

*"I came here where freedom is being defended,
to serve it and live or die for it"*

*Brigadier General Casimir Pulaski
To George Washington*



— OFFICIAL STATE OF ILLINOIS —

Pulaski Day

— CELEBRATION —

MONDAY, MARCH 3, 2025

hosted by

The Polish Museum of America

and the

Polish Roman Catholic Union of America

Streamed live on

www.PolishMuseumOfAmerica.org

from the

Sabina P. Logisz Great Hall, 984 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60642



2025 PULASKI DAY COMMITTEE

Richard Owsiany

James Robaczewski

Malgorzata Kot

Micheline Jaminski

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Ewa Kowcz-Fair

Zbigniew Habina

Eugeniusz Jarzabek

August Fair

Czeslaw Mogilinski

Mariusz Boruch

Bartek Ciezobka

Alex Snitchuk

Daniel Bragiel

Tatra Mountain Cultural Foundation Ensemble

Wesoly Lud Polish Folk Dance Company of PRCUA

Tadeusz Kosciuszko Polish Lancers Society

WITH ASSISTANCE FROM

Agnieszka Bastrzyk

Iwona Bozek

Krystyna Ciecierska

Agnieszka Dobrzycki

Mark Dobrzycki

Elizabeth Dziadulewicz

Jan Gora

Anna Grabowski

Krystyna Grell

Lidia Kowalewicz

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The 2025 Official State of Illinois Pulaski Day Celebration

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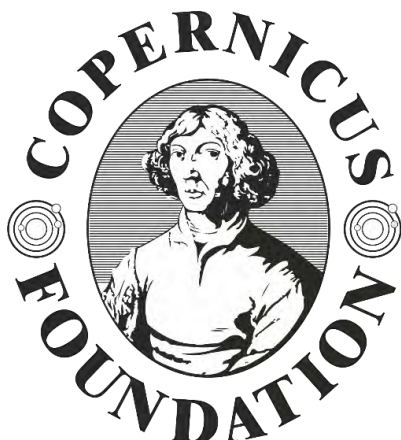


PNC



POLISH & SLAVIC[®]

FEDERAL CREDIT UNION



Malgorzata Palka & Daniel Sobol

2025 PULASKI DAY PROGRAM

GREETINGS

Richard Owsiany
The Polish Museum of America President

James Robaczewski
*Polish Roman Catholic Union of America President;
The Polish Museum of America Chair; PMA Life Member*

PRESENTATION OF COLORS

Tadeusz Kościuszko Polish Lancers Society

NATIONAL ANTHEMS

Ewa Kowcz-Fair and August Fair
soprano and baritone
Bartłomiej Ciężobka
pianist

WELCOME TO THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

Hon. Michael Frerichs
State of Illinois Treasurer

Hon. Susana Mendoza
State of Illinois Comptroller

WELCOME TO THE CITY OF CHICAGO

Hon. Walter Burnett
City of Chicago Vice Mayor

WELCOME ON BEHALF OF POLONIA

Frank Spula
*Polish American Congress President;
Polish National Alliance President*

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Hon. Andrzej Duda
President of the Republic of Poland

Dance from the Podhale Region

Tatra Mountain Cultural Foundation Ensemble

Krakowiak Suite

Wesoly Lud Polish Folk Dance Company of PRCUA

LAYING OF THE WREATH

Polskie drogi

Composed by Andrzej Kurylewicz, 1976

Bartłomiej Ciężobka

REMARKS

Hon. Richard Durbin
State of Illinois US Senator

RECOGNITION OF PSFCU UNDERWRITING

Bogdan Chmielewski
Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union President/ CEO

THE IMPORTANCE OF CELEBRATING PULASKI AND OTHER NOTABLE POLES

Hon. Aurelia Pucinski
IL First District Appellate Court Justice

THE PULASKI COLLECTION

at the Polish Museum of America

REMARKS

Consul General Serhiy Koledov
Consulate General of Ukraine in Chicago

Op. 58, No. 1 Lecioty zurazie

Composed by Karol Szymanowski, 1930-1932

Pod jaworem

Composed by Mieczysław Karłowicz, 1898

Ewa Kowcz-Fair

VIDEO REMARKS

Hon. Nikki Budzinski
13th Congressional District of IL US Representative

RECOGNITION OF PNC UNDERWRITING

Beata Mikita
PNC Bank Regional Manager Chicago
Northwest Suburbs Senior Vice President

REMARKS

Hon. Maria Pappas
Cook County Treasurer

BENEDICTION

Rev. Zdzislaw Torba
St. John Brebeuf Pastor

FINALE

God Bless America



Program subject to change



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

207 STATE HOUSE
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62706

JB PRITZKER
GOVERNOR

February 6, 2025

The Polish Museum of America
984 N Milwaukee Avenue
Chicago, IL 60642

Greetings!

As Governor of the State of Illinois, I am pleased to welcome everyone gathered for the celebration of Casimir Pulaski Day hosted by the Polish Museum of America (PMA) and the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America (PRCUA). This occasion offers an exciting opportunity for everyone in attendance to recognize the heroic contributions of Pulaski and his impact on U.S. History.

Nicknamed the "Father of the American Cavalry," General Pulaski displayed valiant and fearless opposition to British forces. General Pulaski earned praise from several high-ranking members of the military, including General Benjamin Lincoln, and was eventually named Brigadier General. He is a testament to the contributions that Polish Americans have made to this country.

On behalf of the people of Illinois, I offer my best wishes for an enjoyable and memorable occasion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JB Pritzker", written in a stylized, cursive script.

Governor JB Pritzker



Consulate General
of the Republic of Poland
in Chicago

Chicago, March 3rd 2025

President Ryszard Owsiany
Polish Museum of America

Dear President of the Polish Museum of America,

Please accept my heartfelt congratulations on this year's commemoration of the Pułaski Day. Although I only began my post in December of 2024 as the Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Chicago, I am already inspired by the devotion and great work that the Polish Museum of America carries out for the sake of preserving the rich history and heritage of Poland.

Born and raised in Warsaw, Poland, General Kazimierz Pułaski fought against the Russian domination of Poland. Later in life, when he was offered an opportunity to join another fight for liberty on the other side of the world, he took it without hesitation joining Continental Army fight for independence. General Pułaski resolute commitment to the ideals of freedom and independence resonates deeply with the historic struggles for freedom of both our nations. Pułaski's story and service are just one example of how much Polish Americans have shaped the United States history and future. The yearly celebration of Kazimierz Pułaski legacy organized by the Museum is an outstanding reminder of the importance of Pułaski's legacy and ensures his name will be remembered as more than simply a street name in Chicago.

This year from January 1st until the end of June the Republic of Poland holds the Presidency of the European Council, and it's exactly these ideals that Poland brings to the Presidency. In his time Pułaski fought against foreign interference, for defense and security, and to protect the people from tyranny, although the specifics and manner of this struggle may have changed its importance has not. Often the strongest ties between nations are based on shared stories, culture, heritage, and history. This is why the United States and Poland are both fortunate to have Polish-Americans as an important linkage.

I would like to take this opportunity and congratulate the entire staff of the Polish Museum of America on their commitment to Polish heritage and fostering closer relations between Poland and the United States of America.

Sincerely,

Regina Jurkowska

Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Chicago

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1304

March 3, 2025

Dear Friends:

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Polish Museum of America (PMA) and the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America's (PRCUA) observance of Casimir Pulaski Day. This gathering is a special opportunity to commemorate Brigadier General Casimir Pulaski and his contributions to the United States.

Since 1873, the PRCUA has united Polish Americans and preserved the traditions and customs of Poland. PRCUA pioneered social programs for members and advocated for women's rights—more than two decades before women gained the right to vote. In 1935, PRCUA founded the Polish Museum of America, the largest ethnic museum in the United States, dedicated to preserving and sharing Polish heritage with visitors from around the world.

Today's ceremony commemorates Brigadier General Pulaski, known as the "Father of the American Cavalry," who gave his life fighting for American independence. His leadership in the Revolutionary War exemplifies the contributions Polish Americans have made to our country. The enduring alliance between the United States and Poland remains as vital as ever to protect freedom and security in the larger transatlantic alliance.

I commend your commitment to celebrating Polish culture and engaging the Polish American community. Again, I extend my warmest wishes to today's attendees for your dedication to the PMA, the PRCUA, and the Polish American community. Congratulations on all your work and achievements.

Very truly yours,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



OFFICE OF THE ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER
MICHAEL W. FRERICHS

March 3, 2025

The Polish Museum of America
Polish Roman Catholic Union of America
984 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Chicago, IL 60642

Dear Friends,

It is my great honor to welcome the President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda, First Lady Agata Kornhauser-Duda, and all in attendance today to the Polish Museum of America's and the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America's Celebration of Casimir Pulaski. This celebration reflects the unique heritage of Polonia in American history.

Casimir Pulaski has long been a symbol of American and Polish courage, and our passion for liberty. He came to the colonies to volunteer his vast military talent in the defense of the freedoms of a fledgling nation. Upon his arrival from Europe, he wrote to General George Washington: *"I came here, where freedom is being defended, to serve it. And to live or die for it."* He demonstrated great courage in commanding a mounted legion which was unique alongside the Continental Army's infantry. Recognized by General Washington for his courage and abilities, Pulaski was commissioned a brigadier general and became known as "The Father of the American Cavalry".

I join in the celebration of the achievements of this great man. However, Casimir Pulaski Day is not just a tribute to the valor of one man, it is a day of recognition of all Polonia who have sought refuge in the United States and are passionate in defending its freedoms.

Best wishes for this tribute to heritage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Frerichs".

Michael Frerichs
Illinois State Treasurer

State Capitol
Room 219
Springfield, IL 62706
Phone: (866) 458-7327
Fax: (217) 785-2777
TTY: (866) 877-6013

555 West Monroe Street
14th Floor
Chicago, IL 60661
Phone: (866) 458-7327
Fax: (312) 814-5930
TTY: (866) 877-6013

Marine Bank Building
1 East Old State Capitol Plaza
Springfield, IL 62701
Phone: (866) 458-7327
Fax: (217) 524-3822
TTY: (866) 877-6013



ILLINOIS OFFICE OF COMPTROLLER
SUSANA A. MENDOZA
COMPTROLLER

As Illinois State Comptroller, I would like to welcome everyone gathered at the Polish Museum of America to celebrate Casimir Pulaski Day. I am particularly honored to welcome the President of Poland, Andrzej Duda, to the great State of Illinois.

Known as the "Father of American Cavalry," General Pulaski possessed incredible military skills and leadership qualities that earned the respect of his troops. Pulaski gave his life fighting for American independence at the Siege of Savannah in 1779. To this day, his legacy is celebrated by Polish Americans throughout the United States.

Casimir Pulaski Day holds special significance in the State of Illinois. Chicagoland boasts a Polish population surpassing any metropolitan area outside of Poland. While I may not be Polish myself, I am fortunate to have married into a proud Polish family and have witnessed firsthand the remarkable contributions of this community.

From sending us Casimir Pulaski and Tadeusz Kosciuszko to help us win our war for independence; to the laborers who built and continue to build Chicago; to the artists, writers and scientists who have enriched our lives, we can't thank Poland enough.

Thank you, President Duda. You honor us with your presence as we celebrate this momentous occasion. We all owe General Pulaski a debt of gratitude. May his heroism continue to inspire future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susana A. Mendoza". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Susana A. Mendoza
Illinois State Comptroller



Maria Pappas
Cook County Treasurer

March 3, 2025

James J. Robaczewski
National President
Polish Roman Catholic Union of America
984 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Chicago, IL 60622

Dear President Robaczewski

Please accept my best wishes as the Polish community remembers a hero for the ages on Casimir Pulaski Day 2025.

The Polish-born Pulaski became a hero of both his nation and of a nation he helped bring to life.

Born in 1745, by age 20 Pulaski showed military talent so extraordinary that Russia sought his capture when he fought for the freedom of Poland. With Russia on his heels, Pulaski fled to Paris, where he had one of the most consequential meetings of two great historical figures.

He met Benjamin Franklin, on a diplomatic mission to seek French recognition of colonies that had declared themselves independent of Great Britain. Franklin, who knew talent when he saw it, sent Pulaski to the colonies, to America, to meet George Washington, leader of the American Revolution.

Washington sent Pulaski to Brandywine on September 11, 1777, where Pulaski saved success. Washington then gave him charge of the American cavalry, which was not the force the Americans needed. Pulaski made it his horsemen that force, becoming the "Father of the American Cavalry."

In 1779, at Savannah, cannon fire wounded Pulaski. He died two days later, on October 11. He was buried at sea as the hero of two nations but the citizen of one. That was rectified in 2009 when he was made an honorary citizen of the United States. Never was citizenship granted to one more deserving.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maria".

Maria Pappas
Cook County Treasurer

:bb





OFFICE OF THE CITY TREASURER
MELISSA CONYEARS-ERVIN • TREASURER • CITY OF CHICAGO

March 3, 2025

President Duda,

On behalf of the City of Chicago, it is my great honor and privilege to welcome you to our city as we celebrate Casimir Pulaski Day. Your presence on this special occasion is a testament to the strong and enduring bond between Poland and the United States, as well as the profound contributions of Polish Americans to the rich cultural fabric of Chicago.

Chicago is home to one of the largest Polish populations outside of Poland, a vibrant community that has played an essential role in shaping our city's identity. Polish Americans have contributed immensely to our neighborhoods, businesses, and civic life, bringing a deep sense of pride, resilience, and tradition that continues to thrive across generations. Their dedication to hard work, faith, and family has helped make Chicago the great city it is today.

Casimir Pulaski Day is a moment of celebration—an opportunity for all Chicagoans to recognize the bravery and legacy of General Pulaski while also honoring the enduring spirit of Polish heritage in our city. It is a day of unity, pride, and appreciation for the strong ties that connect us to Poland and its people. Through community gatherings and cultural events, this holiday serves as a joyful reminder of the history we share and the future we build together.

Mr. President, we are truly honored to welcome you to Chicago for this meaningful celebration. Your visit reinforces the deep friendship between our nations, and we are proud to stand together in recognizing the lasting impact of Polish culture and history in our great city.

Sincerely,

Melissa Conyears-Ervin
Treasurer, City of Chicago



POLISH
AMERICAN
CONGRESS

6100 North Cicero Ave.
Chicago, Illinois 60646

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E | pacwash@pac1944.org

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SERVING THE INTERESTS OF POLISH AMERICANS SINCE 1944

NATIONAL
OFFICERS

March 3, 2025

Frank J. Spula
President

Dear Guests,

Mark Pienkos
First Vice
President

Warmest greetings to everyone gathered at the Polish Museum of America as we celebrate General Casimir Pulaski Day.

Bożena Kaminski
VP for Polish
Affairs

Today, we reflect on the legacy of Casimir Pulaski, a Polish American hero whose courage continues to inspire generations.

Timothy Kuzma
VP for American
Affairs

General Pulaski, a Polish nobleman and military commander, is remembered for his commitment to the cause of freedom and justice. His bravery on the battlefield, particularly during the American Revolutionary War, left an incredible mark on the history of the United States.

Malgorzata
Schulz
VP for Public
Relations

As we reflect on General Casimir Pulaski's legacy, we honor his memory by continuing to uphold the values of freedom, justice, and equality for all.

Deborah Majka
VP for Cultural
Affairs

He is our true Polish American hero.

Andrzej Niemyjski
VP for Financial
Development

His biography and achievements serve as a legacy for Polish Americans, exemplifying a commitment to the highest values that have helped pave the way for modern democracy.

Mary Sendra-
Anselmo
VP for Education

We take pride in Pulaski and the accomplishments of individuals of Polish descent in America, recognizing our community as a powerful force in this country.

Michael
Niedzinski
VP for
Membership
Development

Thank you to the Polish Museum of America for maintaining and reminding us of Pulaski's successes and the impact of Poles in America.

Sincerely,


Frank J. Spula,
President



James J. Robaczewski, ALMI, FIC, ACS
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

March 3, 2025

Dear Friends of The Polish Museum of America,

The state of Illinois has been celebrating General Casimir Pulaski Day since 1977. We celebrate the man who, through his untraditional tactics, saved the life of George Washington at the battle of Brandywine. We mourn the loss of his life in Savannah, while he was fighting for the freedom of his adopted country. We celebrate his life as a patriot, both in Poland and in the United States.

On Pulaski Day, we, Poles, have a chance to reflect on the achievements of our ancestors, some famous, like Pulaski and Kosciuszko, or others who are our close relatives who came to the United States to escape oppression. Those people had great internal fortitude to withstand the challenges they were facing in a new world, as they forged futures and secured their families. They, too, should be considered great patriots for what they did to help create this great country of ours.

With this in mind, let us look to places where we, as Americans, can assist the oppressed and help them achieve the freedoms that we enjoy in our nation.

Fraternally yours,

James J Robaczewski, ALMI, FIC, ACS
President



Polish Roman Catholic Union of America | PRCUALife™

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984 North Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60642-4101 | **PRCUA.org** |    

James J. Robaczewski, NATIONAL PRESIDENT | (773) 782-2602 | fax (773) 782-2741 | james-robaczewski@prcua.org



Za Wasza i Nasza Wolnosc! – For Your Freedom and Ours!

This rallying slogan has been the calling of Poles to aid the cause of freedom for centuries. Our history produces many examples of Poles taking part in crusades: Zawisza Czarny, Jan III Sobieski, Blue Army, the Polish Armed Forces during World War II, and of course Tadeusz Kosciuszko and Kazimierz Pulaski. Upon arriving in Massachusetts in 1777, Pulaski wrote to George Washington to secure a mission stating, “I came here where freedom is being defended, to serve it and live and or die for it.” Even without a command or rank, Pulaski participated in his first battle at Brandywine. His fervor for freedom was instilled in him by his family. As a military commander in the failed Bar Confederation, Pulaski sharpened his military prowess. Exiled, and a price on his head, he leaves Poland and eventually arrives in America. He offered his services as an experienced military leader to the American Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War. “I came to hazard all for the freedom of America,” stated Pulaski in a letter to the Congress. Even before he was officially commissioned by Congress, Pulaski joined the American Army as a volunteer.

At Brandywine in 1777, he greatly distinguished himself by leading a daring attack against the British, thereby saving the lives of the retreating American Army and General George Washington. At the insistence of General Washington, Pulaski was made a Brigadier General and the first Commander of the American Cavalry. Under his command, Pulaski and his soldiers fought from Massachusetts to Georgia. He established the Pulaski Legion, a corps of Frenchmen, German Hessians, and Poles, who were instrumental in saving the City of Charleston, South Carolina, from British occupation in 1779.

In October of 1779, at the age of 34, General Pulaski paid the ultimate price for freedom: he died from mortal wounds received while leading a cavalry charge in Savannah, Georgia. On October 11, 1779, he died aboard the ship WASP. He was buried at the Greenwich plantation near Savannah. In 1853, Pulaski’s remains were reinterred in Monterey Square in Savannah. In 2005, the remains were ceremoniously reinterred in a public ceremony with full military honors at the Pulaski Monument at Monterey Square. Posthumous honorary US citizenship was granted to General Pulaski in 2009.

Pulaski, like Kosciuszko, brought to our shores, a spirit, a daring, a dedication, and a fervor for freedom which inspired the entire command of General George Washington’s revolutionary forces. Pulaski belongs to the select group of heroes that includes Lafayette, Paine, Garibaldi, and Kosciuszko who opposed tyranny not only in their own homelands, but wherever they lent their talents. The heritage that Gen. Pulaski left to the Americans was a noble one. His Legion earned Washington’s approval and was a model for the formation of others in subsequent campaigns. The cavalry Pulaski organized became the nucleus for future squadrons and thus earning Pulaski the title “Father of American Cavalry.”

The tragic death of this Polish and American hero has not erased his deeds from the memory of future generations, either in the Old World or New. There is hardly a state in the union that does not have a county or town, street or highway, park or school, or monument named in grateful memory to Gen. Pulaski. May the magnificent spirit of Gen. Casimir Pulaski continue to inspire all Americans with a sense of duty to country, pride, a spirit of mission, and the never-ending struggle for human dignity and freedom. In such a manner, we Americans can honor this soldier of Liberty, this undaunted warrior who sacrificed his life in the cause of American Independence. As we pay tribute today to the life and heroic deeds

of Gen. Kazimierz Pulaski, each one of us is a steward of our heritage. It is our duty and responsibility as Polish Americans to ensure that our contributions to this great nation are never forgotten or minimized and that we pass this on to younger generations to carry this mantle. By doing so, we preserve our place in history and our worth to this nation.

At today's celebration, I welcome the President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda, and First Lady Agata Kornhausr-Duda, to the Polish Museum of America to honor General Kazimierz Pulaski for his contributions to American independence and for the ultimate sacrifice Pulaski gave for this country.



Richard Owsiany
President



Lithograph, *Foreign volunteers.*
Steuben. Pulaski. La Fayette.
Kosciusko. De Kalb. New York:
Virtue & Yorston; Eng. by J. Rogers.
From PMA Archives Collections

HONORARY GUESTS

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Kosciuszko Museum President, Solothurn, Switzerland

Marek Adamczyk
Jan Karski Polish School Director

Laura Adams
Parkway Bank VP Branch Manager

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Peter Alter
Chicago History Museum Chief Historian

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*Polish Museum and Archives President,
Essendon North, Victoria, Australia*

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Thaddeus Kosciuszko 7th Air Escadrille Polish School Principal

Eugene Bak
PMA Life Member

Sigita Balzekas
Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture

Maria Baran
Holy Trinity Polish School Director

Chester Barbasiewicz
PMA Life Heritage Member

Dr. Jacek Barski
*Porta Polonica Documentation Centre for the Culture
and History of the Poles Head, Bochum, Germany*

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Circuit Court of Cook County Circuit Judge

Rev. Andrzej Bartos
Ss. Bruno & Richard Pastor

Agnieszka Bastrzyk
*PRCUA Secretary Treasurer;
Polish American Chamber of Commerce Treasurer*

Rev. Robert Bedzinski
Holy Trinity Polish Mission Director

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Palos Hills Mayor

Pamela & Harlan Berk
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Elzbieta Berkowicz
Maria Sklodowska Curie Polish School Director

Rev. Thomas Bernas
St. William Administrator

Louis & Charlene Bielakowski
PMA Life Heritage Members

Bob & Eleanor Bielenda
PMA Life Members

Halina Bielowicz
PMA Life Member

Zofia Biernadska
*Polish Army Veterans Association of America Post 90
Veteran of the Polish II Corps*

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Paderewski Symphony Orchestra General Director

Dee Blicharski
PMA Life Member

Rev. Michal Blicharski
Our Lady Mother of the Church/ Polish Mission Director

Dr. George Bobinski
PMA Life Member

Brenda Bokowski
PNC Financial Services Group

Colleen Bonkowski
PRCUA District 10 Director

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12th Congressional District of IL US Representative

Commissioner Scott Britton
Cook County Board of Commissioners 14th District

Brenda Bruce & Alvin M Fountain II

Valerie Brumm
PRCUA District 10 Director

Marta Bryszewska
*Ignacy Domeyko Polish Library Director,
Buenos Aires, Argentina*

Piotr Brzek
Chicago Union of Upper Silesians President

Anna Buchmann
Polish Museum Director, Rapperswil, Switzerland

Rev. Antoni Bury
St. Zachary Administrator

Thomas & Ann Burzycki
PMA Life Members

Rev. Anthony Bus
St. Stanislaus Kostka Pastor

Marcella Bush
Polish Educational & Cultural Foundation President

Hon. Nick Caiafa
Schiller Park Mayor

Krzysztof Calka
*Ministry of Culture & National Heritage, Department of Finance
Division III Financing Ministry Programs Chief Specialist,
Warsaw, Poland*

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Cook County Board of Review 1st District

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City of Chicago 31st Ward Alderman

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6th Congressional District of IL US Representative

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22nd District IL State Senator

Hon. Javier Cervantes
1st District IL State Senator

John Chitkowski
PMA Legal Counsel

Kazimierz Chlebek
PMA Life Member

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22nd Judicial Circuit Chief Judge; Advocates Society President

Joanna Cholewinski
PRCUA District 7 Director

Heidi Christen
Dank Haus German American Cultural Center Executive Director

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Circuit Court of Cook County Circuit Judge

Hon. Kathryn Ciesla
Northbrook Mayor

Maria & Richard Ciesla
PMA President Emeritus; PMA Life Members

Hubert Cioromski
Copernicus Foundation Chair

Myron Cislo
PRCUA District 8 Director

Geraldine Balut Coleman
PMA Life Member

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5th District IL State Senator

Hon. Melissa Conyears-Ervin
City of Chicago Treasurer

Barbara Cooper
PMA Life Member

Anthony Crissie
Crissie Insurance Group President & CEO

Hon. Margaret Croke
12th District IL State Representative

Hon. Ruth Cruz
City of Chicago 30th Ward Alderman

Virginia Cudecki
PMA Director; PMA Life Member

Hon. Bill Cunningham
18th District IL State Senator

Hon. Joy Cunningham
Illinois Supreme Court Justice First District

Archbishop Blase Cupich
Archdiocese of Chicago

Hon. John Curran
41st District IL State Senator

Rev. Eryk Czarnecki
St. Gertrude Pastor

Yola Czosnyka
St. Raphael Kalinowski Polish School Director



Illinois Governor Daniel Walker signing the Pulaski Day bill
at the Polish Museum of America, September 9, 1973.

From the PMA Photography Archives Collections



Tomasz Dabrowski
Polish Army Veterans Association of America Post 90
Vice Commander/ Financial Secretary

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Schaumburg Mayor

Commissioner John Daley
Cook County Board of Commissioners 11th District

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Our Lady of Unity Pastor

Dr. Josephine Dlugopolski
Polish American Medical Society President

Rev. Dr. Andrzej Dobrzynski
Center for Documentation & Research of the Pontificate
of John Paul II Director, Rome, Italy

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State of Illinois US Senator

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Czeslaw Milosz Polish School Director

Dr. & Mrs. Robert Dutka
PMA Life Members

Elizabeth Dynowski
PRCUA District 8 Director

Wieslawa Dziedzic
Gen. Wladyslaw Anders Polish School Director

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Lemont Mayor

Camille Einoder
PMA Life Member

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Dr. Monica Felix
Chicago Cultural Alliance Executive Director

Lidia & Jerzy Filus
*Kosciuszko Foundation - Chicago Chapter President;
Council of Educators in Polonia President; PMA Life Members*

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9th District IL State Senator

Mr. & Mrs. Peter Finie
PMA Life Heritage Members

Robert Flor
PMA Life Member

Hon. Patricia Flynn
*Metropolitan Water Reclamation District
Board of Commissioners Vice President*

Hon. Bill Foster
11th Congressional District of IL US Representative

Hon. Robyn Gabel
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Bust of Kazimierz Pulaski
by Kazimierz Chodzinski, painted plaster, 1909.
From the PMA Pulaski Collection



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General Casimir Pulaski
(1745-1779)



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Equestrian monument of Kazimierz Pulaski
in a studio of the sculptor Kazimierz Chodzinski, 1910.
From the PMA Photography Archives Collections



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Pulaski at Savannah by Stanislaw Batowski, oil, 1931.
From the PMA Pulaski Collection



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Dear General

I have taken my quarters about seven miles
from Savannah, at the widow Gibbons's house, on the
way to Ogeechee's ferry, it is very essential post, the
Enemies got an advanced one about two miles from
the town, that they have posted there since last
night, being alarmed by the detachment which was
on their lines yesterday, it will be necessary that
my detachment should be reinforced not only by
the Cavalry, but with some infantry to give me
the facility of attacking their pickets, I shall pursue
two miles further on the Sunbury's road to keep a
free communication with Count D'Arting, the enemies
send on that road very ~~soon~~ often some parties.

I have the honour to be
with respect Dear General

your most humble
Obedt. Pulaski

September the 14th 1779
at three o'clock in the morning.

Handwritten letter by Pulaski, reporting to General Benjamin Lincoln on the enemy at Savannah, on September 14, 1779 – less than one month before the assault in which he was mortally wounded.
From the PMA Archives Gen. Kazimierz Pulaski Collection

CASIMIR PULASKI

A Biography by Jan M. Lorys



Casimir Pulaski was born in Warsaw, Poland. Named after a Polish saint, his birthday has been established as March 6, 1745. Part of the aristocracy, he was educated on the family estate at Warka, south of Warsaw, and participated in activities befitting his rank and gender. In 1762, he was a page in the court of the Duke of Courland, a vassal of the Polish King. The Duke's court was interned by Russian forces occupying the area. Pulaski was later released and returned to Warka. Based on his experiences of Czarist expansionism, he learned contemporary military tactics. He was also educated in running farming estates, and took part in responsibilities of local and national government, as the aristocracy was the class that defended the State, elected the King, set foreign policy, and oversaw the economy.

THE BAR CONFEDERATION

In 1764, along with his family, he participated in the election of King Stanisław Augustus Poniatowski. The Polish monarchy was elective, not hereditary, and only the nobility, which made up around 14% of the population, had the right to vote. Unfortunately, the system was open to bribery and intimidation. By 1766, a significant part of

the nobility became convinced that the King was a weak monarch, and that the Russian ambassador was directing Polish decisions.

The Polish nobility invoked a Confederation on February 29, 1768, a feudal move consisting of a general mobilization of the nobility when the country was threatened. Based in the southeastern town of Bar, the Bar Confederation counted the Pulaski family amongst its leaders, and young Casimir became one of its military commanders. With the Royal Army divided on its loyalty, and as the Confederation did not maintain a standing army, its forces were composed of retainers representing various degrees of military training and equipment. Their well trained and equipped opponents, the Russian Army, was one of the largest in Europe. Relying on what would later be known as guerilla tactics, the Confederation forces, knowing the terrain and grouped as small bands, attacked elements of the Russian Army. Sometimes they would form larger bands and try to fight larger numbers of Russians. Sometimes they won, sometimes they lost.

Pulaski was one of the luckier commanders, winning some battles, but losing others. Though of an offensive frame of mind, he became proficient at fighting defensive battles, first at Berdyczów, then at Okopy Świętej Trójcy, or the bastions of the Holy Trinity. The war ebbed and flowed. Bar was captured early on, but the Confederation found a temporary ally in the Austrian monarchy. France, under the old maxim, the enemy of my enemy is my friend, secretly supported the Poles as a counterweight to the Russians. Reinforced, Pulaski captured the shrine at Częstochowa. Pulaski held off the Russians, but this was not a decisive victory to end the war.

Confederation forces found refuge in Austria, which remained neutral. Here, the leaders of the Confederation proposed a plan to kidnap the King and have him become the figurehead of the struggle and rally the country to defeat the invaders of Poland. Pulaski at first opposed the plan, but eventually saw that the nation had to rally around someone. He stipulated that no harm come to the King.

The abduction on November 3, 1771 happened in such an amateurish style, that the king managed to outwit his captors. The Russians quickly declared that the king had been the target of an assassination attempt and named Pulaski as the chief instigator and accused him of attempted regicide. The botched kidnapping turned Austria against the Confederation, and lost support among those European powers that had been secretly supporting the Confederation against Russia. Pulaski, seeing that further struggle was pointless, ordered his troops in Częstochowa and other detachments to disband. He left Poland for good. In 1773, the Polish Royal Tribunal sentenced him to death *in absentia* and stripped him of "all dignity and honors."

Pulaski found himself in exile in the Ottoman Empire, then at war with Czarist Russia. He convinced the Ottoman Turks to organize a force of exiled Poles with him in command, but the Turks surrendered before these troops could be organized and trained. He barely managed to escape to Marseilles. In France, he tried to obtain a commission in the French Army, but was rebuffed. Stripped of his lands and income and with no other prospects of employment, he was placed in debtor's prison until his friends were able to raise funds to pay off his debts.



THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Fortunately, there were other wars going on in the world. It was 1777, and the American Revolution against King George III had been going on for nearly two years. At first, the Colonists fought to preserve their rights as British subjects, but on July 4, 1776, they declared independence from the British crown. As a fighter against

the Czar of Russia and perceived of regicide, Pulaski had a certain renown among those recruiting European experts to train the Continental forces. The American agents were Silas Dean and Benjamin Franklin. Franklin wrote a letter of introduction to the American Commander in Chief, presenting Pulaski in glowing terms: "Count Pulaski of Poland, an officer famous throughout Europe for his bravery and conduct in defense of the liberties of his country against the three great invading powers of Russia, Austria... may be highly useful to our service."

Pulaski arrived in Marblehead, Massachusetts, near Boston on July 23, 1777, as a volunteer. He wrote ahead to General Washington, famously stating: "I came here, where freedom is being defended, to serve it and to live or die for it." Although Washington did not have the authority to appoint Pulaski to any position or salary, Pulaski appeared at the Continental Army headquarters, near Philadelphia on August 20, 1777. While still without a command or rank, he participated in his first battle at Brandywine. When the tide began to turn against the American forces, Washington gave Pulaski command of his 30-man bodyguard to scout out what the British were attempting. The reconnaissance mission discovered that the British outflanked the Americans and



George Washington and Casimir Pulaski after the battle near the Brandywine river
Jerzy Washington i Kazimierz Pulaski po bitwie nad rzeką Brandywine.

planned to cut off their line of withdrawal. Washington told Pulaski to hold off the British with his 30 horsemen and any infantry that would fight until the army could retreat. This Pulaski did, allowing the main Army to escape in rather good order, and incidentally, saved the life of Washington. Had Washington been killed or captured, the Revolutionary cause would have died out, because the Americans did not have anyone with his prestige and determination.

On September 15, 1777, Congress issued orders commissioning Count Pulaski a Brigadier General and in charge of the few hundred men in the four regiments of American cavalry. The next day, Brigadier General Pulaski, doing a job normally performed by a lieutenant, spotted British forces moving towards the American lines. Heeding Pulaski's warnings issued in French and Polish, Washington organized for battle. However, severe weather discouraged both sides from engaging.

On October 4, 1777, he fought at Germantown, the last battle before both sides went into winter camps. Pulaski and his cavalry spent the winter of 1777/78 in the Valley Forge area. Pulaski, who had fought the Russians in Poland in the winter months, argued that military operations should continue. However, he was overruled and instead trained his four cavalry regiments. The American cavalry was not considered a decisive arm of battle. Rather than being a screening force, to keep the enemy from finding out your intentions, the regiments were used as escorts for supply columns, dispatch riders and bodyguards for the higher officers. Pulaski rewrote the cavalry regulations based on his experiences. He even tried to get the Americans to adopt the lance.

With winter coming to an end, General Anthony Wayne, one of the better junior generals of the Continental Army, was sent on a foraging mission to gather supplies. He requested support from the cavalry. On February 29, 1778, 50 horsemen led by Pulaski convinced the British that they were being attacked by a much larger force. The British retreated back into Pennsylvania.

Despite his good relations with the senior American officers, Pulaski and other foreigners were resented by some American who thought that they should hold higher ranks. Also, while Pulaski spoke a few languages, English was not one of them; often, his orders were misinterpreted or ignored. Congress was always behind in paying the soldiers and reimbursing the commanders for their expenses. Pulaski's request to arm his cavalry with lances was also denied. Under such conditions, Pulaski resigned his command and left the cavalry under the command of Colonel Michael Kovats, a Hungarian volunteer.

At Yorktown in Virginia, Pulaski met with General Horatio Gates, who recommended that Pulaski organize a new unit that would act independently and according to his desires. This unit, a mixture of cavalry and infantry, would be named Pulaski's Cavalry Legion. The unit was filled with European volunteers and some Americans and headquartered in Baltimore. It numbered about 330, mostly infantry. Due to Congress' chronic financial shortages, Pulaski supported the unit from his personal fortune. The Legion received a standard from the Moravian Sisters, a Christian religious grouping.

The Legion's first mission was to defend Egg Harbor, New Jersey, near present day Atlantic City. Without artillery, this was a mission beyond the capability of the Legion. The British force, made up of American Loyalists, was led by a deserter from the Legion. They launched a surprise attack on the infantry, killing 50 in their sleep and taking few prisoners. Pulaski led the Cavalry in a counter maneuver and drove off



A. Szuk pinx.

Pulaski mortally wounded in the battle of Savannah.
Pulaski ranny śmiertelnie w bitwie pod Savannah.



the attackers. From here, the Legion was transferred to lower New York in a campaign against American Loyalists and Native Americans supported by the English. He was unhappy that his European trained soldiers were best used against British regulars and that feeding the right fodder to the mounts was a constant problem.

Pulaski and his Legion were rescued by the British decision to hold in the North and take the offensive to the Southern colonies. On February 2, 1779, he was ordered to build up his Legion and to move to South Carolina. Pulaski arrived with his cavalry in Charleston on May 8, 1779. The city was threatened by the British under Brigadier General Prevost. Pulaski launched a series of attacks that stopped the British and also stopped the city officials of Charleston from surrendering to the British.

While Pulaski suffered from malaria in the South, he remained on active duty. The American commander, General Benjamin Lincoln, reinforced by the French Army and Navy, decided to retake Savannah from the English. The plan was to cutoff the city from British naval power by means of the French fleet under the command of Admiral Charles Hector d'Estaing. The American and French armies were to prevent the British from

escaping and stopping any help that might come. Hopefully, the garrison would be starved into surrendering. Pulaski was placed in charge of the American and French cavalry. His missions were to prevent the British from going out into the countryside for food and to scout for any British units coming to the aid of Savannah.

Unfortunately, a large British fleet was reported to be sailing towards the South and Admiral D'Estaing decided for an assault rather than a siege. Plans were made for an all-out assault to take Savannah. Again, treachery was afoot. An American Loyalist, posing as an American soldier, warned the British. During the attack, Admiral D'Estaing was wounded and the French forces wavered. Pulaski led his cavalry to rally the French and was wounded by grapeshot. Taken off the battlefield, he never regained consciousness. He was placed on the brig the *WASP* to be taken to Charleston for better medical treatment. On October 11, 1779, he died aboard the *WASP*. Knowing that Czarist Russia's reward for Pulaski, either dead or alive, might be taken up by the British, they reported the body being buried at sea. In truth, he was buried at the Greenwich plantation, near Savannah, Georgia. His remains were disinterred in 1853, and placed in Casimir Pulaski Monument in Monterrey Square in the historic center of Savannah the following year.

Illustrations:

Postcard images featuring Pulaski from the 1939 series, *Pictures from the Glorious Days of the Polish-American Fraternity*, by Arthur Szyk. From the PMA Archives Postcard Collections

Color photographs of the Pulaski Monument in Savannah, Georgia, with detail. From the PMA Photography Archives Collections





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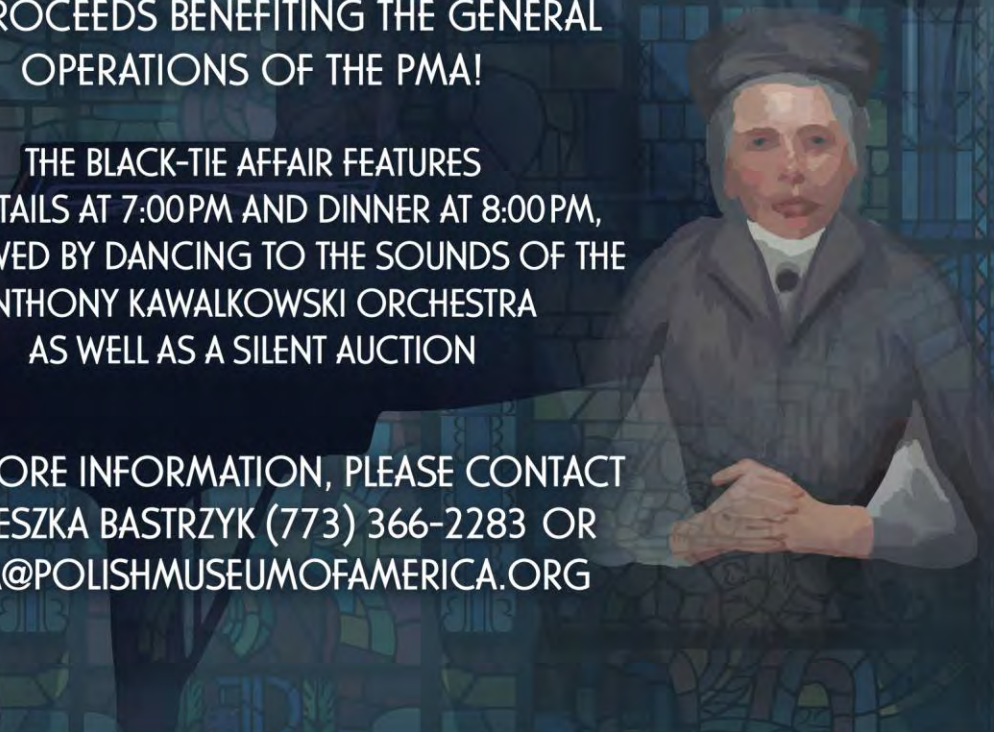
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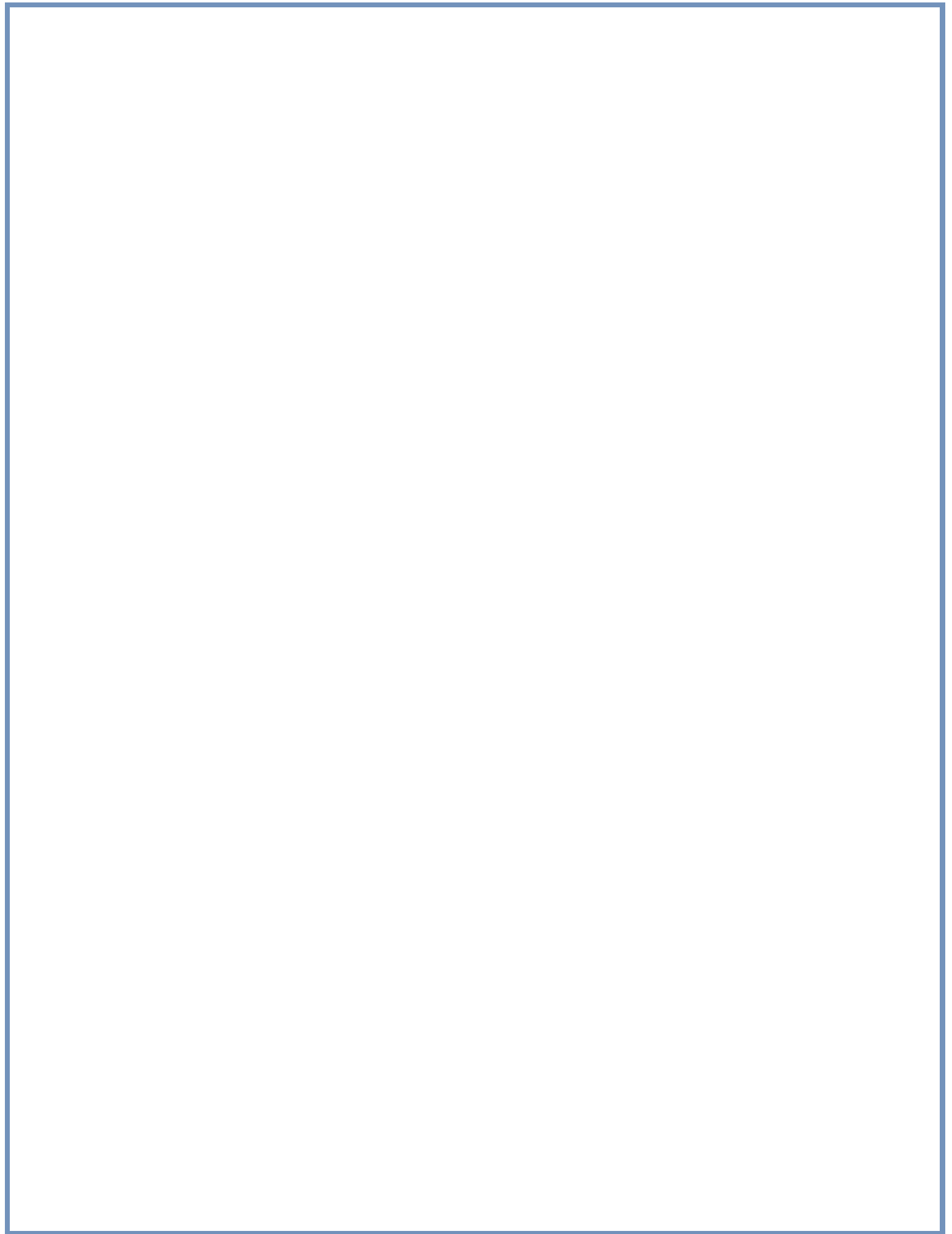
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