**IN MEMORIAM**

**Dr. Stefan P. Wilk, M.D.**

With great sadness we note the recent passing of Dr. Stefan P. Wilk, a prominent member of Polish community in Los Angeles, a distinguished physician, humanitarian, and philanthropist. He died on 25 March 2008 in Los Angeles after a long illness.

Stefan Wilk was born in 1917 near the city of Lwów in southeastern Poland. Orphaned early in life, he was raised in several foster homes and, between the years 1931-1935 he studied at the University of Lwów, where he worked as private tutor and self-financed his studies. He obtained his high school diploma and enrolled in the Lwów Polytechnical Institute, concentrating in mathematics and engineering, but his education was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II.

In the early months of the war, Stefan Wilk escaped from occupied Poland to Yugoslavia and with other Polish refugees, made his way to France, where he joined the Polish Army battalion attached to the French Army. Fluent in French, German and Russian, he also served as a medical interpreter. When the French capitulated to Hitler’s June 1940 invasion, Stefan Wilk’s unit retreated to neutral Switzerland, where he was interned for the duration of the war.

The plight of Polish soldiers in Switzerland was known to Ignacy Jan Paderewski, himself a resident of Switzerland, who became a refugee in the United States in late 1940. By appealing to Henry Noble MacCracken, President of the Kościuszko Foundation in New York, Paderewski secured funds for the 450 Polish soldiers interned in Switzerland, enabling them to continue their studies.

Along with his fellow soldiers, Stefan Wilk was able to study medicine first at the internment camp in Wintersberg and later at the School of Medicine at the University of Zurich, graduating with a medical degree on January 29, 1949. Afterwards, he enrolled in an advanced degree program in the field of biochemistry, eventually receiving his diploma and further specializing in radiology at the University of Bern.

Dr. Wilk arrived in the United States in 1952 to join the staff of the University of California in Los Angeles. Here he obtained a medical license and a Radiology Board Certification. He joined the UCLA School of Medicine in 1954 as an Associate Professor. Then, in 1959 he became Director of Radiology Department at the Queen of Angels Hospital in Los Angeles.

On April 13 a Memorial Mass for the third anniversary of the death of Pope John Paul II was celebrated at the Queen of the Angels Cathedral in Los Angeles. The Mass was sponsored by the Polish National Congress of the Republic of Poland and the Consul General of the Republic of Poland, Ms. Paulina Kapuscinska.

The day before the anniversary event, a Mass was held at St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Los Angeles, as well as at the Queen of Angels Cathedral in Los Angeles.

The Mass at St. Mary’s was lead by Father Henry Noga (Pastor of Our Lady of the Angels Cathedral) Father Marcin Ciecislo (Pastor of Our Lady of the Bright Mount Church in Los Angeles) Father Henry Noga (newly appointed Pastor of the Pope John Paul II Center in Yorba Linda) and Father Damian Kabot (Saint John the Evangelist Catholic Church, Los Angeles). Reverend Teofih Lui (Samson Community), Sacred Heart Parish, Alhambra also took part.

The religious program was organized and directed by Mr. Szymon Grab, organizer.

Cantor and soprano soloist Yola Temor opened the mass with outstanding singing of “Ave Maria.” Readings were done by Jadwiga Nauksch (Polish), and Michael Dickson (Spanish). The Offertory “Verum Corpus” was beautifully performed by the quartet of Susan Montgomery, Nicole Baker, George, Sterne, and Michael McClish. The quartet also sang Mozart’s “Laude Domini” during Communion.

Bishop Clark delivered the homily. The first words of John Paul II when he became Pope were “Fear not. Be not afraid.” He was the first non-Italian Pope in recent history, and instructed not to say anything. These were also the words of Jesus. Bishop Clark compared the flame of the papal candle to the flame of the Olympic torch. Both are for justice and peace. This needs to be carried in our lives. He concluded that “the flame always should remain active in our lives.”

Yola Temor concluded with “Pie Jesu.” Szymon Grab’s organ postlude was “Allegro Maestoso” from II Organ Sonata by J.S. Bach.

After the mass, Richard Widerski thanked Bishop Clark, the priests who assisted as well as those who contributed, and the choir.

He then introduced Ms. Paulina Kapuscinska, Consul General of the Republic of Poland. Ms. Kapuscinska, acknowledged the members of the Krakusa dance group, Army Krajowa veterans, and representatives from the many countries who participated and attended the mass.

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**IN MEMORIAM**

**Dr. Stanislaw K. Tocezk**

**Died March 5, 2008 of congestive heart failure. He had looked only at death as an inevitable long illness. He is buried in the family plot at Forest Lawn - Hollywood Hills**

For Stan Tocezk, the Odyssey from his native Poland to the US where his professional dreams had been fulfilled was a long, arduous, and often, uphill journey. Born in Hołówko, Poland on September 10, 1923, Dr. Tocezk was a part of a generation that experienced the destruction of their country, tremendous human losses, altered borders, mass migrations and a struggle for simple survival.

When W.W. II ended and his high school reopened, he graduated with excellent grades. After the Russian Army occupied Poland, Stan was warned to leave Haców and went to Wrocław in Poland’s western territories. Wrocław became at that time, a haven for the Professors and staff of the University of Wrocław who had survived the persecutions of both German and Soviet occupiers. They had migrated in large numbers to Wrocław determined to recreate the Wrocław University including the medical school renowned for its high academic standards.

Because the shattered buildings of the university, classes could not begin at any rate. Thus, Stan and a small group of his fellow students became for a while guards, ruffians, carpenters, painters, mechanics, etc.

After receiving his medical diploma from the University of Wrocław, Stan went to Wroclaw University, Medical Faculty.

After five years of hardship and painstaking studies, he obtained the specialty certification in Neurosurgery. This was followed by a five year assignment as Adjunct Professor in the Neurosurgery Department of the Warsaw Academy of Medicine.

In 1960 he received a prestigious Post- Doctoral Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship to do a research project in neurophysiology at the University of California in Los Angeles. Here he lost his heart not only to his beloved specialization, but to his future wife and lifetime companion, Arianie, a fellow medical student who had been born in Athens, Greece. And thus another link in the beautiful American mosaic came into being.

Having been warned by friends not to return to Poland due to the political situation, he decided to continue his medical pursuits in the United States.

The long list of Dr. Tocezk’s scientific, consultative, and teaching positions include Ms. Zion Hospital and Medical Center in Sun Francisco, the Stanford Research...