



# POLISH AMERICAN ARTS ASSOCIATION of Washington, DC

Fall 2016 - Winter 2017

NEWSLETTER

Member of the American Council for Polish Culture, Inc. since 1966



Celebrating our past 50 years - looking forward to  
the next half century

*STO LAT PAAA!*





## Message from the President

Dear fellow PAAA members and friends,

The caption on the front page says it all: we have just celebrated our fiftieth anniversary and are poised to begin the next half century of activities to fulfill our mission of “creating public awareness of the richness of Polish culture.”

As I was looking through some archival material while researching highlights of our history for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Program Book, I came across references to the “first annual PAAA Wigilia in 1979” and realized that it was just one year after I moved to Washington and found some of my first friends in the area in the ranks of this organization. I came from Detroit where PAAA’s counterpart, the Friends of Polish Art, had a long standing tradition of holding Wigilia at Christmas and Święconka at Easter time in large scale settings. To be sure, the PAAA also held Wigilia dinners in the past but they were small, intimate gatherings in private homes. I suggested to the then PAAA president, Myra Lenard, that we should organize Wigilia for our members and invite anyone else who wanted to come. So we rented a hall in Arlington, prepared most of the food ourselves or had some donated, made tree and table decorations, and made copies of the texts of *kolędy* for singing. I still remember how Stefan Lopatkiewicz, who had just ended his tour as the youngest PAAA president, and I made two hundred meatless *gołąbki* for the ninety some people that came to celebrate with us. Due to the small size of the hall, many had to be turned away. Since that time, Wigilia became an annual PAAA event, held in grander spaces and professionally catered. The greatest thing about the first one, though, was that we had so much fun arranging it.

The past fifty years witnessed many events, all made possible through the work of many individuals, each with a special talent, vision, or simply a desire to get together with friends and pursue a mission that will give a satisfaction in a job well done and a good dose of fun. All those concerts, cabarets, lectures, art exhibits, poetry readings, film showings, balls, Polish Christmas trees at the Smithsonian, *pisanki* on the White House lawn at Easter, or Wianki on the National Mall, did not happen by themselves. I can just imagine what Edwina Conrad felt after she moved the St. John’s night celebration from Lake Barcroft to the Reflecting Pool at the Lincoln Memorial, and the satisfaction that Marianna Eckel experiences each year as she oversees the dancing, singing, wreath making and Polish craft demonstrations on a Saturday night in June.

Today, at the threshold of a new half century, I feel gratitude to all the people who made the PAAA an organization of which I am proud to be the president. There is one thing though that gives me pause. When my friends and I organized that first *Wigilia* in 1979, we were all 38 years younger. Many of us are still around and we are doing the same thing for the organization. What I would really like to see in our ranks is more people of the age we were at that time. I realize that times have changed; people are busy with their lives and have too many distractions. But most of us in those days also had to work, were students or were raising children. So I invite everyone to think about it for a moment, consider getting more involved, make this organization your own. Who knows, you may have some fun along the way.

Cecilia Larkin

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## A Brief History of PAAA

In the mid-sixties, the Polish community in the Washington area was relatively large and included many Poles who after World War II could not return to Poland after it was taken over by the communists. The general atmosphere was of great patriotism and nostalgia for pre-war Poland. One of the most active groups was the Polish Veterans Organization, which by definition would atrophy and another was needed to represent the aims of preserving and promoting Polish culture in the community. In July 1965, Olga Klug Iwanowska, who eighteen years earlier founded the Polish Arts League of Pittsburgh, introduced the idea to a group of members of the local Polonia of organizing a Polish arts club in Washington. The idea took and on January 11, 1966, The Polish American Arts Association of Washington, DC, Inc. (PAAA) was formally established. On March 1, it was registered at the Office of the Record of Deeds. Martha Korwin-Rhodes was elected as its first president. Almost immediately, the PAAA became an affiliate of the American Council for Polish Culture (ACPC).

During the first year, the PAAA held a reception for the U.S. Ambassador to Poland, John A. Gronouski, who was given a plaque to take to the people of Poland as a symbol of connection to the native land. Many other events followed, starting with a party on St. John's Eve to celebrate the Polish tradition of "Wianki". In subsequent years, there were literary evenings, piano recitals, theater performances, cabarets, art exhibits, film showings, and many social gatherings, from intimate Wigilia celebrations, first in private homes and later in larger settings, to grand balls in elegant venues. Some were staged to raise funds for worthy causes, others to mark milestone anniversaries or simply to enjoy being together with friends. Among lecturers, writers, musicians, artists, diplomats, historians, scientists and other personalities presented or hosted by the PAAA were some best known Poles and others connected with Polish culture. Examples of the successful programs arranged by the PAAA include symposia on "Poland in the 20th Century" in 1979, and "Poland in the 1930s" in 1981, with participation of some of the foremost Polish and American scholars specializing in Central European studies.

In 1967, the PAAA hosted the ACPC Annual Convention and over the years went on to host four more: in 1972, 1984, 1992 and 2013. Many PAAA members served the national organization as officers, including five presidents, board members and committee chairs.

In the mid-1980's, the PAAA played a significant part in the purchase of a building to house the American Center of Polish Culture, in Washington, DC. The PAAA raised funds through monetary and other donations, including those of valuable works of Polish art. Members volunteered labor as well as legal and other skills to the benefit of the Center. PAAA helped furnish the third floor board room of the Center and a collection of objects of Polish folk art donated by the PAAA members can still be seen today by visitors to what is now the Washington Office of the Kościuszko Foundation.

Two significant ACPC projects were spearheaded by members of the PAAA: an establishment in 1990, of a permanent historical exhibit at the John Brown Museum in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, featuring a sculpture by Gordon Kray and a book of poetry by Cyprian Kamil Norwid donated by Teodor Lopatkiewicz; and in 2012, placement of a historic marker in Jamestown, Virginia, informing thousands of visitors of the important contribution made by Polish settlers to early American history.

*Mary Flanagan and Gloria Klepczynski contributed to this article*

# PAAA: People Who Started it All and Made it Work

It would be impossible to even begin naming all the people who made significant contributions to the existence and mission of the Polish American Arts Association. First of all, detailed records from the past are not readily available, and the write ups that can be found, usually contain just names of presidents and sometimes committee chairmen responsible for individual events. Unnamed are the dozens of persons who worked on the board, in the committees, behind the scenes, or simply showed up to hear the music, see the art, take part in a discussion, and sometimes make a financial contribution because they liked what they saw and wanted to support it. At the beginning, fifty years ago, they started with a few dozens and quickly grew to one, then two and, at some point, four hundred members. We continue to be grateful for all the past, current, as well as all the future members because they are the mainstay and the life of our organization.

For the most part, the PAAA charter members and those who joined them in early years are gone but we still are fortunate to have a few of them among us. At the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala last September, we recognized Kaya Ploss, a charter member and later president of PAAA, as well as of the American Council for Polish Culture and director for many years of the American Center for Polish Culture. Richard Okreglak joined the organization within one year after it was founded, served as its president and later a board member, and is currently the Second Vice President. Walter Zachariasiewicz, Polonia's nestor, charter member and three times president of the PAAA and ACPC, at 104 years, was seen regularly at events throughout the city until recently. He planned to attend our Gala but a week before was taken to the hospital and passed away just two days before the celebration. We know he was with us in spirit.

In future issues of our newsletter, we plan to present stories and contributions of some of our past presidents, board members and individuals who made a special mark on the history of PAAA. We ask all our members to contribute such stories, either as full size articles or small vignettes of a paragraph or two. Of course, photos will be most welcome. We begin in this issue with an article on three PAAA presidents, all belonging to the Lopatkiewicz family, which follows on the next page. First, though, we'd like to recall two women, long gone now: the PAAA founder, Olga Klug Iwanowska, and its first president Marta Korwin-Rhodes.



**Olga Klug Iwanowska** was born in Mielec, Poland and came with her family to the United States when she was a young girl. Her father, Jan Klug, was a Polish artist who painted murals in churches throughout Pennsylvania and the Midwest, and is most known for painting the altar at St. Adalbert's Church in South Bend, IN. As a young woman, Mrs. Iwanowska lived in Pittsburgh, PA, where she met her husband, Julian Iwanowski, a jeweler and veteran of the Polish-Soviet War. They had three children, Olga, Julian and Tania. She was active within the Polish community in various organizations and in 1948, founded, and was first president of, the Polish Arts League of Pittsburgh. The League went on to cultivate ties with the Pittsburgh Symphony and the University of Pittsburgh, where a Polish classroom was established thanks to Mrs. Iwanowska's fundraising efforts. She nourished a life-long passion for poetry and in 1957 published her book *Białe Bzy* (White Lilacs), a collection of poems in both Polish and English. Her greatest source of pride was the Golden Cross of Service for Cultural Service in the Field of Polish Literature, awarded to her in 1963 by the Polish Government in Exile in London. Upon moving to Washington, D.C., she worked to establish a cultural club and in 1966 became one of the founders of the PAAA. Mrs. Iwanowska was an active member of PAAA until her death at the age of 92 in 1997.



**Marta Korwin-Rhodes** (1908-1993) was born of Polish parentage in the Russian Ukraine. During the 1917 revolution, her family found refuge in Odessa and in 1920 settled in Poland. A graduate of the Kraków Conservatory of Music, Marta gained prominence as concert pianist but her career was cut short by the explosion of World War II. During the war, she helped establish a hospital in Warsaw and became involved in Polish underground work, only to be caught by the Gestapo. She escaped to England in 1940, where she served with free Polish forces until the end of the war. Later, she worked for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in occupied Germany. In 1946, she moved to Canada, and a few years later settled in Washington. She had graduated from the London School of Economics, and became a graduate student and instructor in social work at Catholic University. Mrs. Korwin-Rhodes was the founder of Perspectives, a magazine on Polish American cultural affairs, which she published from the mid 1960s to mid 80s. In 1966, she was elected the first president of the PAAA. Her two terms at the helm of the fledgling organization set the tone for future activities, starting with receptions, concerts, literary evenings, celebrations of St. John's Eve and Wigilia dinners. In 1967, the PAAA hosted the Annual ACPC Convention.

# Three PAAA Presidents: The Lopatkiewicz Family Affair

Among the thirty-five past presidents of the Polish American Arts Association (PAAA) of Washington, D.C., there are three that belong to the same family - that of the late Teodor Lopatkiewicz: Stefan, Teodor (Ted) and Verna Lopatkiewicz, two sons and a mother.

In contrast to the usual sequence where children succeed the parent in the same position, the Lopatkiewicz sons served as the Association's presidents *prior* to their mother. In addition, Stefan and Ted have the distinction of serving as the youngest presidents of the Association during their terms - 1978-79 and 1982-83 respectively. Stefan was elected at the age of 30, a youth record that was soon surpassed by his brother Ted, who was called to the leadership role at age 29. The tenures of these two past presidents indicate the organization's open attitude toward youth in fulfilling its mission.

The contributions to the Polish-American cultural community of the Lopatkiewicz family extended over a 30-year period at the national level, specifically through Stefan's and Verna's work on behalf of the American Council for Polish Culture (ACPC), of which the PAAA has been an affiliate since its founding.

Stefan began his involvement in our cultural community in 1976, when he was recruited as a young lawyer by the then president of ACPC Walter Zachariasiewicz, to assist in organizing and redrafting the Council's by-laws. This effort resulted in adoption of a significantly modernized and conformed set of governing documents that was ratified at that year's national ACPC convention in Philadelphia. Stefan stayed on as an advisor to the ACPC Board in the newly created role of *pro bono* Legal Counsel, a position he retained until 1998.

Inspired by this initial exposure to organized Polish-American cultural activities, Stefan plunged into active involvement in both the PAAA and the Washington chapter of the Polish-American Congress. Within two years, he was asked to assume the PAAA's presidency.

As president, Stefan endeavored to collaborate with other ethnic and cultural organizations. In November 1978, the PAAA co-sponsored with George Meany's AFL-CIO an exhibition titled *Fasad y Tyły* on the then-emerging Solidarity movement in Poland. At American University, Stefan cooperated with the student Hillel Foundation to produce an educational program on World War II martyr Janusz Korczak. The Association also sponsored the Polish entry in the Smithsonian's Christmas tree exhibit.

Following his tenure as president, Stefan became a co-founder of the American Center of Polish Culture in Washington, for which he developed the governing legal documents, served as *pro bono* legal counsel, and secured the organization's tax exemption from D.C. real estate taxes. In 1991, his work earned him the ACPC's Distinguished



**Verna Lopatkiewicz with her sons, Teodor and Stefan, and daughter Veronica. She and the two sons served as PAAA presidents**

Service Award at the Council's annual convention held that year in Pultusk, Poland. In 1993, he was elected First Vice-President of the ACPC and helped spearhead the Council's annual Youth Leadership Conference in Washington, as well as the ACPC's support for the Jozef Hofmann Piano Competition in Aiken, S.C., for which he organized a concert at the Embassy of Poland on the Paderewski piano as part of the first place award, thereby establishing a new tradition.

Before he was elected president, Ted Lopatkiewicz served energetically as the PAAA's Membership Chairman, building up the organization's rolls to a record of over 400 members. During his presidency, the PAAA held a May 3d Constitution Day Commemoration and sponsored a Christmas program at the Washington Convention Center. Ted also worked with his brother Stefan to organize a solo concert for piano maestro Andrzej Wąsowski at the Terrace Theater in the Kennedy Center. The concert took place during the administration of Ted's

successor, Carl Sharek. It was a great success with a sold-out audience. As a by-product of that undertaking, classical music station WGMS conducted an interview with Wąsowski and Stefan, promoting the concert and the work of the Association.

Prior to retiring to the Washington metropolitan area with husband Teodor, Verna Lopatkiewicz was active in promoting Polish culture in the Orlando, Florida area, where she and her husband resided. In 1982, they co-founded the Polish-American Cultural Society of Metropolitan Orlando which quickly became an affiliate of the ACPC, and in 1984, hosted a meeting of the ACPC Board of Directors.

Shortly after joining the PAAA, Verna became Recording Secretary for the ACPC, a position to which she was re-elected twice. In 1995, she chaired the highly successful national ACPC Convention in Las Vegas. In 1996, Verna organized and chaired a dinner-dance celebration of the PAAA's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The following year, she received the ACPC's Founders Award for her tireless contributions to that organization and to Polish culture in the United States.

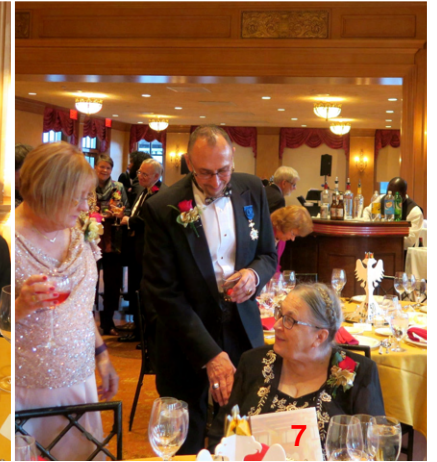
After becoming the PAAA President in 1998, Verna inaugurated the scholarship program, which has since grown and continues today as a key legacy of the organization. She also organized a tour for PAAA members and friends to Harpers Ferry to visit the John Brown memorial which features a book of poetry by Cyprian Norwid (donated to the U.S. Park Service by Teodor Lopatkiewicz) who wrote two poems honoring the abolitionist.

The three Lopatkiewiczzes continue to be proud advocates and stewards of their Polish heritage and remain members in good standing in the PAAA.

# PAAA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala

By any measure, it was a grand affair. The PAAA marked its half century of existence in style, thanks to the good offices of Alice Laning, at the Congressional Country Club in Bethesda, MD, which counts among its membership a number of U.S. presidents, members of Congress, and other high level dignitaries. The PAAA emblem eagles, with a golden number 50 at the foot, decorated the tables of the elegant Congressional Room where guests mingled over cocktails before sitting down to a sumptuous dinner. Father Philip Majka, the ever present Polonia duszpasterz, offered an invocation and Gala Chairman, Marianna Eckel, introduced soprano Laura Kafka-Price who sang the Polish and the U.S. National Anthems.

After dinner, Tom Payne, who earlier in the year ended a six-year tenure as the PAAA President and is currently the President of the ACPC, welcomed guests and talked briefly about PAAA's history and mission. He then introduced the current PAAA President, Celia Larkin, who expressed gratitude for Tom's past leadership and remarked how fortunate we are to have him at the head of our umbrella organization while, at the same time, continuing as the PAAA's First Vice President. She was then joined by Stefan Lopatkiewicz who presented a tribute to the PAAA charter and lifetime member, Sir Walter Zachariasiewicz, who passed away just two days before the celebration at which he planned to be present even as he was being taken to the hospital the week before. Stefan presented a bouquet of flowers to Sir Walter's widow, Sandra, and spoke eloquently about the man whose life was an example to many and who in his three years as president of the PAAA accomplished more than others could fit in a decade.



Among special guests present at the banquet were: Consul General Zygmunt Matynia, representing the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, and his wife Bożena; Susanne Lotarski, President of the Washington Area Division of the Polish American Congress; Bożenna Buda-Ortins, President of the Friends of John Paul II Foundation, and Brigadier General (USA Retired) George Price. It is only fitting for an Arts Association to recognize the artists among us. Of those present were: sculptor Gordon Kray, whose works are seen in many prominent places throughout Washington area and elsewhere; painter Susanne Eisinger; pianists Wanda O'Brien-Trefil, Alvin Smithson and Tomasz Robak; singers Laura Kafka-Price, soprano, David W. Cook, a young American tenor with Polish ancestry, and Dick Larkin, tenor with the Cathedral Choral Society; David Ekanem represented Hanna Bondarewska's Ambassador Theater; Stasia Skrypczuk and the Brothers-in-Law Band are in a class of their own and an integral part of many PAAA events.

Of the seventeen PAAA past presidents who are alive, thirteen were present and introduced. A tribute was paid to all the ones that have passed away. Kaya Ploss, a charter member and past president of PAAA, as well as of ACPC, was welcomed with warm applause as she spoke about her experiences working on behalf of the Polish artistic heritage. The PAAA founder Olga Klug Iwanowska was present in spirit in the persons of her daughter Tania and grandson, Julian Teixeira.

The musical program that followed included a number of Polish art songs performed beautifully by soprano Laura Kafka-Price, accompanied on the piano by Tomasz Robak. The evening ended with the Grand Polonaise and some spirited dancing to the music of the Brothers-in-Law Band. It was, indeed, a grand way to celebrate.









1. Table with favors; 2. Brigitte Adams, Alvin Smithson, Bozena Matynia, Polish Consul General Zygmunt Matynia; 3. Jack Felt & Renata Greenspan (center); 4. Richard Wiermanski\*, Rev. Philip Majka, Al Hennessey, Alice Laning, Gloria & Bill Klepczynski, Susanne Lotarski; 5. Barry Meares, Halszka Twardo, David Cook, Kristen and Paul Coughlin, Paulina Wasicka; 6. Father Majka, Gloria Klepczynski, Al Hennessey; 7. Sharon Brzostowski\*, Stefan Lopatkiewicz\*, Mary Ann Evan\*; 8. Kaya Ploss\*, Marianna Eckel\*, Tom Payne\*, Tomasz Robak; 9. Cecilia Glembocki with Robert and Mary Flanagan\*; 10. Consul Zygmunt Matynia, Cecilia Glembocki, Bozena Matynia, Ray Glembocki; 11. Sandra Zachariasiewicz receives a floral tribute to her late husband Sir Walter Zachariasiewicz\*; 12. Julian Teixeira and Tania Iwanowska; 13. Susanne Lotarski, Eve Marie Szczepanski, Ted Mirecki; 14. Carla and John Kasper\*; 15. Irene Karpinski\* and Richard Okreglak\*; 16. David Cook, Kristen Siudzinski-Coughlin, Paulina Wasicka, Paul Coughlin; 17. Sheryl Shreckengost, Regina Donnelly; 18. Elzbieta vande Sende, Hanna Siwec, David Ekanem, Nicole Giles, Matt Stefanski; 19. Isabella and Tomasz Robak, George Price, Laura Kafka-Price, David Cook, Stefan Lopatkiewicz, Celia Larkin; 20. Spencer Myer, Barry Meares, Laura Kafka-Price, Alvin Smithson; 21 Sharon Brzostowski, Connie Donnelly, Stasia Skrypczuk; 22. Hanna Siwec, Matt Stefanski, Nicole Giles; 23. Gordon Kray and Edwarda Buda-Okreglak\*; 24. Susanne Lotarski & Stefan Lopatkiewicz; 25. Ray Glembocki, Irene Karpinski and Walter Johnston, Brigitte Adams, Marek Michalski; 26. Isabelle and Tomasz Robak with Ted Mirecki; 27. Stephen Donnelly, Bill Klepczynski; 28. Lisa Helling\*, Henry Czauski\*; 29. Gordon Kray, Celia Larkin; 30. Laura Kafka-Price with Tom Robak, Richie Popso, Jr. and Olek Skrypczuk; 31-33. Grand Polonaise; 34. Brothers-in-Law Band; 35. Celia & Dick Larkin; 36. Anniversary cookies.

\* Denotes Past PAAA President

Photos by Dick Larkin



# Walter Zachariasiewicz (1911 -2016)

By Mark Michalski

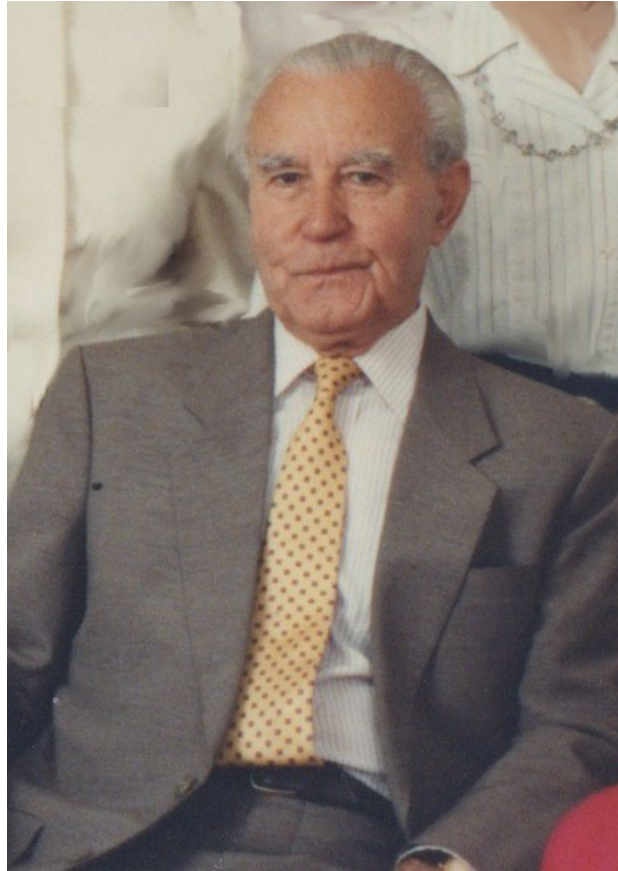
Walter Zachariasiewicz, charter member and three time president of the Polish American Arts Association lived 104 years and died just as the PAAA was celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. He was a distinguished diplomatic leader, true patriot and a legendary figure of the Polish American community in the U.S. He completely devoted his life to Poland and Polonia.

Born November 7, 1911 in Kraków, Zachariasiewicz studied law and administration at the Jagiellonian University. He served as president of Polish Democratic Youth and of Alliance for International Understanding "LIGA". He gained initial diplomatic training at the Polish Consulate in Leipzig and the Embassy in Riga.

His military training at the Officers' Cadet School in Grodno prepared him for September 1939 WWII outbreak, in the II Tank Battalion. Arrested by the Soviets, a month later he was imprisoned in Kiev and Kharkov. Sentenced to ten years of hard labor to a gulag in the Archangelsk, he was released under an amnesty. He served as director for Social Welfare in the Urals and at the Polish Embassy in Kazakhstan. Before leaving for that posting, he was arrested, accused of spying, tortured and expelled from the Soviet Union.

Walter's service to Polish diaspora began with the World Congress of Poles from Abroad ("Światopol"). During WWII, he served in Polish diplomatic posts in Constantinople, London and Rome. There, he was responsible for refugee matters. Upon emigrating to the United States in 1948, he became Executive Director of the Polish-American Immigration and Relief Committee in New York, which assisted over 30,000 refugees and soldiers. He also was a member of the board of the Polish language daily "Nowy Świat." In more recent years, he has worked closely with "Wspólnota Polska" (Polish Commonwealth). In 2008 he was appointed to Polonia Consultative Council.

Zachariasiewicz served as Director of the



Democratic National Committee and was a Special Assistant to Postmaster General John Gronouski. After retiring in 1978, he became a member of the Board of Directors of Radio Free Europe.

For over six decades, upon coming to the U.S. Walter has been a leader in many Polish-American organizations. He served as Vice President of the Polish American Congress (PAC) divisions in New York and Washington, was cofounder and president of the PAAA and the president of the American Council for Polish Culture.

Zachariasiewicz initiated and coordinated fundraising in the U.S. for the John Paul II Home in Rome. He was invited by Pope John Paul II to serve on the board, which he did for many years.

At the age of 94, he recounted his rich experience into American Polonia's support for Poland's independence, in the book: "Etos niepodległościowy Polonii amerykańskiej," published in Poland. It is considered an indispensable compendium of cultural and political history of Americans of Polish descent. An English translation titled: "Independent Ethos of American Polonia" is ready for publication.

Walter Zachariasiewicz's rich and active life won him numerous awards and recognitions. Perhaps the most notable being the Commander's Cross with Star of Poland's Order Polonia Restituta and the Commander's Cross with Star of the Order of Pope Gregory the Great. He was also recognized with the Order of Siberian Exiles, the Gold Medal of the Polish Combatants Association and the Gold Medal, the Laurel Leaf of Wspólnota Polska, the highest honor of Polish-American clubs, the "Pride of Polonia," and many others.

Zachariasiewicz is survived by wife Sandra Rovsek-Crabb Zachariasiewicz, three children: son Jan of Edgewood, NM; adopted daughter Danuta (Deb) of St. Petersburg, FL; adopted son Robert (Donna) of Rockville, MD, five grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. His first wife of 62 years, Adeline Nowinska Zachariasiewicz, died in 2011.

## Lecture on Jagiello Statue at PAAA General Membership Meeting at Kosciuszko Foundation

At the PAAA General Membership Meeting on November 6, 2016, Ted Mirecki made a presentation about the history and restoration of the statue of King Władysław Jagiełło in Central Park in NYC, an artwork from the Polish Pavilion at the New York World's Fair in 1939. The lecture was originally prepared and presented in New York by Dr. Krystyna Nowakowska, the author of a doctoral thesis and book about the Polish Pavilion. Ted translated both the book and the presentation into English. The lecture was met with great interest by those gathered at the meeting and a number of people bought one of the few copies of the book Ted brought with him from New York. In the near future we will run a full article on this topic.



*King Władysław Jagiełło's statue in New York's Central Park originally graced the Polish Pavilion at the 1939 World's Fair*

## Awards Given to Raymond and Cecilia Glembocki



PAAA member Raymond T. Glembocki, who has distinguished himself over many years in the Polish-American community, was the recipient of the 2016 Pride of Polonia Award, an honor bestowed each year by the National Polish Apostolate Committee on an individual whose personal integrity and involvement in the Polish community is exemplary. The ceremony took place in Doylestown, PA, on August 28, 2016. Raymond joins other PAAA members who have received the award in past years, including Ted Mirecki (2011), Mary Flanagan (2015), Sir Walter Zachariasiewicz (1998), and Sandra Crabb (2012).

In October 2016, Cecilia Glembocki traveled to Rome to receive the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice from Pope Francis. This is the highest medal awarded by the Pope for work for the church.

**A number of PAAA members took part in a tour to Rome and other places in Italy last October. Here is Irena Sowa, our longtime recording secretary, taking in the sites of Venice.**



## PAAA Dues and Information for Membership Directory

Dear PAAA members:

Those of you whose membership has recently expired have received renewal letters for 2017. If you haven't done so yet, please complete the form and return with your payment. Please make sure that the information on the form is correct as it will be used in the new membership directory that is currently being compiled. If your membership is paid up but you have recently changed your address or other contact information, please forward these changes to: [paaanewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:paaanewsletter@gmail.com)

Your dues allow us to continue the work of our organization to promote Polish culture in America. Keeping your membership current will ensure that you will continue to receive the PAAA newsletter as well as notifications and invitations to events.

You may also wish to consider making an additional donation to the PAAA for its cultural activities. As always, we look for ways to expand our activities to promote and celebrate Polish art, music, poetry, drama and traditions. PAAA is a non-profit organization and donations are tax-deductible. Please make checks payable to PAAA and mail to: 900 N. Taylor St. No. 617, Arlington, VA 22203

If you have friends that you think would like to join the PAAA, give them the application on page 15 or download one from:

**[paaa.us/org/membership.htm](http://paaa.us/org/membership.htm)**

# PAAA Chopin Concert

The Polish American Arts Association annual Chopin concert will take place on March 5, 2017 at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland. This year, the concert will feature a young pianist who was recognized by the PAAA with a scholarship grant in 2016. We heard him perform at our general membership meeting last May and in September at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala. He is truly a very talented and already accomplished musician.

Tomasz Robak is a concert pianist, chamber musician, organist, and educator. Through his versatile skills in multiple areas, he continues the age-old European tradition of the "complete musician."

His achievements as a pianist include concerto appearances with the New North Shore Chamber

Orchestra, the Memphis Repertory Orchestra, the Manassas Symphony Orchestra, and the Southwest Symphony Orchestra. He has been heard in solo recitals across the United States, in Baltimore, Austin, Chicago, and Memphis, as well as on radio at WFMT-Chicago and WKNO-Memphis. An enthusiastic chamber musician, he most recently performed in five concerts at the Belvedere Chamber Music Festival in Memphis, a festival promoting emerging composers and music of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Mr. Robak has also had a long-standing involvement in music ministry, and has worked as an organist for churches in Chicago, Houston and Baltimore. As an organ performer, he has collaborated with the Concert Artists of Baltimore and the Peabody Singers. His performance of Kodaly's *Missa Brevis* with the Peabody Singers has been broadcast on Baltimore's WBJC. Since April 2014, he has



been serving as Organist and Associate Choirmaster at historic Mount Calvary Catholic Church in Baltimore. Mr. Robak holds the Associateship of the American Guild of Organists.

In addition to performing, Mr. Robak is a passionate educator. He is a member of the piano faculty at the Peabody Preparatory, is in his fourth year serving as a Graduate Assistant in Keyboard Studies at the Peabody Conservatory, and also works for the Baltimore Children's Choir as its Associate Director.

Mr. Robak has received scholarships from the Kosciuszko Foundation and the Polish American Arts

Association of Washington, DC. In 2013, he took Second Prize at the International Beethoven Sonata Competition in Memphis. In recognition of his achievements in organ playing, in 2016 he was awarded the Richard Ross Memorial Prize in Organ at the Peabody Institute.

Mr. Robak completed his undergraduate studies at Rice University, graduating magna cum laude with degrees in both piano and philosophy, and a Distinction in Creative Works and Research. He completed a Master of Music degree in piano performance at the Peabody Institute, where he is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree. His principal teachers have been Dr. Robert Roux, Benjamin Pasternack, Alexander Shtarkman (piano) and Donald Sutherland (organ). He has also participated in a host of master classes with renowned pianists including Eteri Andjaparidze, Leon Fleisher, Andrzej Jasinski, Julian Martin, John Perry, and others.

# Polish American Arts Association (PAAA) of Washington, DC

## 2017 PAAA Scholarship

Several Scholarships from \$1,000 to \$5,000

***Are you proud of your Polish heritage and inspired by the many Poles who made significant contributions in all areas of arts and sciences?***

### **Elegibility Requirements**

- Applicant must be an American citizen and of Polish or Polish-American Descent
  - Consideration will also be given to 10 year green card permanent residents who express a desire to one day become United States citizens
- Participate in Polish-American cultural activities
- Applicant must be a resident of Washington DC, Maryland or Virginia, or a student at an institution in one of these jurisdictions

### **Some Factors for Consideration**

Candidates will be evaluated on:

- academic, civic and cultural contributions
- scholastic performance
- financial need

**NO APPLICATION FEE NECESSARY!**

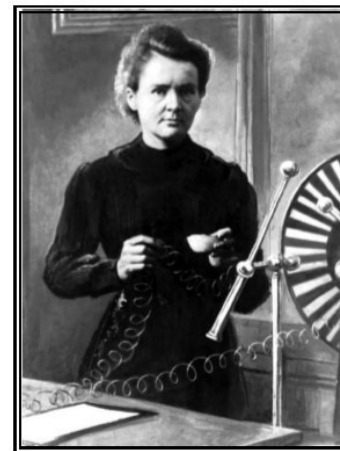
Please see attachment for more details.

or

Visit our web site for more details: [www.paaa.us](http://www.paaa.us)



*Music and the Arts  
(Frederick Chopin)*



*Science  
(Marie Skłodowska-Curie)*



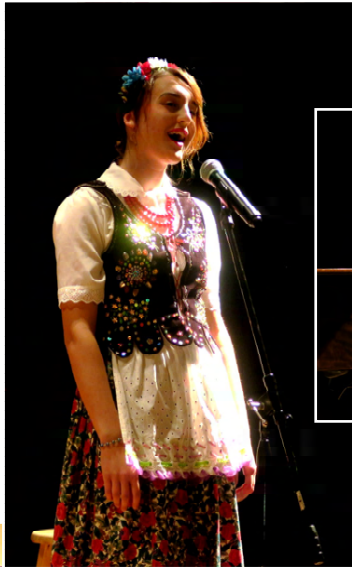
## PAAA Wigilia 2016

For the third year in a row, the PAAA traditional Polish Wigilia was held at the historic Monroe mansion, home of the Arts Club of Washington, on December 6, 2016.

After sharing the *opłatek* blessed by Father Philip Majka and exchanging wishes, guests feasted on barszcz with uszka, herring salad, and other traditional Polish dishes, ending with poppy seed cake and delicious dried fruit compote.

The after dinner program was more elaborate than in previous years and included a performance by the Polish Drama Club of Silver Spring under the direction of Dorota Ponikiewska. The youngest members of the group, accompanied by pianist Alvin Smithson, sang Polish Christmas songs and recited poetry expressing the joy felt by children as they encounter St. Nicholas, or *Mikołaj* in Polish. The older actors talked about the age old customs that were observed in Poland at holiday season, some solemnly religious, other, based on pagan traditions, filled with superstitions and at times treated with great deal of humor. This was followed by a short recital of Polish arts songs performed by the wonderful soprano Laura Kafka-Price. Finally, Laura and Dorota, with Drama Club members scattered throughout the room, and Alvin at the piano, led all those present in singing of *kolędy*.

Big thanks go to Wigilia Chairman Renata Greenspan for overseeing the arrangements for the wonderful evening with the help of Rose Kobylinski and Celia Larkin, Ben Filipczyk for his help with the raffle of gifts donated by PAAA Board members, Ted Mirecki for overseeing reservations, Eve Marie Szczepanski for donating her exquisite table centerpieces, and the two suppliers of Polish foods in our area, the Kilebasa Factory in Rockville and Polish Market in Vienna, for their gift of Polish candy for all the guests. A heartfelt *Bóg zapłać* goes to our beloved duszpasterz, Father Philip Majka, for his gift of *opłatek* and for explaining its meaning and tradition. Special thanks to Yann Henrotte, General Manager of the Arts Club, Kevin Kievit, Executive Chef, and their staff for providing us with smooth service and great food. Thank you all for being there and keeping our wonderful Polish traditions alive.





**POLISH-AMERICAN ARTS ASSOCIATION  
OF WASHINGTON D.C., INC.**

*An Affiliate of the American Council for Polish Culture*

**Membership Form**

I/We would like to enroll as:

Couple: 1 year, \$50 \_\_\_\_; 2 years, \$90 \_\_\_\_; 3 years, \$130 \_\_\_\_

Individual 1 year, \$35 \_\_\_\_; 2 years, \$60 \_\_\_\_; 3 years, \$85 \_\_\_\_

Student 1 year, \$20 \_\_\_\_; 2 years, \$35 \_\_\_\_; 3 years, \$50 \_\_\_\_ (16-28 years of age)

I would like to contribute \$\_\_\_\_\_ for PAAA cultural activities

Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
First \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(if couple membership) First \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street, Apt. no., City, State, Zip

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Office Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsored by Celia Larkin

What activities interest you the most?

\_\_\_\_ Concerts \_\_\_\_ Lectures \_\_\_\_ Dances \_\_\_\_ Arts and Crafts

\_\_\_\_ Special Events, e.g., Wigilia (Christmas Dinner), Wianki (Festival of Wreaths)

Other (provide suggestions)

\_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing and able to help with any of the following:

\_\_\_\_ Newsletter \_\_\_\_ Publicity \_\_\_\_ Membership

\_\_\_\_ Hospitality \_\_\_\_ Fund Raising \_\_\_\_ Special Events

Please make check payable to **PAAA** and mail to:

**Polish-American Arts Association  
P.O. Box 9442  
Washington, DC 20016**

**Information: [www.PAAA.us](http://www.PAAA.us)**

## Upcoming Events

### PAAA Chopin Concert

Benefiting the PAAA Scholarship Fund  
Sunday, March 5, 2017 at 4:00PM at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland  
See article inside for details

### PAAA General Membership Meeting

Sunday, May 7, 2017 at the Arts Club of Washington

### Wianki Festival

Celebration of Polish traditions of St. John's night, June 24, 2017  
The Reflecting Pool at the Lincoln Memorial

Details at: [www.paaa.us](http://www.paaa.us)

**Please remember to renew your PAAA Membership**

Polish-American Arts Association  
P.O. Box 9442  
Washington, DC 20016

