



## Henryk Szkolnicki, M.D.

November 3, 1923 - September 29, 2018

Dr. Henryk Szkolnicki died September 29, 2018 -- a physician and Renaissance man who took such profound joy in life that he defied several early attempts to cut his short. Neither Nazis, nor Communists, nor the inevitable progress of time could dampen Dr. Henry's irrepressible spirit. He exited the stage at 94 after a long illness which he endured with stoicism and grace. He is survived by his loving wife of 49 years, Stephanie (nee Romanowski). His spirit lives on, however, in all who knew him and enjoyed his love and friendship. He will be greatly missed.

A proud veteran of the Polish Home Army (Armia Krajowa), Dr. Henry was born November 3, 1923 in Lowicz, Poland to Aleksander and Janina Szkolnicki. Dr. Henry spent his early years there before the family moved to Warsaw. In that city on September 1, 1939 at the age of 15, Dr. Henry woke to the sound of explosions. The invasion of Poland by Germany and the bombing of Warsaw had begun, sparking World War II that would not claim his life but would shape it profoundly.

The family survived five years of a brutal German occupation during which Dr. Henry several times escaped certain death. Shortly after bombs began raining down on Warsaw, the family fled the city, stopping at an inn in the countryside. After entering the inn, they heard a deafening boom. A bomb had destroyed the car they'd vacated moments before. After the family later returned to the

city to find their apartment looted, Dr. Henry found himself in a streetcar which was stopped by German soldiers. All the young men on board were taken into custody. After several days in prison, Dr. Henry and the others were loaded into a box car and dispatched to a concentration camp. En route, the men made a hole in the side of the boxcar. After a short stop at a small country station and with the train slowly gaining speed, several men including Dr. Henry managed to jump. They ran for their lives as German soldiers tried to shoot them down. A man running beside Dr. Henry took a bullet but kept on running. Dr. Henry kept running too, and eventually made it home to Warsaw.

With colleges and universities officially closed, Dr. Henry continued his education by attending clandestine lectures in the homes of professors who were willing to take the risk. A fierce Polish patriot, he joined the Underground Polish Home Army -- the heart of the Polish resistance and an armed force loyal to the Polish government in exile. On August 1, 1944, he took part in the Warsaw Uprising. Upon learning of the uprising, Hitler was enraged and gave the order to "level the city". The Germans systematically blew up every building on every main street and boulevard. Without receiving expected assistance from the Russian Army, which occupied Polish territory just east of the city, the Poles continued fighting for 63 days. Then desperately lacking food, water and electricity, the Poles capitulated. The number of fighters and civilians killed is estimated at 130,000 to 150,000.

Dr. Henry managed to avoid being taken to a Nazi POW camp and later joined thousands of others who evacuated the city as occupying Soviet forces began to "register" Polish patriot fighters. He eventually settled on the Baltic coast.

After the war ended in 1945, Dr. Henry resumed his studies, completing his education at the Gdansk Medical School. He took a position as a general surgeon at the Municipal Hospital in the neighboring port city of Gdynia, where he worked his way to the position of Vice Chair, Department of General

Surgery. In those years, he occasionally worked as ship's surgeon aboard freighters and passenger vessels that cruised between Gdynia and Canada, where on one such voyage he met his future wife, Stephanie. In 1971, after a lengthy wait for permission to emigrate from Communist Poland to America, he resigned his position to join Stephanie in the United States.

Upon arrival, he concluded that starting a practice as a general surgeon would be extremely difficult, as he lacked a network in the U.S. to generate referrals. At that time, however, there was a shortage of psychiatrists. With clear skill and long experience as a physician, he was recruited into a residency in psychiatry, which he soon completed. He became a Staff Psychiatrist at Ypsilanti Regional Psychiatric Hospital in Ypsilanti, Michigan, where he worked until his retirement. A dedicated healer throughout his life, he had not one but two successful medical careers in two vastly different disciplines.

Dr. Henry never stopped learning -- from books, from his friends, and from his life's many rich experiences. A humanist as well as a scientist, he amassed a great store of knowledge of world history, literature, and music. An opera lover, he and Stephanie were longtime season ticket holders at the Detroit Opera. He and Stephanie also traveled widely, visiting seven continents and always keen to learn the history, culture, and customs of those they encountered. Dr. Henry was also an accomplished linguist, speaking German, Russian, French, and Latin in addition to Polish and English. He always regretted he did not have the opportunity to study Greek.

A born raconteur with a dapper sense of style, Dr. Henry valued the pleasures of a well-cut suit, a fine scotch, and the company of good friends. He was a member of the Polish American Congress, the Friends of Polish Art, and the American Polish Cultural Center, where he spent many enjoyable hours playing bridge. He supported many charities, including those that provided

support to Native American communities, with whom he sympathized for the injustices they suffered.

Dr. Henry was predeceased by his sister Slawomira Hein (Waldemar), and brother-in-law Edmund Romanowski (Carol). He is survived by his nieces Justyna Kruczkowski (Szymon) and Magdalena Raganowicz (Jacek), who reside in Germany; nephew Michael Romanowski (Evangeline), who resides in Missouri; and great nieces and nephews Kasia McGee (Chance), Natalia Kruczkowski, Agnieszka Raganowicz, Paul Raganowicz, Ryan Romanowski, and Elizabeth Romanowski.

Friends and relatives around the world mourn his passing. Those who knew him will always remember his unshakable courage, his generosity of spirit, and his irrepressible drive to live a life of joy and service to others, even in the face of profound adversity.

Funeral Mass will be held Saturday, November 17, 2018 at 11am, preceded by a Memorial Gathering at 10:30am at Our Lady of Czestochowa Church, 3100 18 Mile Road, Sterling Heights. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Native American Rights Fund ([www.narf.org](http://www.narf.org)) 1506 Broadway, Boulder, Colorado 80302-6296 or charity of donor's choice. To share a memory, please use the share a memory tab on this webpage.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Visitation

NOV 17. 10:30 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Our Lady of Czestochowa  
3100 18 Mile Road  
Sterling Heights, MI 48314

## Funeral Mass

NOV 17. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Our Lady of Czestochowa  
3100 18 Mile Road  
Sterling Heights, MI 48314

# Tribute Wall



“ *Henryk Szkolnicki, M.D.*

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December 07, 2023 at 05:11 AM



“ *Twyla Hull lit a candle in memory of Henryk Szkolnicki, M.D.*



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**Twyla Hull** - November 06, 2018 at 07:16 AM