

PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN – April 27 - 29, 2007, St.Catharines

REPORT OF THE POLISH-CANADIAN WOMENS FEDERATION Presented by Yvonne Bogorya-Buczowski, President

The year 2006 was a very special year in our organization. We celebrated our 50th anniversary. In 1956 Mrs. Jadwiga Dobrucka, a teacher and a community activist, together with a group of Polish women immigrants founded the Federation as a non-profit charitable organization. They felt a strong the need to have an independent women's organization dedicated to the preservation Polish culture and to help those who are in need.

During this year we organized the Annual convention with a special exhibit and dinner commemorating the anniversary. The President of the Provincial Council of Women, Milica Kovacevich, and our Board member Thelma McGillivray, honoured us with their presence. The same year, we published a book titled, "Links in One Chain", which described the activities of the 24 chapters of our organization across Canada: Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, Alberta, and British Columbia. It contained the life stories of generations of women who contributed to the Federation, to our community and to Canada at large. Many women have received high honours and distinctions. Many were brave soldiers or nurses during the war. Professional women and dedicated volunteers worked hard to help women immigrants and their families to adjust to their new environment in Canada. They also helped people in Poland in their fight for independence. Throughout our history we have been working together with the National, Provincial and Local Council of Women across Canada.

In the fall of 2006, we organized an Anniversary concert and a photo exhibit. We expressed our gratitude to those founding women who developed the organization. It was our pleasure to see them at the concert, as a special tribute was paid to the members of Branch No.1.

It is interesting to note that the concert was filmed for the documentary video "Red and White", prepared by an independent Canadian filmmaker for OMNI TV. This video is devoted entirely to the history of Polish immigrant women who survived the Second World War and immigrated to Canada. Some of them were imprisoned in German concentration camps or sent to labour camps in Russia. During the war, others fought by joining the underground Polish armies. They survived, and now they can reflect and share their experiences.

Around Christmas time, Branch 1 organized the "Christmas around the World", displaying a traditional Christmas tree and Christmas Eve meal. At Easter time, our Easter table exhibit was selected for broadcast on the Breakfast TV on City TV. The Easter table was organized by the Mississauga Branch of the Federation (No.15).

This event is organized by the Metro Toronto Community Folk Arts Council and held at the City Hall in Toronto.

Both in 2006 and 2007 articles were published in Polish language publications about our organization. We prepared a commemorative video which was played on the Polish language TV programs.

We must say that we are grateful for the support of the Polish Canadian Research Institute and for donation received from Mr. Henry Slaby who administered a trust in memory of one of our distinguished member, Irene Ungar, who was the Judge of Citizenship. A special issue of our Annual Bulletin "Informator" was published to report on the Anniversary. This year we have been promoting our book.

The Executive Board of the Polish Canadian Women's Federation has a leading role in the World Council of Polish Women. We've been invited to participate as delegates at the International Congress of all Polish organizations from abroad which will take place in Warsaw, Poland on September 22 - 26, 2007. This important conference will be conducted in the Polish Parliament. The delegates, who represent many different countries around the world, will meet with the

President and the Premier of Poland as well as with the representatives of the Senate, Parliament and External Affairs. Two of our Board members will be among the 300 delegates and media representatives from around the world. Our presence at the International Congress will enable us to continue to maintain strong contacts with Polish women around the World.