



News of Polonia

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Gdy człowiek jest POLAKIEM to jest DAR OD BOGA

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Marek Żebrowski

**Good afternoon,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my great pleasure to introduce to you my dear friend and today's honoree, Terry Tegnazian. She is a rare individual who saw Polish history—especially the tragic WW II chapter—and decided to devote all her energies and resources to depict not only key historic events but also shed light on unknown or forgotten individuals and facts. Terry belongs to a select circle of scholars of non-Polish descent, like Professor Norman Davies or Anne Applebaum, whose expertise and commitment to Poland is exemplary.

Terry is a graduate of Brown University and Yale Law School who practiced law for twelve years, specializing in motion picture financing worldwide. Afterwards, in quick succession, Terry's publishing house, Aquila Polonica [Polish Eagle] had issued a remarkable collection of titles:

Siege [a documentary DVD of the siege of Warsaw, 1939]

The Mermaid and the Messerschmitt: War through a Woman's Eyes, 1939-1940

The Auschwitz Volunteer

The Ice Road: An Epic Journey from the Stalinist Labor Camps to Freedom

Maps and Shadows [historical memoir Feb. 1940 to Siberia, Persia, Palestine, Italy, etc.]

The 303 Squadron

Currently, Terry is preparing a volume on General Sikorski as well as memoirs of a young Polish fighter who participated in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising that will be published to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Uprising later this year.

Books published by Terry cover in depth the German-Polish as well as Russian-Polish conflicts. They earned rare recommendations from Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Professor Norman Davies, Michael Schudrich, Chief Rabbi of Poland, Antony Polonsky (Professor of Holocaust Studies, Brandeis University), and a bestselling author, Martin Amis, among others. Aquila Polonica books garnered very favorable reviews from major newspapers in the U.S. and are now published in other languages. They also won prestigious awards, including History Book Club, Military Book Club, Book-of-the-Month Club and won Benjamin Franklin Gold and Silver History Awards.

In addition to books, Terry has founded and runs the Los Angeles Musical Salon, recreating the tradition of 19th century European artistic salons. Her salon concerts feature local chamber groups in intimate setting, and are followed by elegant dinners, where the artists and the audience have a chance to interact with each other.

Terry's activities were recognized in 2012 with the Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland given by the President of Poland, in recognition of her outstanding services to the Polish community and promotion of Polish culture abroad.

Please welcome Terry Tegnazian, the "godmother of modern Polish history!" Thank you. ☐

Terry Tegnazian

I want to thank the Polish American Congress of Southern California for this great honor—which is even more important to me because I am not Polish.

My husband Scott Whittle and I are truly touched by the warmth and generosity with which you have welcomed us into your community. Over the past few years, we have met so many lovely people who have become good friends.

I have been asked many times why I am doing this—why did I, who am not Polish, start a company dedicated to publishing the Polish World War II experience in English?

Frankly, if you had told me ten years ago that I would be doing this, I would have said: "Why? Don't know anything about it, not interested in it, and I'm not Polish." I certainly didn't start out to create a publishing company to focus on Poland in World War II—it was an idea which evolved over several years, when every step along the way another door opened that led me down this path.

Basically, I started this company because I was hooked by the heroism of the Poles in World War II, and by the fact that this amazing story is very little known in the West. I first became aware of it when I was researching for a novel.

The heroism, the honor, the integrity, loyalty and faith, the fact that the Poles never gave up in the face of overwhelming odds, that they stood up to fight evil rather than taking the easy road and giving in to it—these are all things that resonate deep within me, in my heart—and I think would resonate with most people.

Those of you in the audience who are Polish (which, I guess, is almost everyone), should be so very proud of your heritage.

My not being Polish, I think, makes a difference. I can say: "I'm not Polish, I never knew any of this. This is an amazing story that deserves to be known!"

You know how so many films these days are about fictional "super-heroes"—well, the Poles are real life heroes, who by their actions embody the highest part the human spirit. They should be a role model for people today.

In closing, I must also thank my husband Scott for his unfailing support, both moral and financial. I couldn't do this without him. ☐