



# THE ADVOCATE

Newsletter of the Advocates Society,  
an Association of Polish-American Attorneys



## OFFICERS FOR 2023-24

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## Board of Governors

*The Management of this Society is vested in the Board of Governors, consisting of the Officers, Chairs of Standing Committees and Past Presidents. The Board shall advise, guide, direct and determine the overall policy of the Society.*

## THE WHITE SOX *Polish Heritage Night*



Tuesday, June 20, 2023 Chicago White Sox Polish Heritage Night Game © Photo by Mark Dobrzy

On June 20, 2023, the Advocates Society, along with the Polish American Police Association (PAPA), the Chicago Society, and Polish National Association (PNA), organized the White Sox Polish Heritage Night. Over 330 people participated in the fun!

Before the game started, participants were able to go on field for a pre-game parade. The night concluded with a win for the White Sox against the Texas Rangers. Check out some photos from the event on pages 3 and 4.





## September 2023

12th - Board Meeting; 6:30pm  
Cocktails/Networking; 7pm  
Meeting (Zoom)

## October 2023

5th - Board Meeting; 6:30pm  
Cocktails/Networking; 7pm  
Meeting (Zoom)

19th- The Advocates Society  
Annual Judges Night (Polish  
Museum of America, 984 N  
Milwaukee Ave, Chicago.) (TBD)

## November 2023

7th- Board Meeting; 6:30pm  
Cocktails/Networking; 7pm  
Meeting (Zoom)

16th - General Meeting and CLE;  
6:30pm Cocktails and Networking;  
7pm Meeting; (Copernicus, 5216 W  
Lawrence, Chicago)

30th - The Advocates Society  
Annual Scholarship Fundraiser &  
Dinner; 6pm (Maggiano's, 516  
North Clark Street, Chicago)

## December 2023

5th- Board Meeting; 6:30pm  
Cocktails/Networking; 7pm  
Meeting (Zoom)

21st - General Meeting and  
Holiday Party; 6:30pm Cocktails  
and Networking; 7pm Meeting;  
(Copernicus, 5216 W Lawrence,  
Chicago)

The Advocate is published quarterly,  
coming out in March, June,  
September and December. Content,  
including news about members, can  
be emailed to  
[Advocatessociety@gmail.com](mailto:Advocatessociety@gmail.com) for  
publication consideration.

KASHUBIAN FOREST, WEST OF GDANSK, POLAND

# Table of CONTENTS

### Pages 1, 3, & 4

Highlights from the White Sox  
Polish Heritage Night

### Page 5, 6, & 7

Highlights from the Back Home:  
Polish Chicago Exhibition

### Pages 8 & 9

Highlights from the National  
Advocates Society Convention

### Pages 10 & 11

Highlights from the Summer  
Picnic/BBO

### Pages 10 & 11

Highlights from the Night at the  
Museum

### Page 14

Advocate Spotlight: Attorney Kent  
Sinson

### Page 15

Advocate Spotlight: Attorney Steven  
Zdanowicz

### Page 16

Law Student Spotlight: Magdalena Biedron

### Pages 17

Save the Dates; Announcement of the  
Polish American Judges Association

### Page 18-19

Polish Culture, History & Traditions:  
Bialystok

### Page 20

Photos Wanted; Becoming a Member

### Page 21

Amicus Poloniae Legal Clinic;  
Newsletter Contributors

### Page 22

Scholarship Flyer (Polish-American  
Advocates Scholarship Foundation)

## *Public Relations & Newsletter Committee*

The Joint Committee  
manages, edits and  
coordinates the production  
of the newsletter.

Kathy E. Bojczuk, Chair  
Hon. Michele Gemske  
Ann L. Melichar  
Pamela Sakowicz Menaker  
Julia Jensen Smolka  
Hon. Joan Ellen Smuda  
Jessica Wiczorkiewicz



# Event Highlights



## ADVOCATES CELEBRATE POLISH HERITAGE







# ADVOCATES CELEBRATE POLISH HERITAGE





# Event Highlights

## The Guild of the Chicago History Museum celebrates the opening of a new exhibition, **"BACK HOME: POLISH CHICAGO"**



On May 19, 2023, the Guild of the Chicago History Museum celebrated the opening of a new exhibition, dedicated to the Polish culture called "Back home: Polish Chicago." Advocate Iwona Przonak was on the special committee that organized this special Gala.

Some Advocates and friends who attended included: Ann Melichar (Advocates' President), Roman Drewniak, Thaddeus Makarewicz, Iwona Przonak, Robert Blinick, Steven Zdanowicz, Agnes Ptasznik, Marta Almodovar, Mark Dobrzyncki, Judge Diann Marselek, Judge Jonathan Clark Green, Judge Michele Gemske, and Justice Aurelia Pucinski.

An evening full of art inspired by Polish traditions and Polish folk songs performed by The Lira Ensemble.



### Dominic A. Pacyga

Dominic A. Pacyga is a professor emeritus of history at Columbia College Chicago and winner of the Mieczyslaw Haiman Award for his contributions to the study of Polish Americans. He has written multiple books on Chicago's Polish community, including *American Warsaw: The Rise, Fall, and Rebirth of Polish Chicago* and *Polish Immigrants and Industrial Chicago: Workers on the South Side, 1880-1922*, and was one of the project historians for *Back Home*. Guests will hear from Dominic and CHM Chief Historian Peter Alter in a discussion about Chicago's Polish history and the creation of the exhibition with the Polish History Museum in Warsaw.



# Event Highlights

## "BACK HOME: POLISH CHICAGO"

BY IWONA PRZONAK

Founded in 1948, the mission of The Guild of the Chicago History Museum (CHM) is to support the Museum's goals and objectives through education, service, and fundraising. The Museum's recent fundraiser was dedicated to the exhibition Back Home: Polish Chicago. The Opening Gala for the exhibition took place on May 19, 2023. Guests received a first look at the exhibition, heard from project historian Dominic A. Pacyga and CHM chief historian Peter T. Alter discussing Chicago's Polish history and the creation of the exhibition. The attendees listened to The Lira Ensemble performing folk songs in traditional dress and enjoyed a dinner of traditional Polish cuisine.

The exhibition is a collaborative project and oral history initiative with the Polish History Museum (Warsaw, Poland), Polish Museum of America, and Loyola University Chicago Polish Studies program. Through the lens of Chicago's Polish communities, the visitors can experience the journeys immigrants have taken to get to the city, the ways they have established themselves in its neighborhoods, and the duality of feeling a deep connection to two places at once. Visitors to the museum can also explore personal narratives, music, community involvement, as well as art installations from five local Polish artists. The exhibition features more than 90 artifacts and documents as well as more than 100 reproduced photographs to help tell the story of the Chicago area's vibrant Polish communities from the mid-1800s to today.



The exhibition is open now until June 8, 2024. Guided tours of "Back Home: Polish Chicago" are available for groups of 10 or more. CHM is located at 1601 N Clark St, Chicago. For more information, visit [www.chicagohistory.org/groupstours](http://www.chicagohistory.org/groupstours).



# Event Highlights

## "BACK HOME: POLISH CHICAGO"





# Event Highlights

The National Advocates Society (NAS) held its Annual Convention in Delavan, Wisconsin, from August 9, 2023, to August 13, 2023. The Convention brought together Polish-American attorneys and doctors for some networking and to facilitate networking and community as part of a summer vacation. NAS has been hosting this convention jointly with the National Medical Dental Association for decades. Regina Rathnau spearheaded this event as NAS President.

There was a CLE, lots of networking, meeting new people and catching up with old friends. Ed Wasilewski was sworn in as the incoming NAS President. Some Advocates and friends who attended included: Ann Melichar (Advocate President), Regina Rathnau (2022/2023 President of NAS), Hon. Joan Ellen Smuda (NAS Honor of the Year), Jan Strzalka, Carlton Marcyan, Justyna Regan, Linda Kuczma, Karen Bogusz, Marilyn Mazewski, Jane Kaminski Simers, and Judge Michael Chmiel.

Our own the Hon. Joan Ellen Smuda was this year's Person of the Year. She received an award for her extensive commitments to Polish-American causes and organizations. During her impressive legal career, she was past president of the Advocates Society and NAS, as well as being the first female general counsel for the PRCUA and her many years of public service for the Attorney General of Illinois. Congrats to Joan!!

## The National Advocates Society Convention in Wisconsin





# Event Highlights

## The National Advocates Society Convention in Wisconsin



ED WASILEWSKI (MIDDLE) BEING SWORN IN AS THE NEW NAS PRESIDENT.





# Event Highlights

## *Advocates Society's* SUMMER PICNIC/BBQ

On August 20th, the Advocates held their Annual Summer Picnic/BBQ. Past President Kristin Kozlowski Lyons hosted the event at her house. Partakers enjoyed delicious food, ribs and hot dogs, and sweet desserts. We are so grateful for Kristin's generosity and throwing such an amazing Summer BBQ!

*Thank you!*





# Event Highlights

## *Advocates Society's* SUMMER PICNIC/BBQ





# Event Highlights

## A NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

### AUG 23<sup>rd</sup> 2023

Guest Speaker  
**PROFESSOR  
DOMINIC A.  
PACYGA**



On August 23rd, the Advocates hosted a CLE and viewing of the Chicago History Museum's new exhibit "Back Home: Polish Experience." Prof. Dominic Pacyga discussed how changing immigration laws affected Polish immigration to Chicago. After the lecture, participants Margaret Kulajian, Mark Dobrzycki, Judge Jonathan Clark Green, Janette Strzalka, and Ret. Judge Joan Smuda discussed the story behind their contributions to the exhibit which included old passports, photos, and Advocate Society memorabilia. Participants then enjoyed exclusive after-hours access to the new exhibit.





# Event Highlights

## A NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM AUG 23<sup>rd</sup> 2023





## Advocate SPOTLIGHT: *Attorney Kent Sinson*

To acquaint readers better with Members of the Advocates Society, we spotlight some Members in each issue. In this issue, we feature a Question and Answer with Kent Sinson, who is a trial attorney in Chicago and an active volunteer for the Amicus Poloniae Pro Bono Legal Clinic.

### Why are you a member of the Advocates Society?

I am passionate about helping people who have been wronged by another's negligence or by corporate greed. In my practice, I represent people on medical negligence, products liability, and transportation cases. I also handle retaliatory discharge and employment discrimination cases.

Early in my career, I was a Cook County State's Attorney trying to get justice for victims of rape, murder, and armed robbery. I have been active in Amicus Poloniae's Pro Bono Legal Clinic for over a decade. Amicus Poloniae is consistent with the values of the Advocates Society.

### Give us an example of how being a member of the Advocates Society empowered you as an attorney.

The Pro Bono clinic provides critical access to the courts for people who, because of a lack of financial resources, unclear immigration status and often a language barrier, have few places to turn. Oftentimes, the clients just need someone to empathize with their situation. There is a synergy between the Amicus Poloniae and the Advocates Society with many of the same people participating in both.

There is a large Polish population in Cook County and, unfortunately, the composition of the judiciary does not reflect reality. The Advocates Society recognizes the importance of improving this and encourages getting its members to the Bench.

### Share any other information about yourself that you think our readers would enjoy.

I live in Lakeview and am a Democratic Party 44th Ward precinct captain. I still play ice hockey and have my entire life. Last May, I visited Warsaw and Krakow. Throughout my travels, I obtained a new appreciation for how important Copernicus is to Poland, as he is celebrated almost every place I visited in Poland.





## Advocate SPOTLIGHT: *Attorney Steven Zdanowicz*

We are also featuring Steven Zdanowicz, who is in private practice in the area of the aviation insurance field at Peter J. McBreen & Associates, Inc.

### Why are you a member of the Advocates Society?

I became a member of the Advocates Society after a chance meeting with another member who invited me to join. While I am proud of my Polish heritage and enjoy meeting other attorneys of Polish-American descent, the friendships and connections with members keep me coming back. The Advocates Society has always been a warm and hospitable environment to meet other practitioners, learn the latest changes in the law, or just have a great conversation.



### Give us an example of how being a member of the Advocates Society empowered you as an attorney.

After the pandemic shut down life as we knew it, in person gatherings, CLE meetings, and networking ceased to exist. As things slowly returned to normal, reconnecting with other legal professionals and rejoining a larger community was long overdue. Fortuitously, at the first meeting I had been to since the pandemic began, I reconnected with a practitioner I had worked with during a law school clerkship. In other words, rekindling old relationships and forging new ones with other members as part of a larger community has been invaluable.

### What are you most looking forward to in the coming year, personally and professionally?

Personally, I have always enjoyed traveling to new destinations and experiencing new cultures. I hope to try and visit a new country this year. Professionally, I enjoy practicing in the aviation insurance field. While I enjoy spending time working with colleagues in the office, I hope to attend more investigations and inspections on the airfield, learning technical and operational know-how to more effectively defend clients.

### Share any other information about yourself that you think our readers would enjoy.

While studying for finals during law school, I used to leave the television on mute in the background. Flipping through the channels, I would usually leave it on TCM/Turner Classic Movies thinking that it would not be too distracting. What was supposed to be an afternoon of intense study turned into an afternoon of enjoying classic films. I have enjoyed watching classic films ever since.

“ The Advocates Society has always been a warm and hospitable environment to meet other practitioners, learn the latest changes in the law, or just have a great conversation. ”



## Advocate SPOTLIGHT: *Law Student Magdalena Biedroń*

**Magdalena Biedroń is featured as a Law Student Member. She is currently a 3L at UIC Law. Here is what Magdalena shared with us.**

### **Why are you a member of the Advocates Society?**

1Ls are strongly encouraged to join bar associations and organizations in order to expand our network. As a Polish American who is also a first-generation law student, I was excited to join a community with legal professionals that had a similar background to me. I learn so much just by listening to the conversation of members around me. It means a lot to be around and learn so much from attorneys who dedicate their skills to helping those who need it most.



### **Give us an example of how being a member of the Advocates Society empowered you as a law student/future attorney.**

I used to be the coordinator of Amicus Poloniae Legal Clinic, and I remain as a regular volunteer. So many of our clinic's volunteers came from the Advocates Society while I was coordinator. The Advocates Society also provided us with laptops for our virtual consults. Thanks to my fellow Advocates Society members, I was even more empowered to help those who needed it most.

### **What are you most looking forward to in the coming year, personally and professionally?**

Professionally, I am looking forward to almost being finished with law school. It feels like it is flying by. Personally, I am looking forward to doing more indoor rock climbing if I ever get any free time.

### **Share any other information about yourself that you think our readers would enjoy.**

I am a crazy cat lady, especially about my cat Apollo! I enjoy taking him for walks on a leash, or in his cat backpack. I also really enjoy running and am happy to have finished my first 10k in November 2022. Overall, I'm pretty outdoorsy and enjoy hiking and camping.



**"It means a lot to be around and learn so much from attorneys who dedicate their skills to helping those who need it most."**



*Judge's Night*

Thursday, October 19th

*Scholarship Fundraiser*

Thursday, November 30th

*Holiday Party*

Thursday, December 21st

*Save the Dates*

ADVOCATES EVENTS

# Special Announcement

The Polish American Judges Association, a newly formed organization, will be having its first installation on Sept 19th.

Its mission is to promote more judges of Polish-American heritage to the bench. All are welcome to come.

## Join Us for the Installation of Officers and Directors Polish American Judges Association

**President:** Judge Diann K. Marsalek

**Vice-President:** Judge Steven Kozicki

**Treasurer:** Judge James Pieczonka

**Recording Secretary:** Judge Diane Pezanoski

**Corresponding Secretary:** Judge Pamela Stratigakis

**Board of Directors:** Justice Aurelia Pucinski, Judge Joel Chupack, Judge Jonathan Clark Green, Judge Daniel Kubasiak, Judge Thomas Nowinski, Judge Ursula Walowski, and Judge Michele Gemske

**September 19, 2023 from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.**  
**Polish Museum of America, 984 N. Milwaukee Ave.**

R.S.V.P. to [polishamericanjudges@gmail.com](mailto:polishamericanjudges@gmail.com) by Sept. 15, 2023





# Polish Culture, History and Traditions



## Traveling in Poland: **Białystok**

By Pamela Sakowicz Menaker

Białystok is the largest city in northeastern Poland and has a special affinity to my family. My paternal grandparents came from this beautiful city before settling in Chicago on Milwaukee Avenue.

The 10th largest city in the country has an interesting history, having existed since the early 1300's. In the past century, Białystok has undergone many changes, mostly due to war-ravaged Europe and the position of the city. At the end of World War I, it became part of the newly independent Second Republic of Poland, but the Red Army took over the city until the Battle of Białystok in 1919-1920 that returned it to Polish control.

In September 1939, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union invaded the city when it passed to Soviet occupation according to the 1939 Soviet-German Pact. Then in June 1941, the German army occupied the city, and in August 1941, the Germans ordered the establishment of a ghetto in Białystok of 56,000 Polish Jews, confining them in a small area of the city. In February 1943, approximately 10,000 Białystok Jews were deported to the Treblinka concentration camp. The city fell then under the control of the Red Army on July 27, 1944. The Soviets carried out

mass arrests of Polish resistance members in the region and imprisoned them in Białystok. On Sept. 20, 1944, the city was transferred back to Poland, although with a Soviet-installed communist regime, which stayed in power until the fall of Communism in the 1980s.

Those from Białystok were a tough group -- during the August 1943 deportations, when all hope for survival within the ghetto was abandoned, the Białystok ghetto underground staged an uprising against the Germans. In an unsuccessful attempt to break out of the ghetto and join partisans in the nearby forests, armed Jews attacked German forces. Hundreds died. About a hundred managed to escape – it's a fascinating story that can be found at the Holocaust Encyclopedia. (See <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org>) (Continued on Page 19)





# Polish Culture, History and Traditions

## Traveling in Poland: **Białystok** (continued)

By Pamela Sakowicz Menaker

On Oct. 27, 1991, the first democratic election since the 1920s was held that completed Poland's transition from a communist party rule to a Western-style liberal democratic political system. The last post-Soviet troops left Poland on Sept. 18, 1993. Białystok and the surrounding region remain somewhat of a buffer zone between the Polish state and Soviet Russia. It sits close to the borders of Belarus, Lithuania and Russia.

Translated into English, Białystok means “white river” for the Biala River that runs through the city. It's an industrial city home to many textile factories, but it is also known for its nature preserves and cultural diversity. It boasts a football (soccer) stadium that seats more than 22,000. Should you visit Białystok, a city of about 300,000, it is two

hours by train from Warsaw. Although there are no monuments, the beautiful Branicki Palace is surrounded by baroque gardens dating back to the 18th century and is often referred to as the “Polish Versailles” (see photo below). It is a leading cultural and artistic center with murals found all over the city. (See <https://www.mywanderlust.pl/>)

My father's parents left Białystok in the early 1900s. Chicago already was a city of many Poles -- 25,726 Polish immigrants in the metro area in 1890, and by 1920 the population reached 151,260, according to the Polish American Association. (See [https://www.polish.org/upload\\_files/CensusReport.pdf](https://www.polish.org/upload_files/CensusReport.pdf))

Another interesting anecdote: My father's uncle (and my godfather) taught himself how to buy property in Cook County and through the help of Parkway Bank (run by a Polish President), Uncle Al bought all of the then vacant property to the west of Chicago that later became the foundation of O'Hare Airport. Obviously, it has expanded quite a bit since 1944.

*Article submitted by:*

*Pamela Sakowicz Menaker,*

*daughter of the late Sig Sakowicz*



BRANICKI PALACE AND GARDENS IN BIAŁYSTOK, POLAND (“POLISH VERSAILLES”)



# Photos Wanted



## Advocates, send us your PHOTOS!

Traveling abroad? Planning a trip to Poland?  
Attended an Advocates' event? Send us photos to include in the Newsletter!

Email:

[Advocatessociety@gmail.com](mailto:Advocatessociety@gmail.com)

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/polishadvocates>

## NEWSLETTER PUBLISH DATES

Spring Issue - March 1st

Summer Issue - June 1st

Fall Issue - Sept 1st

Winter Issue - Dec 1st

## BECOME A MEMBER

**Who qualifies to be a member?** Any person of Polish descent or affinity, duly licensed to practice law in any jurisdiction, is eligible for membership in this Society, regardless of race or religion. A condition of membership shall be absolute and unqualified loyalty to the constitution of the United States of America.

**When do I need to renew?** Memberships are renewed every March.

**How do I pay?** You can visit our website, [www.advocatessociety.org](http://www.advocatessociety.org).

### General Membership

(5 or more years) - \$175

Attorneys who have been admitted to the bar for five (5) or more years.

### General Membership

(less than 5 years) - \$150

Attorneys who have been admitted to the bar for less than five (5) years.

### Law Student Membership - \$30

Individuals who are not licensed to practice law in any jurisdiction, but are a student attending an accredited law school.

### Associate Membership (non-attorney) - \$75

Individuals who are not licensed to practice law in any jurisdiction. This is a non-attorney, non-voting membership.





## Amicus Poloniae Pro Bono Clinic

Volunteers are needed (attorneys and Polish translators) for the Amicus Poloniae Pro Bono Clinic Sessions.

**WHEN?** 3rd Saturday of each month - 9am to 1:30pm

(Fall Dates: September 16, October 21, November 18)

**WHERE?** In person at the Polish National Alliance (6100 N. Cicero Ave., Chicago), via Zoom, or by being "on call."

**HOW?** Contact us by emailing: [Advocatessociety@gmail.com](mailto:Advocatessociety@gmail.com), and we will make sure you receive a CVLS volunteer registration form to fill out prior to the next session so you are all set for the session you want to attend and those for the rest of the year. CVLS provides legal liability coverage for registered volunteers.

# THANKS!

The PR/Newsletter Committee gives thanks to the contributors who submitted photos, content and information to the current issue of the Newsletter. We appreciate your time, support and dedication!

Contributors in this issue include:

Magdalena Biedroń

Mark Dobrzycki

Hon. Michele Gemske

Kristin Kozlowski Lyons

Pamela Sakowicz Menaker

Iwona Przonak

Regina Rathnau

Kent Sinson

Eryk J. Wachnik

Margo Webb

Steven Zdanowicz

THE ADVOCATES SOCIETY  
CELEBRATES

# POLISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

OCTOBER 2023

*Happy  
Thanksgiving!*

FROM THE ADVOCATES SOCIETY



## Newsletter Submissions

Please send items to

[Advocatessociety@gmail.com](mailto:Advocatessociety@gmail.com). Articles should be in Word format and pictures in jpeg or PDF format. Permission to publish as received or edited is assumed when emailed. Any announcements such as job promotions, awards received or personal achievements may also be submitted.





Polish-American  
Advocates

# Scholarship Foundation 2023



## Deadline to Apply: 10/15/2023

The "Advocates Society Scholarship Foundation" is a 501(c)(3) entity that provides scholarships to law students based upon academic performance and financial need. The scholarship is awarded to deserving students each year and winners are selected by the Scholarship Committee.

### Highlights:

- Must be accepted to accredited law school or a current law student ✓
- Must be in good academic standing ✓
- Must be of Polish heritage or affinity ✓
- Must be a Chicago Metro resident ✓
- Mentorship Opportunities ✓
- Networking and Community ✓

Don't miss this opportunity!  
For questions, please email us at:  
[advocatescholarship@gmail.com](mailto:advocatescholarship@gmail.com) OR  
[REGINA@RATHNAULAW.COM](mailto:REGINA@RATHNAULAW.COM)

[HTTPS://ADVOCATESOCIETY.ORG/](https://advocatesociety.org/)