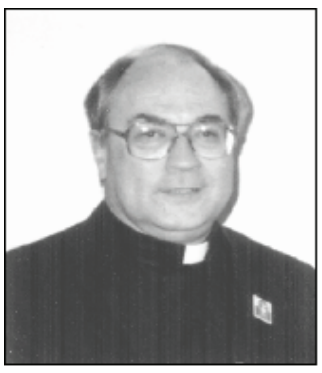

I have been pleased to be part of the Polish American Heritage Month Committee's efforts for the last 27 years. I salute everyone who works so hard to honor the faith, traditions and culture of the Polish people. Since the first Polish settlers arrived in America 400 years ago, on October 1, 1608, people of Polish heritage have made an impact on every aspect of American life. Congratulations Polonia!

Rev. Msgr. Bernard Witkowski
Chaplain, Polish American Congress
Eastern Pennsylvania District

New Exhibits Planned for the Thaddeus Kosciuszko House

The Thaddeus Kosciuszko House, located at 3rd and Pine Streets in historic Philadelphia, will be closed the entire months of December and January for the installation of new exhibits featuring original Kosciuszko collections from six museums in Poland.

The Kosciuszko House is scheduled to reopen on Saturday, February 7, 2009, for the annual General Thaddeus Kosciuszko Tribute Ceremony.

Visit "The Kosciuszko Room"

During October - Polish American Heritage Month, or anytime during the year, visit the Kosciuszko Room in Ansonia, CT.

The Kosciuszko Room, established in 1980 by Joseph Wardzala and sponsored by the Kosciuszko Historical Society of Ansonia, Derby, Shelton and Seymour, is located in the General David Humphreys House, 37 Elm Street, Ansonia, CT.

The Kosciuszko Room displays many artifacts honoring General Kosciuszko, including photographs, books, portraits, and dolls dressed in traditional Polish dress. It is opened Monday through Friday from 1 to 4 p.m., or by appointment, call 203-732-5886.

Polonia Bids Farewell to Les Kuczynski National Executive Director of Polish American Congress

Les S. Kuczynski, 61, passed away on Tuesday, August 19, 2008.

He was born in Lubeck, Germany, in 1947, where his parents were sent to Germany after the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. Six years later the entire family emigrated to the United States as Displaced Persons.

Les earned a law degree from the University of Minnesota in 1972 and an MBA from the Keller School of Management in 1982.

In 1985, he was appointed by Polish National Alliance (PNA) President Al Mazewski as General Counsel, a position he continued to hold for subsequent PNA Presidents Edward Moskal and Frank Spula.

Appointed in 1991 as National Executive Director of the Polish American Congress (PAC), Les played numerous crucial roles, including working closely with Myra and Cas Lenard of the Washington, DC, office on the coordination of PAC's effort to enlist U.S. Senate support of NATO membership for Poland. In 1999, he led the German Forced Labor Compensation Program on behalf of the Polish American Congress and the Polish American community. First, he represented Polonia during plenary meetings with the U.S. State Department and then served as an advisor for the International Organization on Migration (IOM, the Geneva-based partner administering the program). Since 2002 he acted as a member of the Appeals Panel reviewing denied claims of forced labor and personal injury.

When he directed the efforts of the Polish American Congress Charitable Foundation, the Foundation sent more than $150 million in assistance to Poland in the form of donations, medical supplies, pharmaceuticals and medical texts to Polish hospitals, orphanages and homes for seniors.

In 2002, he was elected to a four-year term as Chairman of the Council of World Polonia, comprised of leaders representing Polonia organizations from around the world. From 2002 to 2005 he was a member of the Consultative Committee established by the Marshal of the Polish Senate, and in 2002 he was also appointed (and re-appointed in 2005) to the Advisory Board of the American Red Cross Holocaust and War Victims Tracing Center.

Les is survived by his wife, Alice, an attorney in Chicago, and their son, Andrew.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held on Friday, August 29, at St. Paul of the Cross Church, Park Ridge, IL. Interment was at Mary Hill Cemetery, Niles, IL.

I join with the Polish American Clergy to extend congratulations to all who have been involved in the Polish American Heritage Month effort since its foundation in 1981. Together we have highlighted the faith and traditions of our ancestors from Poland since the arrival of the First Poles in America 400 years ago.

Keep up the good work!

Rev. Msgr. Francis Feret
Vice Chaplain
Polish American Congress, Eastern Pennsylvania District

The Pauline Fathers and Brothers of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Doylestown, PA wish all of Polonia best wishes as you celebrate Polish American Heritage Month during October and the 400th Anniversary of the First Poles in America. We invite you to visit America's Czestochowa at 654 Ferry Road, Doylestown, PA. You can access our Internet site at: Czestochowausa.com, or PolishShrine.com.

Rev. Krzysztof Wieliczko, OSPPE, Provincial
National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa, Doylestown, PA

Thank You from the Children of Laski, Poland School for the Blind

Mr. Wladyslaw Golab, President, and the Laski administration, but especially the blind children in Laski, Poland, extend a sincere thank you to all who have sent donations to help defray expenses caused by a fire, which damaged the school for the blind, including all the Braille equipment.

Laski is a community where blind children live and learn to become independent in their adult life.

Chester Lobrow 2008 "Pride of Polonia Award" Recipient

On Sunday, August 23, 2008, Polonia gathered to celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Czestochowa, Polish Women's Alliance Day and Polish Apostolate Day at the Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Doylestown, PA.

During the 12:30 P.M. Mass, the Pride of Polonia Award was presented to Chester Lobrow of Monroe and Linden, NJ. The award was presented by His Eminence Stanley Cardinal Rylko, from the Vatican, and Msgr. Anthony Czarnecki, National Chairman of the Polish Apostolate Committee.

The Pride of Polonia Award was established in 1992 by the Executive Board of the Polish Apostolate to recognize individuals who make unique contributions to the Polish people and are involved in philanthropic activites. The first recipient was John Cardinal Krol.

Chester Lobrow was born on July 20, 1944, in the town of Szczuczyn in Northeastern Poland to Mikolaj and Salomea Lobrow. He completed his education in Bialystok, Poland and studied business and food processing technology. During his studies he met his future wife, Jadwiga Jablonska, whom he married on October 3, 1964, in Bialystok.

In 1974, Chester was chosen President of the Interprovincial Association of Private Trade and Services in Bialystok where 4500 member-owners of small enterprises in three provinces looked to Chester's leadership to help fight against unjust taxes, regulations, and refusal by the government to renew necessary permits, and for the right to buy supplies and equipment from government-owned factories and companies.

After many tribulations, Chester and his family were forced to leave Poland, arriving at Kennedy Airport in 1979. He continued his education and became an alumnus of Union County College in 1983 and since 2001, has served on the Union County College Foundation Board and its budget and finance committees.

Despite his vast experience in management in Poland, Chester initially found employment in a machine shop. Later he acquired the Severyn Fur Salon which he and his wife developed into the largest fur company on the East Coast.

Chester's volunteerism and philanthropy includes serving on the Boards of organizations, foundations and civic groups, such as the John Paul II Cultural Center in Washington, DC, and the International Order of Smile, an organization composed of children who represent over 30 countries.

He has received recognition numerous times for his civic involvement from the City of Linden, New Jersey State Assembly and Senate, New York City and New York State. He was the 1999 Grand Marshal of the Pulaski Day Parade in New York City and named Citizen of the Year by the Polish American World Publication in 2000. In 2003, he was awarded the Cavalier Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland and the Medal of the Order of Smile.