


2011

Hank Stram

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Recommended Citation

Drobnicki, John A. 2011. Stram, Hank. In *The Polish American Encyclopedia*, edited by James S. Pula, 506. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co.

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Stowarzyszenie Weteranów Armii Polskiej *see* Polish Army Veterans Association.

Stram, Hank (Henry Louis Wilczek; b. Chicago, Illinois, January 3, 1923; d. Covington, Louisiana, July 4, 2005). Football coach, broadcaster. Stram was the son of Henry and Nellie (Boots) Wilczek. The elder Wilczek was a tailor who had wrestled professionally under the name Stramm—German for “sturdy”—and the family’s surname was eventually changed to Stram. To make ends meet for him and his sister after his father’s death (1938), his mother opened a restaurant with support from the local Polish National Alliance lodge. Stram remained grateful, and later organized the Hank Stram/Tony Zale Silver Bell Sports Award Banquet, held every year to raise scholarship money for local graduating high school seniors of Polish and Slavic descent. Stram would recruit high profile friends from around the country to appear at the annual banquet in Indiana, guaranteeing its success.

After lettering in four sports (football, baseball, basketball, and track) at Lew Wallace High School in Gary, Indiana, Stram accepted a scholarship to Purdue University, but was drafted after his sophomore year into the U.S. Army Air Forces (1943–46). After returning to Purdue, he received the Big Ten Medal, awarded to the conference’s best all-around scholar-athlete. Upon graduation (1948), Stram was hired to be Purdue’s backfield coach (1948–55), and also coached the baseball team. Among the players he recruited to Purdue was quarterback Len Dawson. When head coach Stu Holcomb left, Purdue bypassed Stram for the job, so he became offensive coach at Southern Methodist for one year (1956–57). When SMU also passed him over for the head coaching job—Stram believed it was because he was a Roman Catholic—he moved to Notre Dame as backfield coach for two seasons, and then became an assistant coach at the University of Miami.

In 1960, Lamar Hunt hired Stram to be head coach of the Dallas Texans of the fledgling American Football League, which Hunt had formed after the National Football League resisted expansion efforts. The Texans won the AFL championship after their third season, before moving to Kansas City to become the Chiefs. After winning the franchise’s second AFL championship, the Chiefs lost to the Green Bay Packers in the first NFL–AFL World Championship game in January 1967, later known as Super Bowl I. The Chiefs won a third AFL championship in 1969, and then beat the heavily favored Minnesota Vikings

in Super Bowl IV, which was the last game prior to the NFL–AFL merger. Stram was the only head coach who had lasted the entire history of the AFL (1960–69), and was also its winningest coach. Known as “The Mentor” and considered a master innovator, Stram popularized the I-formation, the moving pocket, the two tight end offense, the zone defense, the triple-stack defense, and also instituted weight-training and off-season minicamps. He took players who were cast-offs from other teams, including Len Dawson, and coached them to success. Five of Stram’s players were voted into the Hall of Fame, and he encouraged diversity on his teams, recruiting heavily from historically black colleges.

After being fired by Hunt in 1974, Stram became a football broadcaster for CBS, before spending two dismal seasons as head coach of the New Orleans Saints (1976–77). He then returned to CBS, where he worked on both television and radio, including a very successful 16-year pairing with Jack Buck broadcasting Monday Night Football games on CBS Radio. His professional coaching record over sixteen seasons (including playoffs) was 136–100–10.

An impeccable dresser (which he credited to his father), Stram became a fan favorite after wearing a hidden microphone for NFL Films on the sideline during Super Bowl IV, during which he made many humorous comments, which some critics saw as gloating. Stram was voted AFL or AFC coach of the year four times, and was inducted into both the Kansas City Chiefs Hall of Fame (1987) and the Pro Football Hall of Fame (2003). He was elected to the National Polish-American Sports Hall of Fame in 1985.—*John Drobnicki*

SOURCES: Hank Stram, with Lou Sahadi, *They’re Playing My Game* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1986); *Scribner Encyclopedia of American Lives* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2007), Vol. 7.

Straż (The Guard). The *Straż* newspaper first appeared April 17, 1897, a month after the Rev. Franciszek Hodur arrived in Scranton, PA, to accept a call to lead St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr Parish, which was in the process of beginning to break its relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. The paper, which carried general *Polonia* news and articles pertaining to the independent movement in Scranton and other Polish communities in the United States, was distributed locally and to other Polish immigrant settlements. Although remaining independent, *Straż* became, *de facto*, the official organ of the Polish National Catholic Church when the Church formally constituted itself at the First Synod in 1904. When the Church-related but inde-

pendent fraternal benefit society, the Polish National Union of America (*Spójnia*), was organized in 1908, it became the official organ of that organization as well. In 1923, *Rola Boża* (God’s Field) became the official organ of the PNCC, but *Straż* continued to carry Church news into the next century. In the early years, *Straż* was published almost exclusively in the Polish language but, as the decades passed, English began to appear and eventually predominated. *Straż* was published weekly into the twenty-first century and, for a time, was the oldest continuously-published Polish American weekly in America. In late 2009 it changed to an electronic-only format. *Straż* has been edited at various times by hired editors, PNCC clergy, and PNU officers. The first official editor was Stanisław Dangel-Langowski with Zdzisław Łopatnyer acting briefly as co-editor. Other official editors included Stanisław Klukowski, Czesław Łukaszewicz, Stanisław Staruszkiewicz, Józef Mastalski, Theodore L. Zawistowski, Regina Gorzkowska, Wanda Cytowska, and Mitchell Grochowski. Among regular columnists and contributors have been Henry Archacki, Leopold Dende, Lawrence Orzell, Edward Pinkowski, Robert Strybel, and the Rev. Senior Joseph L. Zawistowski under his own name and *nom de plume* Stanisław Okopiszczak. *Straż* Printery was one of the earliest union print shops in Pennsylvania. In addition to printing most of the periodicals, books, and other imprints of the PNC Church and PNU, it was a general job printer and printed several unrelated weekly, monthly, and other publications. The *Straż* Building originally housed the home offices of the PNU, which eventually bought the paper, the printery, and the building. Under its various auspices, the Polish National Catholic Church was the second largest publisher of Polish language imprints in America in the twentieth century.—*Theodore L. Zawistowski*

SOURCES: Casimir J. Grotnik, ed., *An Index to Straż-The Guard, Volume I, 1897–1915, Volume II, 1916–1925, Part I and Part II* (Scranton, PA: Polish National Union of America, 1994 and 1997, respectively); Casimir J. Grotnik, ed., *Polish National Catholic Church: Minutes of the First Eleven General Synods, 1904–1963* (Scranton, PA: Polish National Catholic Church of America Central Diocese and East European Monographs, 2002); Eugene Obidinski, “*Straż* and the Polish National Catholic Church as a Source of Polonian Ethnic Expression,” *PNCC Studies*, Vol. 16 (1995), 47–58.

String Band *see* Polish American String Band.

Strzelecka, Anne (b. Lubelski, Poland, February 11, 1863; d. Castleton, New York, March 5, 1934). Catholic nun. One of the first Sisters of the Resurrection, Strzelecka’s par-