

Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia

On Sunday February 26th lovers of Chopin's music gathered for this year's concert to commemorate the birthday of the great pianist and composer. It took place at the Settlement Music School in Germantown section of Philadelphia. The concert featured pianist William Yang from Eden Prairie Minnesota. This young virtuoso is a student at Philadelphia's renowned Curtis Institute of Music. There he is mentored by Robert MacDonald and he is a recipient of the William A. Horn tuition scholarship. The program included works by Bach, Beethoven and, of course, Chopin. Mr. Yang showed remarkable command and masterful strength at the piano. His rendition of Chopin's works was done with great feeling and intensity. He so impressed the audience that, at the reception which followed the performance, many personally congratulated him on a wonderful performance.

Serving on the Organizing Committee were Debbie Majka, Chair, Paul Krzywicki, Peter Obst, Jean Joka, Tiffany Loomis. This concert was made possible through the generosity of many patrons, including the Zazyczny Family, Turner Construction Company in Philadelphia, and the main sponsor, the Polish National Foundation of Warsaw.

On Sunday, May 7, at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Częstochowa in Doylestown PA, the Polish Heritage Society awarded seven academic scholarships to outstanding young people of Polish descent.

After mass and a tasty luncheon, Scholarship Chairperson, Dr. Teresa G. Wojcik, led the ceremony which recognized and celebrated these young people for their stellar academic achievements and dedication to lifelong learning. Members of the scholarship committee were Diana Blichasz, Marie Hejnosz, Debbie Majka, Peter Obst, and Dolores Szymanski.

Before introducing the scholarship winners, Dr. Wojcik recognized the contributions of their parents and families. She mentioned that behind every successful student are loving parents who are their first teachers and who can lay a strong foundation on which these young people grow and who instill in them an appreciation for their Polish and Polish American identity.

This year's recipients were: Ava Barton, Gabrielle Kruczkowski, Matthew Jarek, Michael Kowalski, Sophia Majkut, Nicole Pasterczyk and Alycia Szyszko

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Dr. Wojcik drew on the words of St. Pope John Paul II from his address to the young people of Gniezno on June 3, 1979: "Remain faithful to this heritage. Make it the foundation of your formation. Be nobly proud of it. Keep this heritage and multiply it; hand it on to future generations."

In addition to a check for \$1,500 each student received a red and white book carry bag with materials that included: *The Volunteer* (about Witold Pilecki) by Jack Fairweather, *Pills, Pen and Politics* (about Gen. Leon Jastremski) by Edward Pinkowski and *A Man who Spanned Two Eras* (about engineer Ralph Modjeski) by Józef Glomb.

Polish Heritage Society scholarship recipients (front) Alycia Szyszko, Sophia Majkut, Nicole Pasterczyk, Ava Barton. (back row) Michael Kowalski and Matthew Jarek (photo courtesy Marie Hejnosz)



Top photo: Members of the PHSP Board with the pianist (from left) Barbara Nowicki, Debbie Majka, William Yang, Teresa N. Wójcik, Peter J. Obst, Michael Hrabowski, Donna Blichasz, John Wisniewski, Teresa G. Wójcik Ph.D. Second photo above: (from left) Peter Obst, President of the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia, Debbie Majka, Honorary Consul for Poland in SE Pennsylvania, pianist William Yang and committee member Paul Krzywicki.



Submitted by Peter J. Obst