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Stanisław Skrowaczewski

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parish out of serious financial difficulty. In recognition of his services to the Polish cause, in 1954 the Polish government-in-exile in London conferred upon him the honorary title of colonel in the Polish army. Among his other awards, Skoniecki was decorated by the Polish government-in-exile with the Haller's Swords medal and the Gold Cross of Merit of the Polish army, and also received the Gold Cross of Merit from the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America. — James S. Pula


Skoniecki, Alfons A. (b. Zielenia, Poland, July 16, 1894; d. Montague, Massachusetts, July 26, 1975). Priest. Ordained in the U.S. in 1917, during World War I he actively supported recruitment efforts for the Polish Army in France. Skoniecki served as assistant pastor of Saints Peter and Paul Parish in Three Rivers, Massachusetts, before being named pastor of St. Mary's Parish in Turners Falls in 1925, a parish he would lead for 23 years. In 1928 he built a new and expanded church building, and throughout his pastorate he encouraged the formation of parish and community organizations and the promotion of Polish culture and traditions. He edited or contributed to various local Polish newspapers and periodicals and served as a delegate to the Polish National Congress, and in 1934 was a delegate to the World Congress of Poles Abroad held in Warsaw. He was elected president of Chapter 1 of the Polish American Council in Massachusetts, and served for seven years as president of the Massachusetts district of the Union of Polish Priests in America. During World War II, he gained prominence as an early promoter of Polish war relief, and later served as executive secretary of the Coordinating Committee of American Polish Associations in the East, a strongly anti–Soviet group that supported U.S. involvement to guarantee Poland's territorial and political integrity. In 1948 he was assigned to serve Saints Peter and Paul parish, a Polish American church in Three Rivers, Massachusetts. There he founded the Mothers' Club, and led the

Skowron, William "Bill" (b. Chicago, Illinois, December 18, 1930; d. —). Baseball player. Skowron attended Purdue University on a football scholarship, but elected to pursue a career in major league baseball. Over the course of fourteen seasons, from 1954 through 1967, he hit 282 with 211 home runs, playing for five teams. A muscular, right-handed power hitter first baseman, he was known as "Moose," a childhood nickname conferred not for size or strength, but for a supposed resemblance to Benito Mussolini. Skowron is best remembered as a stalwart for his original team, the New York Yankees, in an era when they dominated the sport. In nine seasons as a Yankee, he was named to five American League All-Star squads, and played for seven pennant winners and four World Series champions. After being traded from the Yankees, Skowron won one more World Series title with the Los Angeles Dodgers in 1963, and represented the Chicago White Sox in the 1965 All-Star game. Following retirement, he resided in the Chicago area, and worked for the White Sox organization. Skowron was inducted into the National Polish-American Sports Hall of Fame in 1980. — Neal Pease

SOURCES: Dom Foker, Sweet Seasons: Recollections of the '55–'64 New York Yankees (Dallas: Taylor, 1989).

Skrowaczewski, Stanislaw (b. Lodów, Poland, October 3, 1923; d. —). Conductor, composer. At the age of four, Skrowaczewski's mother, an amateur pianist, began giving him lessons. By age eight he composed his first symphony, and in the same year the Łwów Philharmonic performed one of his overtures. Dividing his studies at the Łwów Music Society between piano and violin, Skrowaczewski gave his first piano recital at age eleven, two years later conducting and soloing in Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto. He volunteered for the army at the outbreak of World War II, and during the two-year period that Łwów was occupied by the Soviet Union, he continued to play and conduct music. A German bombing raid in June 1941 broke both of his hands and also did nerve damage, ending any thought of pursuing a career as a virtuoso, after which he concentrated on composing and conducting. He worked as a bricklayer under the Nazi occupation, eventually graduating from the University of Łwów in 1945, where he studied physics, chemistry, and philosophy, also receiving diplomas in composition and conducting from the Łwów Conservatory. After further study at the Kraków State Higher School of Music, Skrowaczewski obtained his first conducting position as music director of the Wrocław Philharmonic Orchestra (1946–47). His "Overture 1947" received second prize at the Szymanowski Competition in Warsaw (1947). A fellowship from the French Ministry of Culture and Art enabled him to go to Paris to study composition with Nadia Boulanger and conducting with Paul Kletzki from 1947 to 1949. He also cofounded the avant-garde group "Zodiak," along with Maurice Ohana. Returning to Poland, he led three prominent orchestras in succession: the Silesian Philharmonic Orchestra in Katowice (1949–54), the Kraków Philharmonic Orchestra (1955–56), and the National Philharmonic Orchestra in Warsaw (1957–59). During this time he attained recognition as both a composer and a conductor, receiving first prize in Rome's Santa Cecilia International Competition for Conductors in 1956. His String Quartet, which had previously received second prize at an International Composers Competition in Belgium (1953), was awarded a gold medal at a competition of composers in Moscow (1957). During a Warsaw concert on its 1957 European tour, the Cleveland Orchestra's music director George Szell invited Skrowaczewski
to make his American debut with Cleveland the following year. He guest-conducted in Cleveland again in 1959 (giving the U.S. premiere of his “Symphony for Strings”), as well as in 1960 with Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and the New York Philharmonic, where he substituted for Dmitri Mitropoulos, who had just died. After a worldwide search, Skrowaczewski was hired in 1960 to succeed Antal Dorati as music director of the Minneapolis Symphony (later renamed the Minnesota Orchestra). He became a naturalized American citizen in 1966. Many of Skrowaczewski’s earliest works, mostly string quartets and other chamber works, were lost when he fled Lwów in 1945. He began to actively compose again in 1969 after the Philadelphia Orchestra premiered his Oboe Concerto. Among his many compositions are four symphonies; four string quartets; two overtures; concerti for English horn (1969), clarinet (1980), and violin (1985); six piano sonatas, as well as music for opera, ballet, films, and theatre. In Minnesota, Skrowaczewski introduced many important Polish works to American audiences, including compositions by Szymanowski (Symphony No. 2), and Lutosławski (Funeral Music), as well as the American premiere of Penderecki’s “The Passion and Death of Our Lord Jesus According to St. Luke.” He also lobbied tirelessly for the construction of Orchestra Hall. He made his debut as an opera conductor in 1964 at the State Opera in Vienna and his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1970. After nineteen years leading the Minnesota Orchestra, he decided not to renew his contract and became conductor laureate in 1979, wanting to concentrate on composing, teaching, and guest conducting. However, after several years, he agreed to become Principal Conductor of the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester, England, from 1984–91. He also served as Musical Adviser to the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra (1986–88), and the Milwaukee Symphony (1992–94). In 2007, he became principal conductor of two Tokyo orchestras: the Nippon Symphony and the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony. Among his honors are the Commander’s Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta; Second Prize in the International Competition for String Quartet (1953); the Kennedy Center Friedheim Award (1976); and the Gold Medal, Bruckner-Mahler Society (1999). He received honorary doctorates from Hamline University (1961), Macalester College (1977), the University of Minnesota (1979), and the Royal College of Music, Manchester (1986). — John Drobnički


Slisz, Stanislaus Thomas (b. Kołaczyce, Poland, March 4, 1856; d. Buffalo, New York, October 10, 1908), Editor, journalist. Slisz received his education in Jasło and Chyrow before enrolling in the Jagiellonian University in Kraków where he earned a degree in law. He migrated to the U.S. in 1885, settling in Buffalo, NY, where he edited the weekly newspaper Ojczyzna (Fatherland, 1885–87) which reflected an orientation toward the Democratic Party. When this newspaper failed, he moved to Milwaukee in 1887 to edit the weekly Krytyka (The Critic), and from 1887 to 1889 served as editor of Wiara i Ojczyzna (Faith and Fatherland), the organ of the Polish Roman Catholic Union, and Kropidlo (The Aspergillum) in Chicago. Moving back to Buffalo in 1889, he assumed editorship of Polak w Ameryce (The Pole in America, 1889–1908), a successor to the earlier Ojczyzna, and Polak Amerykański (Polish American, 1908–09). Slisz also authored a number of short stories and contributed to other newspapers, adhering throughout to support of Roman Catholic issues. —James S. Pula


Slisz, Curtis (b. Brooklyn, New York, March 26, 1954; d.—). Community activist, radio personality. The son of a Polish father and an Italian mother, Slisz graduated from Canarsie High School. In May 1977, during a time when New York City as experiencing a wave of violent crimes on its subways, he created a crime-fighting organization he named “The Magnificent 13.” As the group grew in numbers it was eventually renamed “The Guardian Angels.” Their distinctive uniform of a military-style red beret and white insignia t-shirt became instantly recognizable. Their work drew both positive and negative reactions from police, public officials, local residents, and the media, as they began to court media attention. As president of the group, Slisz saw the organization grow to include operations in nine countries and 82 cities around the world, with a membership of some 5,000. The Angels’ New York City activities eventually became confined mostly to patrolling the Restaurant Row neighborhood in Manhattan. In July 1992, a stolen taxi picked Sliwa up near his East Village home and a gunman hiding in the front passenger seat jumped up and fired several shots, wounding Sliwa in his groin and legs. He escaped the kidnapping attempt by jumping out the window as the cab was moving. Federal prosecutors charged John A. Gotti, the son of organized crime boss John Gotti, with attempted murder. It was said that the younger Gotti was angered by comments supposedly made by Sliwa about the elder Gotti. After three failed attempts to try Gotti on the charges, they were eventually dropped. Slowa went on to become a radio talk show host on WABC in New York, and later on WNYC. In 1994, after four months at WNYC, Slisz went back to WABC and in 1999 became the co-host, with attorney Ron Kuby, of the long-running show Curtis and Kuby in the Morning. The show lasted eight years until Citadel Broadcasting replaced them with Don Imus, but the station kept Slowa in a late-night time slot. As a broadcaster, he was also known for his “Slizisms,” malapropisms such as “They...