

Eulogy for Dr. Wilk from 14

Uncle Stefan decided to follow a proverb of Francis Bacon: "If the mountain won't come to Mahomet, Mahomet must come to the mountain." And so, Dr. Stefan Wilk and his Wife Wanda got into their car and drove down the hill to visit me. I'm sure they both had more pressing concerns than spending an afternoon with me. Many things were said that day, the most important of which was "Get going Konrad." And so I did.

Uncle Stefan gave me the guidance, the motivation and the help I needed to get up and go. He took his responsibility as an Uncle seriously. He asked questions and offered advice. He was from another generation, in fact two generations removed from me, but everything he said, all his observations and his genuine interest in my progress, my ambitions, my hopes, aspirations, his focus on my destiny, was straight from the heart.

I am proud to share the same last name with a man so carrying and so devoid of ulterior motives. I cannot say, that I mourn him as much as Diane mourns her father, or as much as his wife Wanda mourns him, but I can say that I feel truly blessed, for most people have only two grandfathers and I, because of Uncle Stefan had three, he was my third grandfather, and that is whom I am mourning today.

The Wilk family motto is "*Fortuna Favet Fortibus*" – Destiny Favors the Brave – it is written on the *Gozdawa* shield which is our ancestral coat of Arms. For Uncle Stefan, it was excellence born of self-evolution. The kind of evolution that the French moral philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, called "The Future of Man." For man is the smith of his own destiny. I learned from Uncle Stefan that I need not only rely on chance, I have a measure of control over my own life, as he did, if I merely learn from him the most important lesson he could impart: Destiny Favors the Disciplined.

Dr. Stefan Wilk answers Greg Bear's question "do you want peace and quiet?" with a resounding no. For though he has left us! For though he has died! His impact remains! He touched so many lives, that his name will endure, not out of vanity but out of the well justified attributes he so exemplified – goodness, excellence and virtue, or in one word: Areté. □

Inglis interviews Kosmala from 4

With regard to contemporary music, many more pieces are being written for the viola. **KI** - Being an expert at solo viola performance, what if anything have you done to get the music you want to perform? For example, have you had to convert music initially written for instruments to the viola or have you had to write your own pieces?

JK - Since the viola repertoire is rather limited except for the contemporary music, I have to look for the music written for other string instruments and if possible adapt them for viola. It takes a great deal of experience and know-how to make those adaptations sound like they were written especially for the viola. There are many transcriptions available on the market today, but unfortunately most of them are not suitable to be called truly viola pieces written for viola. In addition to the music I have adapted for viola on my own and performed in public, I also published numerous of my transcriptions and adaptation through the Polish Music Publishers which are available for purchase.

KI - Over the course of your career, have you noticed any changes in how the viola is performed?

JK - Since the high demands and expectations placed on the viola as a solo instrument are constantly increasing, the viola technique had to develop accordingly and nowadays there is practically no difference in technical abilities between violinists and violists, except perhaps for some virtuoso pieces written specifically for the violin and sounding the best just on the violin.

Kimberly Inglis is a student at Corona Del Mar High School. This is part of her Senior Project □

Dr. Stanislaw Toczec from 1

Institute, the position of Chief Medical Officer in Neurosurgery at D.C. General and at Georgetown University Hospital as Clinical Associate Professor in Neurosurgery, where he remained until his retirement. He was also a consultant for the National Institute of Health.

He belonged to several professional and scientific societies. His crowning achievement was certification by the American Board of Neurological Surgery and becoming a Fellow- of the American College of Surgeons.

In spite of all these impressive achievements, he remained a person of extreme modesty. He was deeply religious, and a strong believer in traditional family values.

Compassionate and generous, he always had time for those who sought his good counsel. He knew firsthand what hardship is and he knew what it means to be hungry and destitute. He loved this country which offered him so much, but his heart belonged to Poland and the beautiful rolling hills and valleys of his childhood. He had a deep sense of community participation and belonged to and supported almost every Polish American organization in the Washington metropolitan area. However, the John Paul II Foundation had a special place in his heart. When in the third year of Pope John Paul's historical Pontificate, our Holy Father by personal decree called to life the John Paul II Foundation, Stan was among the first to respond. The idea of the Foundation was conceived by the Holy Father and is His personal creation.

Stanislaw Toczec has twice taken it upon himself the burden of the Presidency of our Friends Chapter of the Foundation and helped make it a purposeful and successful organization.

In January 2000, on a cold and icy street, as he drove to the hospital, his car began to slip, and to avoid hitting some children playing in the street, he was able to swerve the car and was stopped by a tree. To his relief, no one was hurt but himself. After a prolonged recovery, he realized that he would no longer be able to continue his practice and he reluctantly retired. He and Ariadne moved to Glendale, California to be close to their daughter, Dr. Maria Toczec, their son Andrzej, his wife Amy, granddaughter Gabrielle Maria, and grandson Nicholas Stanislaw.

He was the epitome of what is special about Poles – a truly Renaissance Man. His family and friends will miss him greatly and all who knew him feel privileged to have known him. "Śpij kolego w ciemnym grobie. Niech sie Polska przyśni tobie." (Words from a Polish Military song: "Sleep in a dark tomb my friend. May you dream of Poland.")

The family has asked that in lieu of flowers, donations be sent to:

Friends of John Paul II Foundation

c/o Mary Flanagan

1721 Forest Lane

McLean, Va. 22011

Or

Committee for the Blind of Poland

P.O. Box 412

Gracie Station, NY 10028

(Please write LASKI on the memo line.) ☩

Eulogy for Dr. Stan Toczec

By way of introduction, I am Herbert Manz, a retired Neuropathologist. Georgetown University Medical Center recruited me in 1974 to work with the Depts. of Pathology and Neurology and the Div. of Neurosurgery in Washington, DC. That is when Dr. Toczec, by then already a respected senior member of Neurosurgery, came to my attention. Part of my responsibility was attending Grand Rounds of the neurosurgeons at Georgetown. Dr. Toczec was commonly asked his opinion about managing a particular neurosurgical case, because of Dr. Toczec's practical experience and vast knowledge. Colleagues and former residents would also comment about unique aspects or new approaches Dr. Toczec had pioneered. He was a brilliant, very wise, very humble, and very experienced-Neurosurgeon. While Dr. Toczec was on the Clinical Faculty at Georgetown University Hospital, he had a major appointment at DC General Hospital. The location of DC General is right next door to the DC Jail and DC Medical Examiner's morgue and labs, in one of the most dangerous locations in Washington. Because of the many criminally assaulted patients admitted to the DC General Hospital, Dr. Toczec gained invaluable experience, developed a well-deserved reputation as a superb Neurosurgeon and friend of the Black community. Thus, he was rarely in danger from the local criminals and gangs in that district. However, most unfortunately, some of his trusted office staff embezzled untold amounts of patient fees for his medical and surgical care.

Over the past decades our friendship with the Toczec family has only grown stronger, as we came to know one another and our backgrounds better. Dr. Toczec's youth and early adulthood in Nazi-occupied Poland was dangerous, fraught with life threatening situations; and scant food. During the Russian occupation and Communist regime, his life was equally threatened, until he could at last pursue his medical studies. His neurosurgical training was rigorous and demanding, yet adversity only strengthened his resolve to succeed. As a Foreign Medical Graduate in the USA, Dr. Toczec had to prove his skill, knowledge, and competence, before being accepted as more than qualified practitioner of scientific and caring neurosurgery.

It is my great honor to pay tribute to any brilliant and highly talented colleague, Dr. Toczec, and to express my gratitude to our gracious God for letting me be a friend to this gentleman and to his family. Alvina, Cathy, and I love you dear Ariadne and Maria, and express our sorrow and condolences. Also, to you Andre, Amy, Gabriella, and Nickolas. □

Please send news and updates about your Polish Organization to the **News of Polonia** polishnews@earthlink.net

Strybel - John Paul from 1

known as the swimming and skiing pope, who loved children and peppered his sermons with light-hearted humor.

But although he was mourned and continues to be remembered around the globe, nowhere does his memory inspire love and devotion than in his native land and –by extension–across the Polish Diaspora. Across Poland anniversary masses, prayer vigils, concerts and exhibitions were held to honor Poland's favorite native son, whose death three years ago brought to an end one of Christendom's longest pontificates. Not only the stations of Poland's public television network TVP, but also commercial channels provided blanket coverage of the life and work of John Paul II. His pilgrimages to his native land were recalled, portions of his sermons were rebroadcast and people who knew him shared their inside views with the country's viewing audience.

People prayed and lit votive lamps in towns and villages across the country, but especially turned out in force in localities closely associated with his life and pastoral ministry. Crowds jammed the square of his birthplace of Wadowice, and young people gathered beneath the window of Kraków's Episcopal Palace at ul. Floriańska 3, his lodgings during papal pilgrimages to Poland's old royal capital. But is there more to this collective outpouring of devotion than a desire to honor a beloved native son combined with a kind of nostalgia trip?

Contrary to predictions that after embracing capitalism, Poland would turn its back on religion the way Spain has done, that has not occurred. Church attendance and religious vocations have decreased only slightly, and Poland still has one of Europe's lowest divorce rates – tendencies many attribute to the Polish Pontiff's overwhelming influence. An overwhelming majority of Poles also supports the Church's ban on homosexual marriage. In a recent poll conducted by Warsaw University sociologists, 79 percent of the Poles surveyed insisted they were guided by John Paul's teachings, and 63 percent said his pontificate had changed their lives.

On specific moral issues, 71 opposed euthanasia and 68 percent were against abortion, but only 27 percent were totally opposed to contraception. And 68 percent did not accept the late pope's rejection of capital punishment. But more than 80 percent believe the anniversary of John Paul's death (April 2nd) should be marked annually, and as many as 47 percent want it to become a legal national holiday. □

Janek's Corner from 4

According to the Treaty of Lisbon, the right to marry is recognized and respected according to the national law governing the exercise of this right. Polish law states that the marriage is a legal relationship between a woman and a man, so the turmoil about the European law affecting the change of Polish national law seems to be groundless.

I hope this would give you a small insight in what it means for Poland to be a part of the European Union. I believe you would also become more interested in the matter. It is a very important aspect of the Polish affairs at the moment, and so it is quite crucial that the society would immerse in it more closely. □

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