



# THE POLISH HERITAGE CENTER AT PANNA MARIA

# Center Updates April 2023

## Fond Farewell and a Promising Future for Texas Polonia

By: Aloys Notzon, PHC Chairman and President

On behalf of the Board and staff of the Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria, we want to thank Angelica Docog for over two years of service as the first Executive Director of the Center and wish her well in her new assignment as Director of the State Museum of Pennsylvania in Harrisburg. Angelica helped us get the doors open and fully launch the Center. She spent many hours with Bishop Yanta to fully grasp his vision, and so she was able to develop a blueprint for operations that is both professional and inspiring. For her work, we are forever grateful. The Board is currently advertising for her replacement.

Bishop Yanta desired the active involvement of the younger generations in the life of the Polish Heritage Center. I know his Excellency would be pleased at several recent events: On Saturday morning, February 25th, a UTSA geography class of 28 students along with Professor Richard Jones, PHD, came for a presentation and tour of the Center.

That afternoon, 10 students from the Texas A&M Polish Association in College Station and 8 students from the Polish Club at the University of Texas at Austin had a joint tour and presentation at the Center. On March 9, the Polish Heritage Center's Virtual program was: "The next generation of Polish American Leadership" put on by Emily Glowski and Jennie Szefer, Co-Presidents of the Texas A&M Polish Association and Nathan Silverstein, President and Founder of the Polish Club at UT.

Each shared their personal story and the influences that brought them to appreciate their Polish heritage and culture. The attendees were moved by their stories and questions and comments from the attendees and their responses to the questions were enlightening.

There was an attendant who had started a Polish Club at her High School and wanted advice on specific activities to build her club. There was talk about next steps and forming associations or clubs at other universities and colleges including an annual conference.

The Polish Heritage Center and the Polish American Council of Texas are in discussions about how we could assist the students in these endeavors. The presentation was well received, and the future of Polish American leadership is in good hands.



Above: Texas A&M and UT Polish Club members with Al Notzon, Chair and President of the Polish Heritage Center Board of Directors and Foundation and Susan Moczygomba-McKinsey, Board Secretary  
Below: Board member Randy Pawelek chats with UTSA student



# Wonderful Donors Help Build Our Library Collections

By: Lauren Robinson, PHC Librarian/Archivist

As the library and archives of the Polish Heritage Center continue to grow, we would like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank all of the generous donors who are making that growth possible. The Center is grateful for each and every one of these remarkable people as they actively support the Center's mission to retain the history, values, beliefs, customs, and traditions of the Polish settlers to America while inspiring, engaging, and educating our descendants and visitors.

Bishop John W. Yanta, the Polish Heritage Center's visionary, donated over three hundred books to the library along with valuable artifacts, records, and photographs. His presence will forever remain within the PHC, keeping alive the history and legacy of the Polish settlers for generations to come.

Dr. T. Lindsay Baker recently paid a visit in person to the Center to donate valuable materials to the library. As a historian who collaborated with and is prominently featured in the Center, Dr. Baker continues to tell our story by donating twenty-three boxes of books, maps, his own publications, and research regarding Panna Maria and Father Leopold Moczygemba.

Photographer Joe Jaworski has visited Panna Maria for decades. He recently brought to the Center his incredible collection consisting of materials from his documentary project, "Panna Maria: The Image of Polish Texans." Included in his donation are negatives, prints (individual and exhibition-mounted ones), notes, book design mockup, proposals, interviews etc.

Anna Knap held on to her family's collection of books in Chicago and has donated parts of the collection to other research institutions such as the Loyola University's Polish Study Department. Working with the PHC, Anna mailed us twelve boxes consisting of roughly six hundred books. Her collection began with her uncle who was part of the Polish underground during World War II and had to leave Poland.

Jay Orbik drove a U-Haul from the Chicago area all the way to Panna Maria to give us his collection of books and films. With roughly six hundred books packed into



Left: Dr. Lindsay T. Baker, Book Collection Display at the PHC, Photograph taken by Laruen Robinson. Right: Silesian Profiles Collection on display at the PHC, Photograph taken by Lauren Robinson

**“Bishop John Yanta’s presence will forever remain within the PHC, keeping alive the history and legacy of the Polish settlers for generations to come.”**



Czeslaw Miedbala pictured in the top left corner, photograph provided by Anna Knap



Polish Heritage Center Library, photograph taken by Lauren Robinson

25 boxes, the collection safely made it to the Center. The collections consist of subjects such as Polish language, culture, history, arts, and literature.

Monsignor Frank Kurzaj has visited the center on several occasions and has graciously donated a wide array of materials including roughly 150 books and artifacts. In addition to his generous donation of physical objects, he and the Father Leopold Moczygemba Foundation are represented in the Heritage Circle as the Founding Sponsor of the Library and Genealogy Research Room.

George Bobinski, retired former librarian and library school dean and professor from New York, graciously donated not only to the construction of the Center, but also mailed his collection of sixty books to our library. The collection focuses on topics such as Polish history and culture, biographies of eminent Poles, survivors of Nazi and Soviet imprisonment, and Polish immigration to the United States.

Working with the Austin Polish Society, the PHC is honored to have accepted and catalogued a rich collection of their books for the library. Written in English and Polish, topics cover a wide array of significant Polish historical topics including World War II and Polish Independence.

The PHC is proud of its collaboration with the Silesian Profiles Committee, and its contribution to the Center. In addition to the “Silesian Profiles: Polish Immigration to Texas” books 1 and 2 (red and blue) featured in the exhibit gallery as well as physical copies in the library, the committee has generously donated a copy of its E-Book, located at the research station in the library, for visitors to browse their family histories. Visitors and researchers can easily locate family names in a user-friendly database.

## Touring the Exhibits... Baroque Era Art

By: Susan Moczygemba-McKinsey, Board Secretary

Whenever I take visitors through the exhibit halls of the Polish Heritage Center, I encourage them to look up. That way they will take in the awesome mural in the lobby and the galactically-inspired star chamber in the Rotunda. In the hall of Polish history, they will also see an outstanding example of Baroque art.

The Allegory of the Holy Cross is hanging from our ceiling because the original is found in the vaulted ceiling of the Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in Brzeg, Poland. It was painted in the years 1740 – 1746 by Johannes Kuben, a Jesuit priest, painter, mathematician, and teacher. He was a master of the Baroque style which encouraged devotion to God along with artistic appreciation.

The Baroque era in Poland stretched from the early 17th century to the mid-18th century. The art of the era is dramatic and intense. The subject matter reflected crisis,

such as a saint battling and defeating temptation or a sinner reconciling with God. The emotional intensity of the works evoked piety, and so this type of art became a rhetorical tool during the long period of religious and political strife brought about when Europe divided into Roman Catholic and Protestant camps.

It was during this time that the pious King Sigismund III Vasa commissioned the Church of Saints Peter and Paul, the first building in Krakow designed entirely in the Baroque style. Kuben's work is found in a number of churches and institutions, including murals gracing the grand Baroque ceremonial hall at Wroclaw University.

Much of the information you've just read comes courtesy of the stanchion text found next to the Baroque exhibit in the Polish Heritage Center. We always encourage our visitors to read the text or listen to the information via audio wands. And don't forget to look up!



Photos taken by Susan Moczygemba-McKinsey



**THE  
POLISH HERITAGE CENTER  
AT PANNA MARIA**

13909 N FM 81  
PO Box 25  
Panna Maria, Texas 78144



## April Virtual Programs Please Join Us!

### Surviving Genocide: Personal Recollections from the Dual Invasion of Poland in World War II

Tuesday, April 18th, 6:00 PM CST

Link to join our virtual program:  
[linktr.ee/polish\\_heritage\\_center](https://linktr.ee/polish_heritage_center)

**Presented by:** Donna Chmara

Donna Chmara describes the loss of her home in Eastern Europe during World War II, her family's deportation to a Nazi labor camp, and their eventual arrival in the United States. Relying on historic sources, interviews with twenty survivors and personal experience, she focuses on the danger of identifying solely with a group or ideology rather than with the fact of our shared humanity.

### Surviving Genocide Personal Recollections



By  
Donna Chmara

**POLISH AMERICAN  
COUNCIL OF  
TEXAS**

