

Chris Korwin-Kuczynski

(b. 1953)

Politician, community activist



Born of Polish parents in Toronto, Chris Korwin-Kuczynski holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from York University. Active in municipal politics for twenty-two years, from 1981 to 2003, he was a Councillor of the City of Toronto, and for a time, the city's deputy mayor. He also served as a special assistant to the federal Minister of State for Multiculturalism.

Throughout his career, Korwin-Kuczynski held numerous positions on community councils, committees and boards, among them Parkdale Village Foundation, Physically Disabled Olympics, Non-Profit Housing Corporation, Mayor's Task Force on Drugs, City of Toronto Millennium Task Force, and Children and Youth Action Committee. He co-chaired Food and Hunger Action Committee to respond to the hunger and food issues. He chaired Pension Benefit Advisory Committee, Toronto Fire Department, City Services and City Hall Events Committee. He served in a total of twenty-five City Committees.

Living in his ward, High Park-Parkdale, Korwin-Kuczynski was active in his community, working with residents' groups and other local organizations and institutions, such as community centres, schools, churches, libraries, on matters of common interest and concern.

Korwin-Kuczynski has always supported the needs of the Polish community in Toronto. Thanks to his involvement, the Education and Training Programs for Poland, an international project organized by the Canadian Polish Congress, could operate free of charge from the City Hall premises, sending in the years 1991-96 over four hundred Canadian teachers to teach English in Poland. He was instrumental in the erection of a monument in his riding, dedicated to the nearly nineteen thousand Polish officers murdered by the Soviet secret police in the Katyn massacre of 1940, the most memorable of crimes perpetrated by Stalin's regime. He played a vital part in negotiating a twin city agreement between Toronto and Warsaw, capital of Poland. He also worked with the Canadian Government to remove the visa requirements for Polish citizens visiting Canada.

Korwin-Kuczynski is an honorary Captain of the Canadian Navy, and currently serves as a Director of the Royal Canadian Military Institute in Toronto, and Director of the Atlantic Council of Canada. Among his many distinctions are: the Order of St. John, Byzantine Order of the Holy Sepulchre; Combatants' Cross; Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta; and Queen Elizabeth the Second Jubilee Medal.

Photos from top left clockwise
• Chris Korwin-Kuczynski, honorary captain of the Canadian Navy / Photo – family archives • Speaking at the Katyn monument in Toronto • With Art Eggleton, Mayor of Toronto, and Stanislaw Wyganowski, Mayor of Warsaw, at the official twinning ceremony of the two cities, 1990
Other photos – Marek Goldyn