercise the privilege we all enjoy, as a result of our heritage, to celebrate the achievements of Polish culture – and to help meet the duty we also hold to grow the promise of Polonia as it continually emerges within Polish-American generations across America."

Second Vice President

John W. Cebrowski



John is originally from Garfield and Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey. Military and professional experience led him and his family to South Carolina, Illinois, Florida, Connecticut, Michigan, Wisconsin, Virginia, and New Hampshire. John and his wife Amanda, from Norfolk, Virginia, have four daughters and nine grandchildren. One of their daughters is a Dominican Sister with the St. Cecilia Congregation.

All four of his grandparents emigrated to America in the first decade of the 20th century. His maternal grandfather from Borawe, near Ostroleka; his maternal grandmother from Maly Plock, near Lomza; his paternal grandfather from Korczow in

Eastern Galicia, now in Ukraine; and his paternal grandmother from Helenowka in Wolyn, now in Ukraine. His grandparents and his parents instilled in him a deep respect for his Polish heritage.

John holds an Associate in Applied Science in Electrical Engineering degree from the Rochester Institute of Technology (1960), a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Industrial Design from the Rhode Island School of Design (1962), and a Master in Business Administration in Marketing Management from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management (1970).

He had the honor of serving America as a United States Marine Corps officer and attack pilot (1962-1967). He was awarded the Bronze Star with Valor while serving as a Forward Air Controller with 2nd battalion, 7th Marine Regiment—and five Air Medals while flying eighty missions as an A4E attack pilot with Marine Attack Squadron 311 in Vietnam.

He had a rewarding leadership and management career as a sales and marketing executive with Xerox, General Electric Medical Systems, Digital Equipment Corporation, and Solarex Corporation. John has authored two books, *The Sales Manager's Troubleshooter*, and *Sales Management Essentials*. He taught marketing for one year at Southern New Hampshire University, and taught international sales channel management at the World Trade Institute in New York.

In 2008 he was elected to the first of three two-year terms in the New Hampshire House of Representatives, where he served on the Health and Human Services & Elderly Affairs Committee, the Finance Committee, and was vice-chair of the Judiciary and Constitutional Review Committee. He authored several pieces of successful legislation, most notably dealing with the state's budget process, and the state's economic development planning. He was the New Hampshire House representative to the state's Economic Development Advisory Council.

John is currently serving on the Board of Directors of the Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria, and the Austin Polish Society. He is the 2nd vice president of the American Council for Polish Culture. Because he has a deep passion for Polish history, culture, and traditions he is also a member of the American Institute of Polish Culture, the Friends of Polish Art in Michigan, the Jozef Pilsudski Institute of America, the Kosciuszko Foundation, the Polish American Council of Texas (PACT), the Polish American Historical Association (PAHA), the Polish Heritage Society of Northeastern Wisconsin, and the Polish Cultural Council in Pittsburgh.

John has been to Poland on ten different occasions to visit family and for business. In 1996 he was a Citizen's Democracy Corps (CDC) volunteer and worked for three months for Spectro-Lab Sp. z o.o. in Warsaw, which he claims was the best work experience of his life. His task was to share his marketing and sales management expertise with this private Polish high-tech distributor. The CDC was sponsored by the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

Today, aside from his commitment to Polonia organizations, he is an accomplished and active artist, committed to the Knights of Columbus (Rycerze Kolumba), and focused on his family and parish.



Treasurer

Tom Payne

Tom Payne, ACPC Treasurer, has been involved in Polish-American cultural activities for 25 years, in an endless attempt to catch up with his fellow ACPC veterans. He inherited Polish blood from his mother Elaine Mazany Payne. He began his service in 2000 humbly as Recording Secretary of the Polish American Arts Association of Washington DC and his progression culminated in his election as President of PAAA in 2010. He served as President for six consecutive years.

Tom had never been to an ACPC Convention until 2010, when he dutifully decided to represent PAAA as their presidential representative to the ACPC Convention in Rapid City SD, with great memories still of visiting the Crazy Horse Memorial and Mount Rushmore, and he rapidly became a zealous convert to the ACPC mission. Soon thereafter he was given an assignment to conduct a project to establish an historical marker at Jamestown VA to commemorate the arrival of the first Poles in America in 1609, and the project was completed and recognized at the 2012 ACPC Convention in Williamsburg VA.

Tom was elected President of ACPC in 2015 at the ACPC Convention in Chicago and he served for 4 years, after which he was elected as Treasurer at the 2019 ACPC Convention in Warsaw Poland. He continues as Treasurer today. He hopes to share his warm experiences with others to familiarize them with the positives of becoming an active participant and leader in ACPC activities. He particularly aims to identify and encourage innate talents of other like-minded Polonians.

In addition, he currently serves in other Washington DC-based Polish American organizations. He was recently elected Treasurer of the PAAA, and a Board member of the local chapter of the Polish American Congress, and Vice President of Friends of John Paul II. He graduated with a degree in History from University of Virginia and earned an MBA in Finance from Virginia Tech and a Masters in Telecommunication from George Washington University. He is currently an independent consultant in federal contracting and he spends a lot of his spare time in his organic vegetable garden and greenhouse, along with tending to four egg-laying hens. He has great appreciation and awe for the talents of his fellow ACPC Board members and wishes to thank his many mentors over the past two decades. He is very glad to attend the Philadelphia Convention since it is very appropriate to be in a city that was the hub of revolutionary organization that has resulted in 250 years of freedom and democracy.



Recording Secretary

Rose Kobylinski

Rose Kobylinski was born in Regensburg, Germany of Polish Parents; Roza F. Nowotarska (writer, journalist, broadcaster for The Voice of America for over 20 years broadcasting a weekly Country Music Program to Poland) and Leslie S. Kobylinski (Singer and Talented musician and who was an employee of General Motors in Detroit). She grew up in Detroit (Hamtramck) and Warren, Michigan. She started dancing as a young girl with a group sponsored by the PNA 122. She was also a member of "Mlody Teatr" and danced alongside Marcia

Lewandowski, our former Recording Secretary.

She moved with her family to Washington, D.C. and has remained in the Washington Metropolitan area ever since.

She joined a Polish Folk Dance group from Baltimore, Maryland known as "Wschodnia Galica" under the direction of Mr. Patrick Hotkowski. She remained with them for a few years. The group danced on the Washington Mall as part of the Wianki Festival. For a few years. She also took part in the Baltimore Festival 1984 held in July, 1984. The dance workshops were held at Towson State University. The final concert/finale by the groups was held on July 20th at the Joseph MeyerHoff Symphony Hall in Baltimore. There were over 300 dancers on stage for the grand finale. This event was the very first held by the Polish Folk Dance Association of the Americas.

She joined the Polish American Arts Association (PAAA) when Verna Lopatkiewicz was President from 1998-99. She also worked on the board when Estelle von Wachtel Torres, was President from 1999-2001. She stepped away for several years. She returned when Celia Larkin was a member of the PAAA board. She has been an active member ever since and has held various board positions. Most recently at the PAAA's Membership meeting held on Sunday, May 31st, 2026, she was responsible for holding elections to vote for a new President, several Board Members, Treasurer and Membership. Mr Olek Skrypczuk was elected as PAAA's new President.

She has worked as an office manager/events planner for various industries, i.e., Quality Inn, Wine and Spirits Wholesalers of American, MCI and ABC Technologies to name a few. Most recently she worked as an office manager/pet care and dog walker for Becky's Pet Care.

She joined ACPC and her first ACPC Convention was in Minneapolis, Minnesota from August 8-12, 2018 at the Crowne Plaza hotel. Since joining, she has been on the Board of Directors. For the past several, she has served as the Chair of the Nominating Committee. In addition, she also serves on the Boards of The Friends of John Paul II Foundation and the Polish American Congress.

In her spare time, she is part of The Rose Theatre Play Reading Series held at the Arts Club of Washington, D.C. She has also recently joined the Virginia Beach International Folk Dance Club where line dancing from all over the world is taught.



Lifetime Achievement Award

Deborah M. Majka

***Honorary Consul of the
Republic of Poland***

Deborah (Debbie) M. Majka was educated at St. Hubert's High School, and Villanova University graduating with an MS in Counseling and Human Relations. She was employed professionally in the Monomers Marketing division of Rohm and Haas Company taking an early retirement in 2006.

She served as president of the American Council for Polish Culture (ACPC) 1993-1999, 2003-2007, and from 2009 to 2013. Currently she

is a member of the ACPC Pulaski Committee and Affiliate Grants Chair, the General Pulaski Memorial Committee and is National Convention Co-Chair.

On the local level, Debbie completed five terms as President of the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia, an affiliate of ACPC. For many years she was an active volunteer at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa, in Doylestown, PA, and during celebration of its 50th Anniversary was honored by the Shrine for all her loyal work. She is a charter member and President of the Marcella Kochanska-Sembrich Female Chorus, No. 321, Polish Singers Alliance of America, and, together with the members of the Chorus, has sponsored the Adam Mickiewicz Polish Language School Junior Chorus No. 22.

On Saturday mornings she teaches Polish language to children and adults at the Adam Mickiewicz Polish Language School based at the Associated Polish Home in Northeast Philadelphia. She served as Polish Home's President for one year and had been the Financial Secretary for over ten years, currently serving as Treasurer and Membership Secretary. She is also a past member of the Philadelphia-Torun Sister City Committee.

Debbie Majka is the producer and host of a half-hour radio program in English on Polish topics, entitled Polonia Today, which may be heard on Sundays in the Greater Delaware Valley on 1540 WNWR AM. In the past she also hosted the Polonia View segment of the local Polish TV program, Kalejdoskop, on Channel 35 WYBE.

She has received numerous awards and medals including Medal Zaslugi (Polish Army Veterans); Distinguished Woman of the Year (Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia); Polish American World Newspaper Citizen of the Year, the ACPC Founders Award, Poland's Krzyz Kawalerski, Orderu Zaslugi (Cavalier Cross of the Order of Merit), the Pulaski-O'Neil Medal (City of Savannah); PAHA Civic Achievement Award; was recognized by the Pauline Fathers of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa, Doylestown, PA for her volunteer efforts for more than 20 years; and was named "Am-Pol Eagle" National Citizen of the Year for 2006 (Buffalo); and received the Education Medal of the Polish Republic (2024).

On April 12th, 2011 she was formally inaugurated as an Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland for South-eastern Pennsylvania by Robert Kupiecki, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in Washington DC.

and continues to hold this important office. She is a member of the Consular Corps Association of Philadelphia, an organization for foreign diplomatic representatives, where currently she serves as Secretary on the Executive Committee.

Debbie has represented Poland at various other functions that needed an official Polish presence in Philadelphia, this included receiving Poland's Culture Minister Piotr Glinski at the Kosciuszko House Memorial on Sept. 25, 2016.

She has held high the Polish flag and represented the Polish people in the United States appearing at many meetings, celebrations and events, fulfilling honorably her mission as the Honorary Consul and official representative of Poland.



Distinguished Service Award

Dr. Janusz Romanski

Janusz Romanski (1943-2026) was born in Warsaw into an intelligentsia family. He graduated with a master's degree from Gdansk University of Technology in 1968, and in 1978 earned a doctorate in technical sciences from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering at the same university. There, he worked on the application of fracture mechanics to assessing the resistance of welded ship plates subjected to variable loads. In 1968, he was appointed lecturer, and in 1978, assistant professor. He supervised over 80 engineers specializing in welding technology and materials science for the needs of industry. He presented the results of his research at conferences and scientific seminars in Poland, Europe, and the USA. He received numerous awards from the Rector of the Gdansk

University of Technology for his outstanding achievements in science and teaching. He came to the USA in 1981 on a research internship. From 1989/90, 2001-2025, he taught as an Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Widener University, Chester, PA..

In 1991, he received an attractive job offer from the renowned research and development company Piasecki Aircraft Corporation, founded by Frank N. Piasecki, the renowned helicopter designer and philanthropist of Polish descent. Dr. Romanski held the position of chief specialist in the application of computer methods to the design of helicopter control and propulsion systems. As chief engineer, he was a member of the design team for the SpeedHawk X49-A military helicopter, whose first officially recorded flight took place in November 2009. He co-authored over 40 scientific and research papers on military helicopter modernization commissioned by the US Department of Defense.

Dr. Romanski's scientific achievements include over 150 studies, reports and approximately 50 articles. He was active in professional organizations such as the Society of Manufacturing Engineers, where he has held numerous positions, including Chair of the Philadelphia Section, Secretary and Director of the prestigious American Helicopter Society, and was a member of the American Society for Engineering Education and the American Society for Testing and Materials. For years, he had been actively involved in the Association of Polish Engineers and Technicians in the USA, "Polonia Technika."

Dr. Romanski, was involved in erecting historical markers in Philadelphia honoring engineer Rudolf Modrzejewski, a prominent bridge builder in the USA; Frank N. Piasecki, a pioneering designer of vertical flight vehicles, including helicopters; Dr. Waler Golaski, a bioengineer; and Edward Piszek, a well known Polonian philanthropist and entrepreneur.

He participated in the historic "Poles Together" meeting of engineers in London at POSK in 2000. He was Vice President of the Council of Polish Engineers in the USA. In September 2010, he participated in organizing the 1st Congress of Polish Engineers in Poland. He was a delegate to the Polish American Congress in Philadelphia. He was a member of PIASA, the Kosciuszko Foundation and SWAP. He dedicated much of his work to the professional integration of Polish engineers in the USA, Europe, and Poland.

For many years Dr. Romanski served as president and board member of Polonia Technica (PT), an organization for Polish Engineers based in New York. Lately he was an honorary president (emeritus) in that group but continued to be active among the expatriate Polish Engineers in the USA. For over 10 years he was also president of the People's University (a lecture group - PUL) at the Associated Polish Home in Philadelphia. This is one of the oldest Polish American organizations, founded in 1918 in Philadelphia.

For his scientific and professional contributions, Dr. Romanski was decorated with the Cavalier Cross of the Order of Merit, Commanders Cross of the Order of Merit, the Silver Cross of Merit, 1000th Anniversary Medal of the City of Gdansk, City of Gdansk Pin of Merit, 100th Anniversary Medal of Gdansk University of Technology, as well as many certificates, diplomas and awards from American engineering associations, and other technical and cultural institutions in the USA, Great Britain and Poland.

He was also an honorary member of the Polish Society of Engineers and Technicians (STP). He was married with one son. His wife, Malgorzata, is a physician, dermatologist, member of Polonia Technica, and former delegate to the Polish American Congress. Dr. Romanski has a listing in James Pula's *Polish American Encyclopedia*.

Dr. Janusz Romanski passed away in July 2026. May he Rest in Peace.



Cultural Achievement Award

Paul Krzywicki

In 1997 and 2000 Krzywicki performed in Warsaw at the Teatr Wielki with the Philadelphia Orchestra and held a masterclass at the Chopin Academy.

In 2016 he published the book, *From Paderewski to Penderecki, the Polish Musician in Philadelphia* which includes the history of the Curtis Institute of Music whose world prominence today would be impossible to imagine without its early Polish influence.

In 2019 he lectured at the Chopin University of Warsaw which also showcased his book.

In 2023, he received the Polonia Achievement Award from the Polish Heritage Society in Philadelphia.

He has been a guest at the last four Chopin International Piano Competitions in Warsaw, and each year attends the Chopin I Jego Europa Festival in that same city.

Since 2017, Krzywicki has been a docent for the National Park Service at the Kosciuszko House at 3rd and Pine streets, here in Philadelphia.

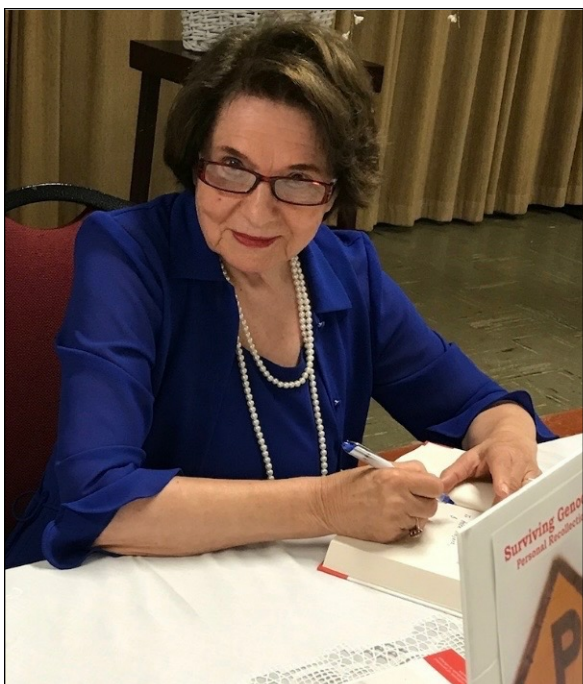
In 1972, Eugene Ormandy invited Paul Krzywicki to join the Philadelphia Orchestra as tubist, and he remained there for 33 years playing more than 4,000 concerts around the world under Maestros Muti, Sawallisch, and Eschenbach, in addition to his first eight years with Ormandy. In that same year Rudolf Serkin invited him to join the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music where he is now in his 54th year as teacher of tuba and brass orchestral performance.

Paul was a faculty member of the Aspen Music Festival for 5 summers.

He attended Indiana University receiving both bachelor's and master's degrees, a Performers' Certificate and was a teaching assistant. In 1965, He was the recipient of a Fromm Foundation Fellowship to Tanglewood and in that same soloed with the Philadelphia Orchestra. In 1967, Krzywicki became a member of the United States Military Academy Band at West Point for three years. Before joining the Philadelphia Orchestra, his career after the Army took him to the New York Brass Sextet, the Cambridge Brass Quintet of Boston, the Boston Ballet, the Portland (Maine) Symphony, was assistant professor at Youngstown State University, and performed with the Buffalo Philharmonic.

In 1985, the Philadelphia Orchestra presented him with the C. Hartman Kuhn Award for showing "ability and enterprise of such character as to enhance the standards and reputation of the Philadelphia Orchestra."

That same year, the Philadelphia Orchestra commissioned a new work, Music for Three Trombones and Tuba by Raymond Premru, which Krzywicki performed. He had already appeared as soloist, performing the premiere of Fantasy for Tuba and Strings, a composition by his brother, Jan. He also appeared as soloist on four Youth programs in his first fifteen years in the Orchestra. He played the first performance of Jan Krzywicki's Concerto for Tuba and Orchestra with the Temple University Orchestra under Luis Biava in 1997 and soloed under John Williams at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center in 1984. For three years he was a member of the Fulbright Fellowship Screening Committee in New York. He is President/Treasurer of the non-profit organization The Philadelphia Orchestra Retirees and Friends. His graduating students from the Curtis Institute of Music have held positions in twenty-eight orchestras around the world. In addition to Warsaw, he has taught master classes in the United States as well as in faraway places such Taiwan and Argentina. In 2025, he completed A History of the Tubist in Philadelphia, published by the Curtis Institute of Music.



Founders Award

Donna Chmara

Life in Exile - Our honoree was born on May 28, 1943, and baptized Danuta Chmara, in the village of Naliboki in eastern Poland, the primeval forest almost at her doorstep. Ten weeks later, the German army invaded and set fire to 26 local villages. Homes turned to ash. Bewildered families were crammed into cattle car trains abducting them from the beloved soil of their ancestral land.

As the cattle cars began to rumble, her mother held on for dear life to 10-week-old Danuta. The youngest of six children, would heat and dehydration consume her tiny body? Miraculously, she lived and believes that "After two years in a forced labor camp in Nazi Germany, and 5 years in refugee camps, everything else feels like a gift."

Her father's brother, Henry Chmara, sponsored the family from a refugee existence. He had left the bonds of blood in 1913 to seek peace and prosperity

in America and became a successful farmer. The family set sail for New York harbor in 1950, arriving four days before Thanksgiving. After 37 years apart, the two brothers locked in an embrace, shedding bittersweet tears.

Uncle Henry and Aunt Minnie's place in heaven was surely reserved after they took eight people into their home and gave the family land to build on. The parents and three older siblings, who had gone to school in the refugee camps, got jobs. Every Friday, they combined their earnings to buy food and construction materials. After building a home, on two occasions, the parents had displaced families living with them until they found jobs.

Life in America - Danuta became Donna, and loved the teachers, the lessons, colorful books, new food like peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, playground equipment, speaking a new language, making friends, and best of all – feeling safe.

America had many doors to the future; an education would help open them. During high school, Donna took waitress jobs to earn tuition money. Trenton State College (College of New Jersey) accepted her into the fold, and the next year, selected her as a full-year exchange student at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada.

After College, Donna taught English as a Peace Corps volunteer in Turkey, 1966-68, and still maintains friendships through visits to and from her students. She has also taught English in places as varied as Poland, Myanmar (Burma), and Thailand.

While teaching English full-time at Trenton High School, and composition at the College of New Jersey, she became a writer. The New York Times Journey Home Contest wanted descriptions of coming to America through New York harbor. Selected from hundreds of entries, her essay was one of 25 "First Prize" winners judged on originality and the ability to inspire.

After many dedicated years in the classroom, she held administrative positions, such as: Director of Communications, New Jersey Association of School Administrators; Director, New Jersey State Board of Education Office; Director of Personnel, New Brunswick School District.

Loving her new country, she felt left out when the trauma of Polish families was absent from school curricula, the media, even World War II history classes. So while President of the Polish Arts Club of Trenton, Donna organized a program, in cooperation with the Polish Embassy, about the Polish perspective in the book *WWII Behind Closed Doors: Stalin, the Nazis and the West* by British historian Laurence Rees. Over 300 community members and educators attended.

Her extensive research for information she felt was missing from the library meant travel to parts of the United States, Poland, Belarus, England, and Canada, to interview 20 Polish eyewitness survivors. *Entitled Surviving Genocide: Personal Recollections*, her book describes their amazing resilience in facing diverse life-threatening situations. Her travels led to meeting with English historian Norman Davies, who wrote the foreword to the book, and a chapter based on a conversation with Polish Nobel laureate, Czeslaw Milosz.

The author's speeches and book signings inspire questions from the audience. They often say, "I never heard about the five million Polish Christians who perished." They want to know more, and the conversation begins.

Donna writes letters to the editor when forced labor and concentration camps in wartime Germany are not correctly identified as German camps in occupied Poland. Her local chapter programs to celebrate Polish culture have become a focal point of monthly meetings and have bolstered attendance and membership.

The author holds a Bachelor of Arts in English from the College of New Jersey, and a Master of Arts in English, with a major in medieval literature, from Temple University in Philadelphia. Donna Chmara also loves to read, dance, swim, garden, and learn from other people's wisdom.



Founders Award

Richard Poremski

***Honorary Consul of the
Republic of Poland***

All of Richard Poremski's maternal and paternal grandparents emigrated from the area of Katowice, south-central Poland in the later 1800s. His parents, Anthony and Mary, were both American born, making Richard a second generation Polish American in the Polonia. The begotten Poremski family consisted of 8 children: 5 boys and 3 girls, Richard being the youngest boy born on June 2, 1945, and subsequently the second youngest child.

His education consisted of St. Partick's primary grade school, Baltimore Polytechnic Institute high school, an Associate of the Arts Degree in Trade Union Administration from Dundalk Community College,

which served him well in his Port of Baltimore overarching waterfront career. Attending the University of Washington, D.C. was also an educational factor.

The U.S. Social Security Administration Headquarters in Woodlawn, MD was Richard's first formal employer for 3 years. In 1965, following in the footsteps of many family members, he joined the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) Local 829 as a general longshoreman, working cargo on/off the ships, and on the adjacent docks. During the period 1978-1984 Richard served in the elected positions of recording secretary and financial secretary in successor ILA Local 333.

In 1985 Richard was then appointed as an administrator to the management-union trust funds that provides various contractual benefits, such as pension funding, medical insurance, vacation/holiday pay, annuity and containerized cargo royalty payments, to the longshoremen and longshorewomen in the Port of Baltimore, MD until his retirement in 2017 after 52 years of combined union/management service in the seaport.

Richards's Polish awakening began with a south-east tour of Poland in 1976, at the age of 31 with a Polish American group from Wilkes Barre, PA, followed with a reprise tour covering the rest of the old country in 1978. Gladly awakened to the Polish heritage and culture of the fatherland, he then became very active in the Baltimore Polonia and involved in many of its organizations, and served officially in various offices. This activity eventually has evolved in his becoming the long-term President of the Polish National Alliance, Council 21, and the Chairman of the National Katyn Memorial Foundation.

For the past 25 years, Richard has overseen the Polish American Journal's bureau in Washington, DC, and a corresponding satellite office in Baltimore, MD. Over the years he has written scores of articles almost too numerous to count, along with various pictorials, published in the Polonia news and fraternal medias. One specialty is covering the diplomatic visits, news, and patriotic celebratory events at the Embassy of Poland in Washington.

Many awards and citations have come Richard's way over the years, but he is most proud of having received The Knight's Cross, Order of Merit, of the Republic of Poland, recognizing his service in the establishment of the National Katyn Memorial in Baltimore, MD. Receiving the ACPC's Distinguished Service Award in 2018 was another very distinguished achievement.

Currently, at the age of 81, Richard is still very much involved in Polonia affairs. For the past six years he is serving as Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland for the State of Maryland. He was recruited to be an Honorary Consul personally by then-Ambassador Piotr Wilczek in 2019. After a very rigorous and extended vetting, and legal processing, by Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassy of Poland in Washington, and the U.S. Department of State, Richard was formally recognized and credentialed by the respective authorities as Poland's Honorary Consul, with a Consulate established at Baltimore City, on February 19th, 2021.

Today, Richard has begun the reestablishment of the Maryland-Lodz Sister States program, between the U.S. and Poland, which has been lying dormant for over the past 30 years. Back then Richard was a junior member of this diplomatic, cultural, and business initiative.

"America First – Poland Always" is the patriotic bon mot that Richard faithfully embraces and adheres to in all respects of his private and public life - then and now.



Sembrich Competition Winner

Christine Boddicker

Christine Boddicker, mezzo-soprano, has been praised for her "powerful, multi-colored mezzo" (South Florida Classical Review) and "entrancing presence" (Chicago Classical Review). In the summer of 2026, Christine will return to Des Moines Metro Opera as an Apprentice Artist. In the 2025-2026 season, Christine was a Jan Miller Studio Artist at Pensacola Opera, and made her debut with Haymarket Opera in *Euridice* by Jacopo Peri.

Christine is an alumna of several prestigious training programs including Des Moines Metro Opera, Cedar Rapids Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and Indianapolis Opera. Her notable roles include Sesto (*La clemenza di Tito*), Angelina (*La Cenerentola*), Sesto (*Giulio Cesare*), Stéphano (*Roméo et Juliette*), Lola (*Cavalleria rusticana*), Nerone (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*), and Mercédès (*Carmen*).

Christine has also appeared in performance with Ars Lyrica Houston, Music of the Baroque, and Grant Park Chorus.

Christine's growing connection to her Polish heritage has inspired a deep love for Polish folk music and art song. Through her work with the Chicago-based Polish vocal group, Lira Ensemble, she has cultivated a rich appreciation for this repertoire and is passionate about sharing works by Moniuszko, Chopin, and other Polish composers in recital settings whenever possible. She looks forward to continuing this artistic exploration this summer as she joins Des Moines Metro Opera for their production of *Król Roger* by Szymanowski.

Christine has been recognized in several vocal competitions. She was a finalist in the 2022 San Antonio Tuesday Musical Club Young Artist Competition, a semi-finalist in the 2022 and 2023 Houston Saengerbund Awards, and the first-place winner of the 2021 MIOpera Voice Competition, where she previously won second place in 2019. Christine holds a MM in vocal performance from the Moores School of Music at the University of Houston, and a BM from Michigan State University.



Honoring Casimir Pulaski on the Battlefied in Savannah, GA, Edward Krolkowski on his horse Mykonos, with his wife Camile standing beside him, also in Colonial dress, and local reenactors.



Head of Poland's Diplomatic Mission

Bogdan Klich

Mr. Bogdan Klich is the Head of Mission in the Embassy of the Republic of Poland as of 18th November 2024. He has been Senator in the Polish Parliament between 2011 and 2024. Between 2015 and 2019, he was Minority Leader of the Polish Senate. Mr. Bogdan Klich served as Poland's Minister of Defence from 2007 to 2011 and was a member of the European Parliament.

Mr. Bogdan Klich managed the Information Department at State TV Centre in Cracow between 1990 and 1992. He then was Head of the International Centre for Development of Democracy in Krakow from 1993 to 1999 and Head of the Institute for Strategic Studies from 1999 to 2003. In 1998 and 1999, he was an Adviser to the government plenipotentiary for Poland's accession negotiations with the EU. Mr. Klich graduated from the Faculty of Medicine at the Krakow Medical Academy and the Faculty of Philosophy and History at the Jagiellonian University. He was a lecturer at the Institute of European Studies at the Jagiellonian University. Mr. Klich has authored numerous publications on foreign policy and international security. In the late 1970's and 1980's he was active in the democratic opposition movement.



Honorary Consul General for Lithuania

Krista Butvydas Bard

Krista Butvydas Bard has served as Honorary Consul General of Lithuania since 2010, is a Chancellor of the national Consular Corps Association as well as President of the Consular Corps Association of Philadelphia, America's first diplomatic corps. For her consular work, she has been awarded the Lithuanian Knight's Cross Order of Merit and the Ministry of Culture's Medal of Light, Global Lithuanian Leaders Award, and the Angel of Vilnius.

Bard also serves as the Chair of the national Lithuanian American Community Public Affairs Council, Lithuanian representative to the Central East European Coalition and Joint Baltic American National Committee, and a founding member of the annual North American Lithuanian Business Forum first held in Philadelphia in 2022. In her prior career, Bard built an award-winning marketing consultancy for Fortune

500 companies as well as SMEs, served on numerous boards and as the small business association president, and held policy analyst posts in the federal government in Washington, DC. She has been awarded Philadelphia Business Journal's Woman of Distinction, 40 Under Forty, the Public Relations Association of America International PR Award, the Neographic Award, the USA Shopping Center Association Maxi Award, and the Mabel Daniels Award for Literature. Her art avocation series "Sacred Words" has been exhibited in Paris, Palm Beach and Washington, DC, and been awarded to numerous interfaith leaders.

Bard has a Masters Degree in Historic Preservation from Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning, and an undergraduate from Tufts, Phi Beta Kappa, summa cum laude. Bard is the first person in her family born in the USA. Her maternal grandmother was Polish, but they never met because her parents fled Lithuania before Krista was born.



Poles in the American Revolution

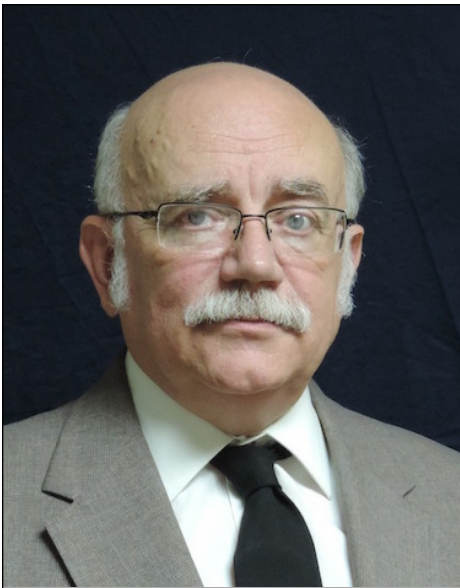
Edward Krolkowski

Edward Krolkowski was born in Chicago, Illinois, the eldest of three children. He attended Catholic elementary school, public high school and graduated (8 years) from the Gen. K. Pulaski Polish Saturday School. Afterwards he earned a Master of Architecture Degree from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana.

Edward worked for 5 years for a private engineering firm in Chicago on power plants as a structural engineer. Afterwards, he was employed by the Department of Army as a Registered Architect for the next 33 years working on a multitude of projects; domestic and foreign. Due to his technical and language skills, he represented the U.S. Army on projects in Afghanistan, Brazil, Bulgaria, Czechia, Germany, Guantanamo Bay, Honduras, Poland and the Ukraine.

Among his professional awards were the Civilian Combat Service Pin, Afghanistan, Certificates of Appreciation from Krakow, Poland for heading a Flood Relief Team in 2001 for the Missile Shield in 2011.

Edward has always been keenly interested in his Polish roots and history. Over the years he wrote several newspaper articles on Polish history. In 2005, during the Gen. Kazimierz Pulaski Jubilee and reburial of his remains, Edward served as personal aide and interpreter for Field Bishop of the Polish Army Brigadier General Tadeusz Ploski, earning the Capt. A. O'Neill Honoree medal for his service. In addition, he started the ACPC Savannah Gen. K. Pulaski Committee in 2013 and was the chairman for 9 years. He has volunteered at Ft. Pulaski National Monument since 2016 where he gives tours and lectures in both English and Polish. He has represented Gen. Pulaski, along with his horse Mykonos at historical events. He was elected to the ACPC Board of Directors for 2022-2026. He is presently the chairman of the ACPC Revolutionary War 250 Project.



Ralph Modjeski: Master Bridge Builder

Peter J. Obst

Peter J. Obst, born in Poznan, Poland, worked as a software engineer for United States Steel and The Wall Street Journal after graduating from Drexel University in Philadelphia in 1977. He later received an MA in Central and East European Studies from LaSalle University. His interest in the history of Polish immigrants and Polonia resulted in working for the Poles in America Foundation, started by Edward Pinkowski an eminent historian living in Philadelphia.

He has translated several books from Polish into English and is a contributing writer for NOWY DZIENNIK a Polish language weekly newspaper. He also designs and maintains websites for several Polish societies. He served as president of the Philadelphia Chapter of the Kosciuszko Foundation for five years. He is a past president of the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia (PHSP 2020-2024). With the PHSP he has worked to install Historical Markers, sanctioned by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, in Philadelphia, to commemorate various persons of Polish background who have made major contributions to Pennsylvania. These include Ralph Modjeski (bridge engineer), Frank Piasecki (aviation pioneer), Walter Golaski (biomedical innovator) and, to be unveiled soon, Edward Piszczek (frozen food entrepreneur).

For his activities on behalf of Poland and Polonia he was awarded the Cavalier Cross of the Order of Merit in 2001, the Eagle of the Polish Senate in 2009, and on May 5, 2022 the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit.

Poles in the American Revolution

This is the year of the American Semiquincentennial and America celebrates the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The American Council for Polish Culture, where the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia is an affiliate, is holding its convention here with emphasis on the Polish contribution to the American Revolution.

In the 1930s Polish-American historian Mieczyslaw Haiman wrote the definitive book about the Polish fighters in the American Revolution (*Polacy w walce o niepodleglosc Ameryki*). He researched a variety of sources, muster lists of various Colonial regiments and records of the Pulaski Legion. He found many Polish-sounding names and a some writings concerning individuals of Polish background who served the cause of American Independence.

The General Pulaski Committee in Savannah has been using this book as a resource to place tablets in honor of these individuals on the field of Battle in the City of Savannah, where Pulaski fell on October 9, 1779.

Here is a list of individuals honored on that field to date:

- (1) Casimir Pulaski,
- (2) Thaddeus Kosciuszko, and
- (3) Feliks Miklaszewicz, a privateer captain, sponsored by Mr. Raymond Okonski and the Friends of Polish Art, Detroit, MI,
- (4) Captain Fryderyk Paschke, of the Pulaski Legion infantry, sponsored by the Polish Embassy.
- (5) Captain Jan Zielinski, cavalryman of the Pulaski legion, sponsored by the Savannah General Pulaski Committee
- (6) Lieutenant Karol Litomski, Pulaski's aide, sponsored by the American Council for Polish Culture
- (7) Colonel Mihaly Kovacs, commander of cavalry in the Pulaski Legion, sponsored by the Pulaski Cadets organization from Perth Amboy, NJ
- (8) Jozef (Joseph) Gabriel, Seaman, sponsored by "Gazeta Polska" Clubs in America - Kluby Gazety Polskiej w Ameryce
- (9) Agrippa Hull - Kosciuszko's black orderly and friend, sponsored by the Philadelphia Chapter of the Kosciuszko Foundation
- (10) Captain Commander Jan K. Mieszkowski - serving in the French Lauzun Legion - sponsored by the Polish National Foundation (PNF), of Warsaw, Poland
- (11) Piotr Zabriskie (Zaborowski) - hosted Gen. Washington and his staff in his home in Bergen, NJ, sponsored by the Polish National Foundation
- (12) Captain Jan Grabowski - Polish nobleman, commander of hussars in the French Lauzun Legion - sponsored by the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia



There is plenty of space for additional tablets on the field in Savannah. If your organization, or an individual, would like to sponsor an additional tablet, please inquire of:

Edward Krolikowski, k2aeg@att.net 912-598-4421 or Peter Obst, peterpjo@aol.com 215-946-5723

Dining Around in Philadelphia

These restaurants are within walking distance of the Marriott!

****Amada, Spanish, Wine Bar**
217 Chestnut St, 215-625-2450

****Bistro Romano, Italian**
120 Lombard St, 215-925-8880

****Moshulu, Continental, Seafood (located on the Delaware waterfront)**
401 S. Columbus Blvd, 215-923-2500

****Fork, New American Cuisine**
306 Market St, 215-625-2427

****Kyber Pass Pub, historic Olde City mainstay**
56 S. 2nd St, 215-238-5888

Jim's South Street, Cheesesteak heaven
400 South Street, 215-926-1911

Pizzeria Stella
420 S. 2nd St. 215-320-8000

****Talula's Garden, New American Cuisine**
210 W. Washington Square, 215-592-7787

****High Street Restaurant and Bar,**
Happy Hour and great cocktails
101 S. 9th St, 215-625-0988

****Positano Coast, Italian**
212 Walnut St, 215-238-0499

****Panorama, Mediterranean, Italian**
14 N. Front St, 215-922-7800

**** Not to be disappointed, please call your selected restaurant and make a reservation!**

Sunday Mass Suggestions

Churches within walking distance:

1. Old Saint Joseph's
321 Willings Alley
Mass - 7: 30 AM, 9: 30 AM and 11:30 AM
Phone – 215-923-1733

2. Old Saint Mary's
252 S. 4th Street
Mass – Saturday @ 4: 30 PM, Sunday - 10 AM
Phone – 215-923-7930
Not within walking distance, UBER suggested:

3. Cathedral/Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul
(Drive time – less than 15 minutes)
1723 Race Street
Mass – 8 AM, 9:30 AM, 11AM, and 6: 30 PM
Phone – 215-561-1313

4. Saint John Cantius (Drive time at least 30 minutes)
4415 Almond Street
Mass – Saturday @ 4: 30 Sunday 9 AM English & 11 AM Polish
Phone – 212-535-6667

5. Saint Adalbert's (Drive time at least 25 minutes)
2645 E. Allegheny Avenue
Mass – 7: 30 AM and 10:30 (Polish)
Phone – 215-739-3500



St Adalbert Church

Event Schedule – ACPC Convention – Aug. 12–15, 2026

Date - Time	Activity	Location
Aug. 12 - Wednesday		
4:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Registering Arrivals	Walnut Room
9:00 - 7:00 pm	Evening Social Reception	Broomley Claypoole Room
Aug. 13 - Thursday		
9:00 - 9:30 am	Registration - Credentials	Broomley Claypoole Room
9:30 am	Opening Ceremonies begin	Broomley Claypoole Room
10:15 - 10:30 am	Break	
10:30 - 12 noon	Call to Order - Convention Business Sessions begin	
12:00 - 1:30 pm	Lunch with speaker - Edward Krolikowski <i>Celebrating Poles in the American Revolution</i>	Ballroom A
3:30 pm (to 5:00 pm)	Ceremony at the Kosciuszko House Memorial at 3rd and Pine Sts.	
5:30 pm	Dinner at Carpenters' Hall	320 Chestnut Street
Aug. 14 - Friday		
8:30 - 9:00 am	Registration - Credentials	Broomley Claypoole Room
9:00 am	Business Sessions	
12:00 - 1:30 pm	Lunch with speaker - Peter Obst <i>Ralph Modjeski: Builder of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge</i>	Ballroom A
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Business Sessions	
4:00 pm	Dinner	Ballroom A
5:45 pm	Transport to Sembrich Concert	Gould Rehearsal Hall 2nd fl. Lenfest Hall, Curtis Institute of Music, 1616 Locust Street
7:00 pm	Sembrich Concert and Reception	
Aug. 15 - Saturday		
8:30 - 9:00 am	Registration - Credentials	Broomley Claypoole Room
9:00 - 12 noon	Business Sessions	
12:00 noon - 2:00 pm	Working Lunch - Old and New Board	
2:00 - 5:00 pm	Free Time	
6:00 -11:00 pm	Awards Banquet	Hamilton Ballroom
Aug. 16 - Sunday		
	<i>Optional</i>	
	Roman Catholic Mass	see list of churches





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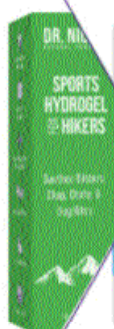
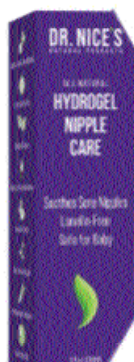
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Best wishes to the
AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR POLISH CULTURE

*for a successful convention in Philadelphia,
the birthplace of the United States,
celebrating Poles in American Revolution
and*

*Congratulations to PAAA member Richard Poremski
on his ACPC Founders Award and to all ACPC Awardees*

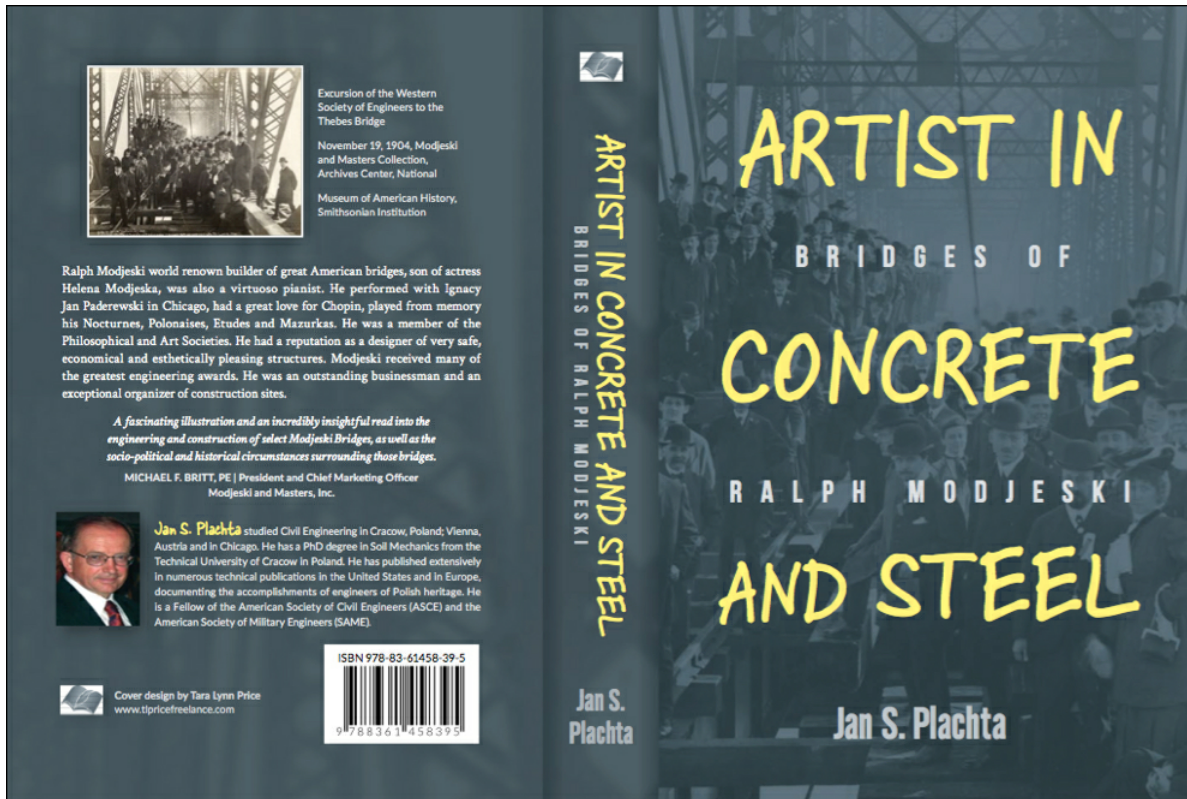
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***Congratulations
to the
American Council for Polish Culture
and their
Award Recipients
at the
2026 Convention in Philadelphia
Jan S. Plachta***

*As we celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the United States
At the 2026 ACPC Convention*



Music is the only art that actually lives • Ignacy Jan Paderewski



We welcome all our members and guests attending the
78TH ANNUAL ACPC CONVENTION
in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

CELEBRATING POLES IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION
on America's 250th Birthday

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Congratulations and Thank You to the ACPC and the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia for Hosting the ACPC Annual Convention

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**I Join with the Organizations in our Tri-State area in Extending
Best Wishes to the Members of the American Council of Polish Culture
as You Gather in Philadelphia for Your 78th Annual Convention.**



Polish American Cultural Center
PolishAmericanMuseumOnline.com

Saturday Variety Program
SaturdayVarietyProgram.com

Polish American Congress
Polish American Radio Program
PolishAmericanRadioProgram.com

Polish American Social Services
PolishAmericanSocialServices.com

October "Polish American Heritage Month" Committee
PolishAmericanHeritageMonth.com



Polish American Cultural Center
MUSEUM ONLINE

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POLISH PERSPECTIVES

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NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES CONFERENCE

Congratulations to Debbie Majka

*Recipient of the ACPC 2026
Lifetime Achievement Award*



The Polish Perspectives project committee congratulates Debbie Majka for receiving the Lifetime Achievement award. Thank you for being a Polish warrior in promoting Polish history, culture and traditions to thousands of educators for the past 27 years at the National Council for Social Studies conventions throughout the United States.

~ Thomas Payne, Raymond and Cecilia Glembocki

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Surviving Genocide: Personal Recollections

by Donna Chmara



Exiled from her home as a baby in what was Eastern Poland, and based on interviews with 20 eyewitnesses, the author chronicles the aggression against Poland by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union during WWII.

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Congratulations and best wishes to the 2026 ACPC awardees

Deborah Majka - Lifetime Achievement Award
Janusz Romanski - Distinguished Service Award
Paul Krzywicki - Cultural Achievement Award
Donna Chmara - Founders Award
Ryszard Poremski - Founders Award

We salute their commitment in Fostering Our Polish Heritage
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***God's Blessings and Sincere Congratulations
to my fellow 2026 ACPC Award Recipients
as together we spread an awareness of
our rich Polish Cultural Heritage***

***Dr. Janusz Romanski, Distinguished Service Award
May he Rest in Peace***

***Paul Krzywicki, Cultural Achievement Award
Donna Chmara, Founders Award
Honorary Consul Richard Poremski, Founders Award***

***Honorary Consul Deborah M. Majka,
Lifetime Achievement Award***

**Polish Home,
the Center for Polish Culture
and History in the Philadelphia
Area, Wishes ACPC Much
Continued Prosperity!**

**Warmest Congratulations
to All the Honorees !**

**A Special Compliment to
Debbie Majka, a Long Time
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Application deadline: April 1

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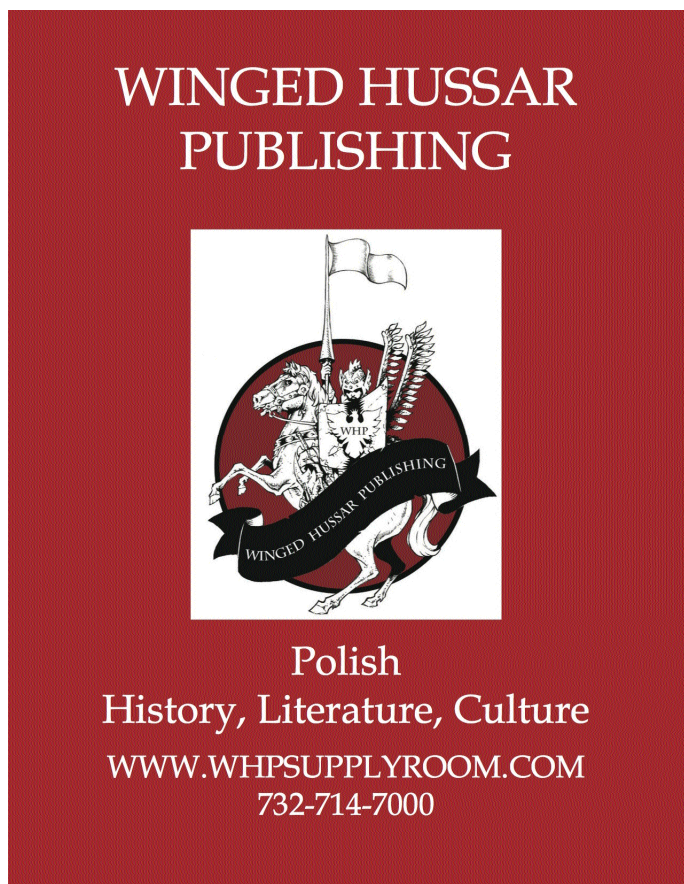
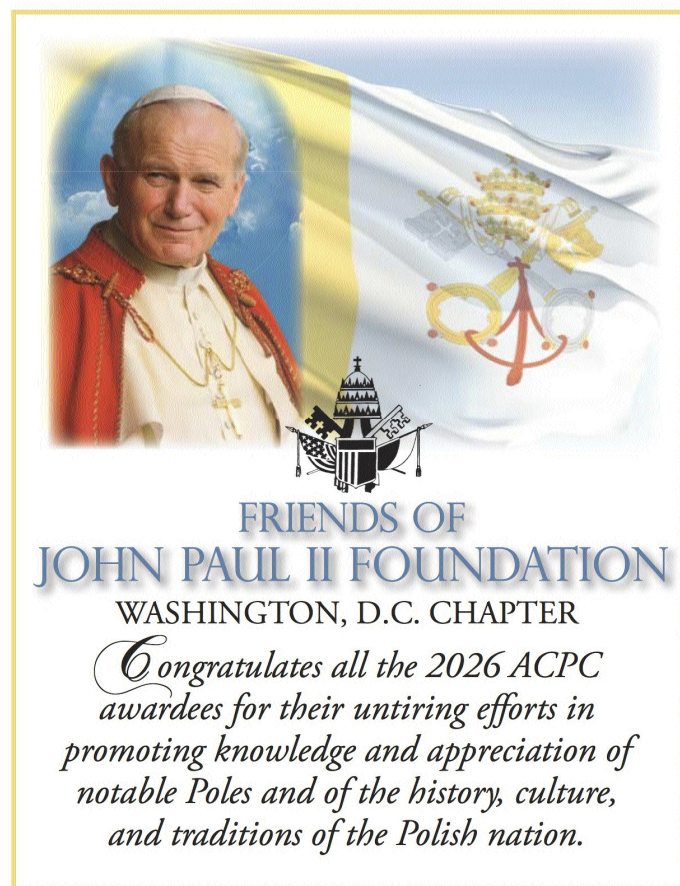
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*We extend best wishes to the
American Council for
Polish Culture
for a successful 2026 Convention,
and heartfelt thanks and
congratulations for
78 years of service to Polonia*

Mark Szpak, President, and Andrzej Pronczuk, President Emeritus – contact@pcf-boston.org





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The American Council for Polish Culture

on its Annual Conference

and

Donna Chmara

on Her Receiving the ACPD Founder's Award

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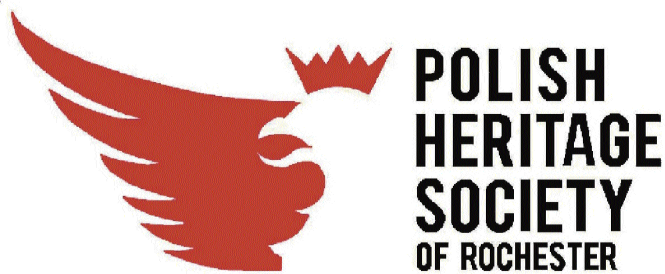
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Bridge Engineer

Ralph Modjeski

Ralph Modjeski (Rudolf Modrzejewski 1861-1940), was the son of actress Helena Modrzejewska, a star of the theater in Poland. In 1876 she, with a group of artists and intellectuals from Poland that included Nobel Prize winning writer Henryk Sienkiewicz, moved to Anaheim,

California, to start an "art commune." Things did not go smoothly as her companions were not used to farm work. When the money ran out she tried out for the stage in San Francisco and thanks to her persistence, her inborn talent, and a little help from Civil War hero General Włodzimierz Krzyżanowski, became a great success in the US and internationally. Mother and son adopted the last name of Modjeski on becoming naturalized as American citizens.

Ralph, who was also a superb pianist, became one of America's great bridge builders, educated at the famous Ecole des Ponts et Chaussées civil engineering school in Paris. When he applied in 1880 there were only 25 places for incoming students. He placed 27th on the entrance exam. After a year of intense study he made the grade and in 1885 graduated at the head of his class. He then interned with George Morison, one of America's pioneering bridge engineers. Later, he started the firm of Modjeski and Masters going on to build some of the great bridges in the United States.

In the Philadelphia area he built the Benjamin Franklin Bridge, the Tacony-Palmyra Bridge, and two bridges on Henry Avenue. His other major projects included the Thebes Bridge at Thebes, Illinois; the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, and the Huey P. Long Bridge in New Orleans. During a long career he introduced many advances in the design of long steel truss and suspension bridges, and was one of the first engineers in the United States to build large structures of reinforced concrete.

He received many awards for his work including the Franklin Institute Franklin Medal (1922), the John Fritz Medal (1930) and the Washington Award (1931) given for his contribution to transportation *through superior skill and courage in bridge construction and design*. The firm he founded continues to design and build bridges, maintaining the legacy he established.

The Hundred Year Bridge

On July 11, 2026 the City of Philadelphia Celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the opening of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge. On that day the bridge was closed for motor traffic a pedestrians were allowed on the bridge. Reportedly over 50,000 individuals took the opportunity to walk on the road surface. Members of the Polish Heritage Society placed a wreath at the large bronze commemorative tablet located in the plaza on the west entrance to the bridge to honor Ralph Modjeski. A photo from the ceremony is included at the end of the book, page 40.



With great pride and profound sadness,
we extend our posthumous congratulations to the late

JANUSZ ROMAŃSKI

on being awarded
THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD
at the Annual Convention
of the American Council for Polish Culture.

This prestigious award recognizes his many years
of dedication, service, and outstanding contributions
to the Polish American community, as well as his commitment
to preserving and promoting Polish heritage.

May he rest in peace.



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The American Council for Polish Culture

The Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia is the local representative of the American Council for Polish Culture (ACPC). The Society is dedicated to the preservation and promotion of our rich Polish cultural heritage among the citizens of the Greater Delaware Valley.

Through its stimulating monthly programs, the Society enhances understanding and enjoyment of Polish history and culture and values of our forefathers. Its Annual Chopin Concerts, the Adam Styka Art Exhibit, visiting author lectures, Polonaise Ball and other special events showcase the talents and accomplishments of Polish and Polish-American artists, musicians, writers, scholars and scientists.

Overall, the Society strives to share an awareness and appreciation of the quality of the Polish ingredient in our modern American mosaic.

For membership information contact:

Agnieszka Simon

2401 Pennsylvania Avenue, #2C51; Philadelphia, PA 19130

e-mail: phspmembership@gmail.com

Polish Heritage Society Web Page: www.poles.org/PHSP



(l. to r.) Brenda Bagonis-Cooke, Agnieszka Simon, Jewls Teneva Rogowska - President of the Polish Heritage Society, Debbie Majka - Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland for SE Pennsylvania, Joseph Buss, Peter Obst

STOLAT!

**Congratulations to the 2026 awardees
with heartfelt gratitude for their efforts in
preserving and promoting Polish culture!**



**The Polish Arts
Club of Buffalo**



Congratulations and Best Wishes

to all honorees:

Deborah Majka

Janusz Romanski

Paul Krzywicki

Donna Chmara

Ryszard Poremski

on being recognized

by the

American Council for Polish Culture

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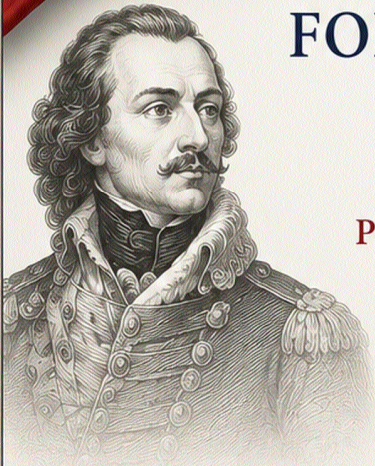


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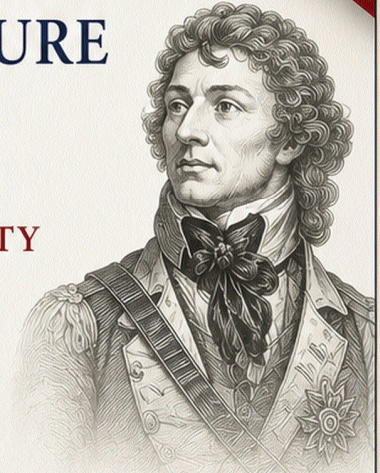
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Casimir Pulaski

1745 – 1779



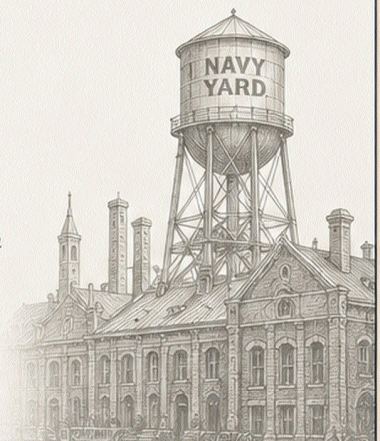
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