

**Danuta M. Zawadzki from 4**

shipped in cattle cars to the east, to Siberia and Kazakhstan.

When Hitler invaded Russia, Stalin declared an amnesty for some of those Poles so they would help fight the Germans. And so, my mother and my grandmother were released, and joined the Polish forces. But neither had any idea where the other was. One day, while still in Russian territory, my mother was walking along a road. A woman was walking in the opposite direction. The woman was so thin that it was only when she passed that my Mom recognized her profile. It was her mother.

My Mom and grandmother were able to reach the Polish refugee camps in Iran. They were forever grateful to the Persians for how well they treated the Poles. After recovering their strength and health, my grandmother and Mom went to England to serve in the Polish Women's Auxiliary Air Force under British command. Mom graduated from the strict British Women's Air Force officers' school at Windermere, and became the personal assistant to General Stanisław Karpiński, of the Polish Air Force.

One evening, Mom was with some friends in the officer's club. One of them said, "Go talk to that sad-looking officer over there." It turned out that he was a Polish pilot who had also been arrested and shipped to Siberia. He would become my father. But, he was a bit hesitant. Then one day they were out walking. An expensive car went by. My Dad asked, "Would you marry me if I had a car like that?" And my Mom said, "I would marry you even if you didn't have a car like that."

They were married in 1946 and I was born in 1947. In 1951 we came to America. The next year Mom started working in college libraries. There was the University of Illinois, the University of Chicago, and Brown University. In 1959, she received a BA degree in French from the University of Rhode Island. That same year we moved to Los Angeles. Mom worked in the libraries of several aerospace companies and in 1964 earned a Master of Arts in Library Science degree from Immaculate Heart College. That same year she started working as a librarian for Hughes Aircraft Co. where she stayed until she retired as a senior librarian in 1981.

Mom was active in many Polish organizations including Samopomoc, Polish University Club, Polish National Alliance, Polish Roman Catholic Union of America, and the Polish Air Force Veterans Association.

In the year 1966, Poland celebrated 1,000 years of its history and the Polish library in Los Angeles was renamed, "Poland's Millennium Library." For the next 40 years, Mom was on the board of directors and served as president much of the time. The library steadily got bigger, to over 15,000 volumes. She attended the weekly working meetings until 2006 when her strength gave out. At the next annual meeting, she was made Honorary President.

In the early 1980s, in the face of Solidarity and the inspiration of the Polish Pope, the communists imposed martial law in Poland. Mom served as the Chairman of the European Affairs Committee of the Immigration and Citizenship Division of the Los Angeles Archdiocese. She helped many Polish refugees and asylum seekers, including the Polish crew that jumped ship in Los Angeles harbor.

My Mom loved to read. When she was little, she would read under the blankets with a flashlight. She loved detective stories and read all of the Agatha Christie books. She loved to dance, play bridge, cook, and have guests over. She subscribed to *Seek and Circle*, a word puzzle publication, and she devoured mail order clothing catalogs. She sent a small donation to almost any charity that asked.

She would give photographs of the Polish Pope, to strangers. She gave one to the hotel shuttle bus driver at Chicago's O'Hare airport. He put it on the dashboard of his hotel van. Two days ago I talked to her hairdresser. He said he wasn't religious but whenever he went on a trip, he always took with him the rosary that Mom gave him.

Mom never complained about the hardships in her life, except one. She would ask, "Why, why did they kill my father and brother?" Now, after 70 years, she has finally been reunited with them. †

**Wanda Tomczykowska from 3**

numerous festivals of Polish culture, cooperated with the San Francisco Symphony and Oakland Symphony Orchestras on concert programming, and reached out to local museums to organize exhibits of Polish art, film retrospectives, and theatrical performances. Frequently heard in interviews on Radio Free Europe and Voice of America, Wanda promoted and conducted courses of Polish language and history for her American audiences and classes of English as a second language for her fellow émigrés.

The Polish Arts and Culture Foundation also established the Polish Memorial Library, which houses over nine thousand volumes. The PACF has a collection of Stefan Norblin's fourteen last paintings that were donated by his son, Andrew. Since 1981, the Foundation sponsors the annual Polonaise Ball—one of the most elegant and formal social affairs in San Francisco that also presents outstanding Polish artists to the local audiences. Usually held at The Fairmont Hotel, the Ball has also used the Palace Hotel where Ignacy Jan Paderewski always stayed when visiting San Francisco.

"Pani Wanda" as Madame Tomczykowska was affectionately and deferentially known to all who met her, served as President of the Polish Arts and Culture Foundation from its inception in 1966 until 2002. Always reaching out to help other Polish organizations, Pani Wanda's Polish Arts and Culture Foundation donated an unprecedented collection of books and music scores to the Polish Music Center at the University of Southern California.

Wanda's rich and eventful life and her good works were noticed far and wide, and her efforts were recognized with a multitude of honors, awards and tributes. Among them are the People to People Award (1961), the Meritorious Service to Culture Award from Poland's Minister of Culture (1991), the Gold Cross-Order of Merit from President Lech Wałęsa (1993) and the Polonia Restitua (2001). While vacationing in Poland in 2002, Wanda Tomczykowska suffered a series of strokes that prevented her from returning to California. In frail health for the past several years, she died in Kraków on March 2. She is survived by her daughter, Caria, grandchildren Remy, Dariana and Sebastian (Ariani) Szykier, and great-granddaughters Hennessy and Lillian. The memorial mass for Wanda Tomczykowska took place on 20 March 2010 at the Saint Ignatius Church (Fulton and Stanyan) in San Francisco. Commemorative services for Wanda will also be held in Warsaw and Kraków in June. In lieu of flowers, tax deductible donations may be sent to the Polish Arts and Culture Foundation, 4077 Waterhouse Road, Oakland, CA 94602. †

**Joseph Stanley Dudzick from 4**

and of the bustling life of the Polish community in the 1950s and 1960s. His life outside of work really revolved around this community, and he remained interested in the goings-on until his last day.

In 1969, my mom came from Poland to visit her sister in Los Angeles, and it is here, at one of the functions at the Polish church, that my parents met. My mom had to return to Poland to help my grandparents, so my dad flew to Poland to visit her. At the time, the communists required Americans to obtain a visa to enter the country – and the visas must have been for very short stays because my dad's visa expired before my parents could marry, so my dad had to return to the US and fly to Poland a second time. My parents were finally married in 1971 with a civil ceremony in Poland and a church ceremony in this church. My parents moved to Santa Monica a few years after they married. In 1973, my brother Gregory was born, and I was born in 1977.

Due to the difficulties of the time and place in which my dad grew up, he did not have much of an opportunity for formal education, but he was definitely a man of the world with vast life experience, and he had the ability to pick up things and remember them with ease. He had an enviable memory and a good ear, and I remember him showing off his German or Greek – limited though it was. He had taught himself to play the harmonica, and I remember him playing in the evenings when I was a child. Three weeks ago, we were doing some cleaning and came across his old harmonicas. He picked one up and said "let's see if this thing still plays" and started playing. I was surprised at how well he played given his overall frailty.

I suppose that having older parents, my life growing up was unconventional and fortunate in many ways. My dad had retired early, the year before I was born, so he was always around at home when we were growing up. He drove me and picked me up from school every day. And, of course, he had maintained his old-fashioned sensibilities and charm – like teaching me to waltz in the living room when I was 7 or 8 – at a time when break dancing was the popular dance. When I was 9 or 10, I remember coming across a shoe box in the closet. Being nosy, I opened it up and got the scare of my life. Inside was a rolled up snake skin. I screamed and jumped away from the box. My dad explained that this was the skin from the pet cobra that he had had while in the army in Egypt. When it was time to leave Egypt, he was unable to take the snake with him, so he had it killed and skinned. I know that we still have that shoe box with the 65-year-old snake skin at home somewhere. And I think that it was this skin that had broached the topic of his army service in Egypt.

Up until the last few months, my dad had a fighting spirit and dreamed big – a little too unrealistically at times. I often joked that he was 81 thinking that he is 18. He was interested in and connected to what was going on around him. I remember watching TV with my dad a month or so ago (he was always watching either the news or basketball – he loved the Lakers), and he turned to me and said that he did not know that that Tygrys, as he called Tiger Woods in Polish, was so important. I don't know why, but hearing Tiger's name said in Polish just tickled me. My dad was hard of hearing as a result of a bomb explosion during the war, and this just worsened as he became older. It was frustrating at times but also the source of great laughter as he could be very creative.

Despite the time that I was fortunate to spend with my dad as a child and as an adult helping him in his later years, there still remain so many things unsaid and unknown. Several years ago, I had the

idea of having my dad videotaped as he recounted stories about his life so that I would not have to rely on my fallible memory to remember them. As they say, never put off doing what you can do today because it may be too late one day, and now it is. My dad had a great memory, especially when it came to history and people's personal stories. I regret never having asked my dad those deeper questions in life – like what he had dreamed of becoming when he was a child or what his greatest life lesson was. It's important to make time for questions like these.

My dad was not perfect, but he was a fundamentally good and decent person who genuinely cared about his fellow man. He preferred to lead a simple life so that he could offer a helping hand to someone in need – whether a neighbor or someone on the other side of the world. This is a quality sorely lacking in today's world. He will be missed by his children and family, but his spirit and example remain and inspire. †

**Investments from 3**

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