

## Poland Celebrates the 100th Anniversary of Independence

- 2018 Declared Jubilee Year by Polish Government -



2018 will be a very special year, a jubilee year — in Poland and for Poles all around the world — marking the 100th anniversary of Poland regaining its independence on November 11, 1918. This centennial anniversary commemorates the restoration of Poland's sovereignty as the Second Polish Republic and the restoration of its independence after 123 years of partition under Austrian, Prussian, and Russian rule. During the partitions, Poland had ceased to exist as a nation — and it wasn't until the end of World War I and the signing of the Treaty of Versailles that the country once again emerged as a sovereign state. This is what we celebrate in 2018.

Fittingly, the Polish government has declared 2018 as a Jubilee Year, commemorating this important milestone, *the 100th Anniversary of Poland's Independence*. In addition, a Senate declaration formally designated 2018 as the year to celebrate the *Wielkopolska Uprising*, the *Bar Confederation*, and the ongoing struggle for *Women's Rights*. Famous Poles to be honored during 2018 include the poet *Zbigniew Herbert*, World War II hero and PWA Honorary Member *Irena Sendler*, and *Archbishop Ignacy Tokarczuk*.

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### 100th Anniversary of Poland's Independence

On November 11, 1918, the dream of many generations of Poles came true: the Polish state was reborn after 123 years of occupation by Prussians, Russians, and Austrians. This is the achievement that we celebrate in 2018, 100 years later. Poles all around the world will be marking this centennial and they will be observing the milestones and heroes, as listed below. As members of Polish Women's Alliance of America, we are especially proud to be commemorating the 100th Anniversary of Women's Right to Vote in Poland, as well as the life and achievements of Irena Sandler, World War II hero and Honorary Member of PWA.

### **The Wielkopolska Uprising**

The uprising had a significant effect on the Treaty of Versailles, which granted a reconstituted Second Polish Republic, the area won by the Polish insurrectionists. The region was part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth before the Second Partition of Poland in 1793 when it was taken over by the German Kingdom of Prussia.

### **250th Anniversary of the Bar Confederation**

The Bar Confederation was an armed coalition of Polish nobles established on February 29, 1768, in the city of Bar, in Podolia. It was set up to protect the Catholic faith and Polish independence. The purpose of the Confederation was to abolish the treaty imposed by Russia, pursuant to which Poland became a Russian protectorate, as well as to abolish acts – passed by the Sejm under the terror of Russian troops – granting equal rights to people of other faith.

### **100th Anniversary of Women's Voting Rights in Poland**

2018 has been announced as the year of Women's Rights, connected with the 100th anniversary of voting rights granted to women in Poland. On November 28, 1918, Józef Piłsudski signed an Election Regulation Decree governing the Legislative Sejm Elections that stipulated that every Polish citizen, regardless of gender, had the right to vote.

### **Irena Sendler**

Irena Sendler is one of three notable Polish citizens to be honored by the Polish state in 2018. The 10th anniversary of the death of this World War II hero and social activist who contributed to saving the lives of 2,500 Jewish children from the Holocaust as head of the children's section of the Jewish Aid Council "Żegota" falls on May 12, 2018. Sendler was named an Honorary Member of PWA in 2007.

### **Archbishop Ignacy Tokarczuk**

In 2018, we also celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of the late Archbishop of Przemyśl, Ignacy Tokarczuk, a relentless defender of the rights of the followers of the Catholic Church and one of the spiritual leaders of the Polish nation's peaceful struggle for the independence of its homeland from under Soviet rule.

### **Zbigniew Herbert**

July 28, 2018, marks the 20th anniversary of the death of one of the greatest Polish and European poets of the 20th century. Herbert always championed values: in art – the canon of beauty, hierarchy, and craftsmanship; and in life – the ethical codes differentiating between good and evil. He embodied faithfulness, and he understood patriotism as a rigorous love that demands solidarity with those subjected to humiliation and oppression.