



# Chairman's Column

By: Aloys Notzon,  
PHC Chairman and President

Hats off to the work that PHC Board member Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz has accomplished at the Polish American Chamber of Commerce in Texas (PolChamTX). The Polish Chamber's networking, panel discussions, and hosting of businesses, government officials, and student leaders is outstanding. Dr. Jim has been traveling extensively, most recently to Washington DC and Miami, and has been involved in presentations and discussions on Energy, Energy Security, Tech, and Business opportunities in Poland and Texas. The Chamber was instrumental in arranging the recent Texas visit by the President of Poland.

Dr. Jim was honored by Polish President Karol Nawrocki with the Gold Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland in Dallas on March 29, 2026. This well-deserved honor recognized Jim for his work with the Polish Chamber Texas, the Polish Heritage Center, the Polish American Council of Texas, the promotion of Polish culture, and his interaction with the Polish student organizations at Texas A&M University and the University of Texas, among many other accomplishments. We feature a story about the Polish President's visit to Dallas in this newsletter.

I would like to invite our readers to participate in the Polish Heritage Center's monthly virtual program. Please visit our website at [polishheritagecentertx.org](http://polishheritagecentertx.org) to see our recent virtual programs by noted historians and others who have shared their talents with our viewers and answered questions. Some recent examples were Dr. James Pula who shared his research on the Polish army's victories in the Second World War, Dr. Piotr Przybylski's presentation on Polish struggles and victories against totalitarian regimes in the 20th Century, and Dr. Mark Pienkos on Polish contributions to the United States of America's 250-year history.



# President Nawrocki Visits With Texas Polonia

By: Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz, PHC Board Member

This past Palm Sunday, President of the Republic of Poland Karol Nawrocki addressed an audience of more than 300 at the State Hall in Dallas, TX. On behalf of Texas Polonia, we want to express to him our thanks and appreciation.

The event was well organized by the Polish Consulate, and the Consulate General of Poland in Houston made a wonderful speech. Consul Andrzej Fafara did a great job of MCing the event, with participation by children from the Polish School in Dallas, the presidents of the Texas A&M Polish Association and the University of Texas Polish Club (who presented President Nawrocki with a black Stetson cowboy hat) and members of Polonia singing both national anthems.

President Nawrocki made a beautiful speech about the history of Texas Polonia (mentioning Panna Maria and Polish contributions in the Texas Revolution), the current efforts of Texas Polonia and the robust economy in Texas. Following the President's remarks, he honored eight members of Texas Polonia with distinctive honors for their efforts in building economic/business bridges, educating the youth about our history, language and culture, and strengthening the relationships between our two countries. The President mentioned the shared history the United States and Poland have had for 250 years and congratulated the United States on its 250th anniversary of Independence.

Congratulations to the eight members of Texas Polonia who were honored in The State Hall in Dallas, Texas on March 29, 2026.

## **GOLD OFFICER'S CROSS OF THE ORDER OF MERIT OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND**

Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz

## **SILVER KNIGHT'S CROSS OF THE ORDER OF MERIT OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND**

Waldemar Biniecki

Christopher Gajda

Jolanta Mazewski-Dryden

ks. Jacek Wesołowski

Fernando Schmidt

## **GOLDEN CROSS OF MERIT**

Peter Ray

## **SILVER CROSS OF MERIT**

Alicia Futoma

## **BRONZE CROSS OF MERIT**

Katarzyna Wlodek

It was a great honor to be recognized and an honor to take part in this event which heralds the strong and ongoing cooperation between Poland and Texas Polonia.



# Remembering Polish Veterans in America

By Alice Poore, PHC Executive Director

As far back as memory can reach, the Association of Veterans of the Polish Army works to commemorate their fallen soldiers. Especially in the last decade, thanks to tireless searches in the archives, in cemetery books around the world, and records of battles, many long-forgotten Polish veterans of combat have been discovered resting in American cemeteries.

On March 27, a group of eighteen delegates from New York traveled to South Texas to honor those brave men who were not yet American citizens, who volunteered to fight in a war for freedom that was not a conflict associated with their own homeland of Poland.

The delegates' first stop was Goliad, where they visited La Bahia Cemetery, which protects the remains of four Polish refugees: Napoleon Dybicki, Jan Kornicki and brothers Franciszek H. Petruszewicz and Adolf H. Petruszewicz. Together with other refugees, they joined the Texas Army under the command of Colonel James W. Fannin. On March 19, 1836, Fannin was quickly surrounded by an overwhelming force of Mexican troops at Coleto Creek, and after a full day of battle, surrendered.

These captured soldiers were confined at Fort La Bahia where the conditions were inhumane. However, they held strong with the promise they would be released and could return to the United States. General Santa Anna had other plans, and on Sunday, March 27, 1836, four hundred soldiers were divided into three groups and led out under the guise of marching toward the frontier. It was a trap and all of them were shot and their bodies burned.


On the 190th Anniversary of the Goliad Massacre in Texas, The Polish Army Veterans Association of America honored the memory of the Polish patriots who had fought in the 1830 insurrection against the Russian Empire, who were then forced into exile in the United States, and who, in March 1836, laid down their lives in the struggle for Texas Independence. In loving memory of them, they solemnly sang the national anthem of Poland.

The Association's next stop was the much-anticipated visit to Panna Maria. Each of these veterans was familiar with the story of the oldest permanent Polish settlement in the United States, but they never imagined what they would experience. As John Wojtasczyk and I led tours of the Polish Heritage Center, the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church, St. Joseph's School and the famous oak tree, phrases like "quaint community," "beautifully preserved," "perfect setting," "gorgeous church," "unbelievable center," and "nothing like it anywhere," flowed throughout the afternoon. After celebrating evening Mass with Father Wieslaw Iwaniec, they made their way to the cemetery to honor and pray for all veterans who are laid to rest in Panna Maria.

The Association of Veterans enjoyed a day of our famous Texas hospitality and promised to return with an even larger delegation next visit.

Contributions of Editor Jolanta Szczepkowska, "Marsz, Marsz, Polonia." Kurier Plus Polish Weekly Magazine, Number 1647, April 11, 2026, pp. 8-9.



 THE POLISH HERITAGE CENTER  
AT PANNA MARIA

## GENEALOGY SERVICES AVAILABLE

Silesian Profiles  
Silesian Profiles II  
Silesian Profiles III

Please reach out to our archivist, Lauren Robinson, at [lauren@polishheritagecentertx.org](mailto:lauren@polishheritagecentertx.org) or (830) 310-8612 to make an appointment!



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PHC Hours: Tues. – Sat. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
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(830) 310-8612

The Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria  
Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax deductible organization.

TAX ID: #46-0561240

### News from the Heritage Communities



Congratulations to Msgr. Frank Kurzaj!  
Pastor of St. Stanislaus Catholic Church in Bandera  
Celebrating his 75th Birthday and 50th Anniversary  
of Ordination to the Priesthood.



Panna Maria 4-H members assembled Easter  
bags for John Paul II Nursing Home residents  
and Panna Maria elders.