



THE ADVOCATE

Newsletter of the Advocates Society,
an Association of Polish-American Attorneys



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Kathy E. Bojczuk

2nd Vice President

Roman Drewniak

3rd Vice President

Julia Jensen Smolka

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Secretary

Alon Stein

Historian

Board of Governors

The Management of this Society is vested in the Board of Governors, consisting of the Officers, Chairs of Standing Committees and Past Presidents. The Board shall advise, guide, direct and determine the overall policy of the Society.

Installation & Award of Merit Dinner

On Thursday, February 29th, the Advocates Society held its 2024 Annual Installation & Award of Merit Dinner at the Union League Club of Chicago. Past President L. Steven Rakowski was the Master of Ceremonies. Following tradition, Amanda Zink, Past President Michael Zink's wife, sang the Polish and American national anthems. Illinois Supreme Court Justice Elizabeth Rochford administered the oath to new president, Hon. Michael Chmiel. Hon. Timothy C. Evans administered the oath to the remaining officers. Justice Aurelia Pucinski presented the Award of Merit to Marta Almodovar.

We thank all attendees, sponsors, and donors who all made the Installation Dinner a memorable event. We also thank the Immediate Past President, Ann Melichar, for her leadership over the past year, and to the 2023-24 Officers for their enormous dedication and support of the Advocates Society.

We send a heartfelt congratulations to the 2024-25 Officers!





Wawel Castle and the Royal Cathedral - Krakow, POLAND

Calendar of Events

April 2024

9th - Board Meeting; 6:30pm
Cocktails/Networking; 7pm
Meeting (Zoom)

25th - General Meeting and CLE;
6:30pm Cocktails and Networking;
7pm Meeting; (Copernicus, 5216 W
Lawrence, Chicago)

May 2024

3rd - Polish Constitution Day
Parade

14th - Chicago Bar Association
Vanguard Awards

14th - Board Meeting; 6:30pm
Cocktails/Networking; 7pm
Meeting (Zoom)

23rd - General Meeting and CLE;
6:30pm Cocktails and Networking;
7pm Meeting; (Copernicus, 5216 W
Lawrence, Chicago)

June 2024

11th - Board Meeting; 6:30pm
Cocktails/Networking; 7pm
Meeting (Zoom)

25th - Polish Heritage Night with
the White Sox, co-sponsored with
PAPA

Next Newsletter Issue Deadlines
Submissions Due: May 15th
Release Date: June 1st

The Advocate is published quarterly.
Content, including news about
members, can be emailed to
Advocatessociety@gmail.com for
publication consideration.

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Joint Public Relations and Newsletter Committee

The Joint Public Relations and
Newsletter Committee manages,
edits, and coordinates the
production of the newsletter.
Committee members include:

Kathy E. Bojczuk, chair
Hon. Michele Gemskie
Pamela Sakowicz Menaker
Julia Jensen Smolka
Hon. Joan Smuda
Jessica Wiczorkiewicz

Advocates' Installation & Award of Merit Dinner

FEBRUARY 29, 2024



Advocates' Installation & Award of Merit Dinner

FEBRUARY 29, 2024



THE 2024 AWARD OF
MERIT HONOREE
Marta Almedovar

Advocates' Installation & Award of Merit Dinner

FEBRUARY 29, 2024



Marta Almodovar
THE 2024 AWARD OF
MERIT HONOREE

Justice Aurelia Pucinski presenting the Award of Merit to Marta Almodovar

An award is a keepsake, a reminder of success of its recipient; it demonstrates who such awardee is and what has been accomplished. It allows the recipient to look back and say "yeah, I did that. Yes, it was ME".

I am immensely honored and grateful for the recognition. When I think about the Advocates Society Award of Merit, I don't think about creating a successful fundraiser, organizing the "Summer Reception", all the effort I have put into introducing Advocates Society to the broader legal community in Chicago or helping several Polish-American judicial candidates achieve their ultimate goal. Instead, I think about ongoing and forever lasting friendships I developed by joining the organizations in 2011, about the legal service and assistance provided to the Polish community through Amicus Poloniae, and about supporting judicial independence in Poland.

The time I have dedicated to Advocates Society contributed to my personal and professional growth, and made me the person I currently am. I will always be thankful for the opportunity to be a part of Advocates Society.

Marta Almodovar

Advocates' Installation & Award of Merit Dinner

FEBRUARY 29, 2024



Advocates' Installation & Award of Merit Dinner

FEBRUARY 29, 2024

We thank you!



Newly installed President, Hon. Michael Chmiel, presented Past President, Ann Melichar, an award for her excellent service and leadership as President.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR EXCELLENT
SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP,

Ann Melichar



Advocates' Installation & Award of Merit Dinner

FEBRUARY 29, 2024



(Top, Left to Right) Past Presidents: Lucas Figiel, Marta Zaborska, Thaddeus J. Makarewicz, Janette A. Strzalka, Michael Zink, Ret. Hon. Joan Smuda, Peter C. Wachowski, and Regina L. Rathnau.
(Bottom, Left to Right) Hon Timothy Evans, Past Presidents: Kristen Lyons Kozlowski, Hon. Jonathan Clark Green, Ann Melichar, Matthew A. Sidor, and Hon. Steven A. Kozicki.



Congratulations to the 2024-25 officers (From left to right) Roman Drewniak, Alon Stein, Hon. Michele Gemskie, Hon. Chmiel, Julia Jensen Smolka, Kathy E. Bojczuk, Hon. Thomas Nowinski

Event Highlights

January 18th General Meeting and CLE on Collections for the Non-Collection Attorney

The Advocates' General Meeting was held on January 18, 2024, at the Copernicus Center. The evening included networking, delicious Polish food and an informative CLE.

Attorney and Advocates Officer Julia Smolka delivered a one-hour CLE titled *Collection Basics for the Non-Collection Attorney*. In the CLE, she discussed when a party can start collecting on a money judgment. She discussed the common collection practices such as garnishments, citation proceedings, and recording judgment liens. She also discussed basic bankruptcy procedure for when a creditor forces a debtor into bankruptcy. She offered scenarios and examples from her 23 years practicing in commercial litigation. The lively interactive session was well attended.



Julia Jensen Smolka has over 20 years of experience representing diverse business industries and individuals as debtors in reorganizations, bankruptcy, and debt restructuring. Julia is a partner at Robbins DiMonte, Ltd., in Park Ridge and can be reached at jsmolka@robbinsdimonte.com

CLE Presenters NEEDED

If you would like to present as a CLE Speaker, please let us know! CLE's are offered throughout the year at General Meetings. If you have suggestions on topics to cover or presenters, please email us at Advocatessociety@gmail.com



Event Highlights



ADVOCATES' ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY



Event Highlights

March 21st General Meeting and CLE on Emerging Developments in Data Privacy

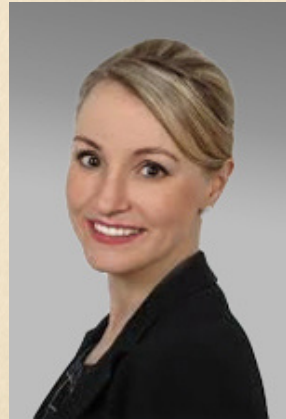
The Advocates' General Meeting was held on March 21, 2024, at the Copernicus Center. The evening included networking, delicious Polish food and an informative CLE.

The presentation provided an overview of the most recent developments on the European data privacy arena (including the General Data Protection Regulation), as well as laws that have been adopted by various states in the last years. Presenters, Justyn Regan and Anthony Jacob, introduced the most common problems that attorneys may face when working on contracts involving data transfers, data collection or data processing.



Anthony Jacob serves as a trusted advisor to domestic and foreign corporations, limited liability companies; all types of partnerships, banks, private lenders, and other commercial lending institutions. He is a partner at Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP, having worked at Hinshaw for over 20 years.

Justyna H. Regan, Ph.D. is a partner at Hinshaw & Culbertson, practicing out of the Chicago office, licensed in Illinois and Poland. She is experienced in international corporate law, international trade, cross-border transactions, US, and European business law.



Advocate SPOTLIGHT: *Attorney Mariusz Zatorski*

To acquaint readers better with Members of the Advocate Society, we spotlight a Member in each issue. In this issue, we feature a Question and Answer with Mariusz Zatorski, a lawyer in private practice who practices family law and bankruptcy law at LSR Family Law Group.



Why are you a member of the Advocates Society?

I first heard of the Advocates Society by chance while working for a bankruptcy firm right after law school. It was not until I started practicing family law and began to volunteer my services at Amicus Poloniae and the Chicago Volunteer Legal Services (CVLS), however, that I became interested in joining the Advocates Society. Through those connections, I met attorneys who were active members of the Society, including then-current officers and former presidents. I quickly began to appreciate the significance and influence the Advocates Society has in Chicago's legal community in general, and the Polish community in particular. This was particularly important to me as someone born in Poland, who has family on both continents, and who is proud of his native language, history, and tradition.

Give us an example of how being a member of the Advocates Society empowered you as an attorney.

As a member of the Advocates Society, I try to attend every meeting and function hosted or sponsored by the organization. This gives me the opportunity to rub shoulders with past and current leaders in the legal profession and allows me to give back to the Polish community of which I am proud. The continuing legal education offered by the Advocates Society as well as participation in their sponsored events allows me to develop professionally and gives me confidence as an attorney that I have the Advocates Society in my corner.

Share any other information about yourself that you think our readers would enjoy.

I practice family and bankruptcy law at LSR Family Law Group with a former president and an active member of the Advocates Society, Steve Rakowski, whom I consider a mentor and who is also proud of his Polish heritage. I have two basset hounds - Sophie and Oliver, whom I love as much as they love me (especially when it's time for dog treats). I like to travel, I follow sports, I've run a few marathons (including the Chicago Marathon in 2011), and I still would like to complete the Iron Man race.



What Is the Judicial Performance Evaluation Program?: Insights from a Facilitator

By Hon. Mitchell L. Hoffman,
(Ret.)

Judges, just like the attorneys who practice in their courtrooms, benefit greatly from feedback on how well they're performing in their jobs. While attorneys typically work closely with their peers, and likely undergo regular performance reviews in their law firms, this process is more difficult for judges. Judging tends to be a solitary endeavor. While there's time for judges to talk and compare notes at the end of the day, for the most part judges work alone in their individual courtrooms while other judges do the same. Of course, judges occasionally get positive or negative feedback from the Appellate Court, but a candid and detailed assessment of how a judge handles his or her courtroom on a day-to-day basis can only come from the attorneys and court staff who share the courtroom with them, and who are able to respond to detailed questions on a confidential basis. It's this kind of information that supports professional development for judges.

In March of 2011 the Illinois Supreme Court launched a new program for mandatory judicial performance evaluation. As stated in Supreme Court Rule 58, "[T]he program is designed for the purpose of achieving excellence in the performance of individual judges and the improvement of the judiciary as a whole". Since the inception of the program, well over 1,000 Illinois judges have gone through this performance evaluation process.

Under the Supreme Court program, judges are confidentially evaluated by the attorneys who appear before them, and the court staff who serve in their courtrooms. The evaluated judges are then required to meet with another judge from outside their own circuit who is a trained facilitator. The evaluated judge and the facilitator will confidentially review the evaluation, process and discuss the information, and work together on strategies to address issues that may be presented by the results.



As the Supreme Court worked with the National Center for State Courts to develop the program, they compiled a comprehensive electronic questionnaire for the purpose of measuring many specific aspects of judicial performance. Having worked as a facilitator in the program, I can tell you that the questionnaire is far more detailed than any bar association survey. The questionnaire seeks specific information on the judge's legal ability, impartiality, professionalism, communication and court management skills. Each of these general areas is broken down into an individual section containing many specific questions designed to gauge performance on discrete skills using a numerical scale. The questionnaire also allows for comments relating to the judge's performance in each specified area. The final evaluation is compiled with all identifying information about the responding attorneys and court staff removed.

A key part of the Supreme Court's program is the training of the judges who will become evaluation facilitators. Facilitators are active or retired judges with at least 6 years of experience who have been selected to undergo facilitator training. The judges selected to be facilitators go through a training process which covers not only how the performance evaluation program operates, but how to best work with the evaluated judges when reviewing the evaluation results, a process which can be delicate and challenging at times (as with performance reviews in any professional setting).

I've served as a facilitator since 2012, and although I was at first concerned about the time commitment and the inherent difficulties of the assignment, looking back over the past 11 years I have to say that it's been one of the most rewarding experiences of my judicial career (and one that I continue in my retirement). Sometimes, the evaluations provide a lot

of positive feedback and very little negative. Other evaluations clearly highlight one or more areas that need improvement. Reading the report can be a difficult and humbling experience for some evaluated judges, and their reactions can range from relief to surprise, irritation or even dejection.

As I see it, the interaction between the evaluated judge and the facilitator is really a two-way street, and the best way to help another judge work through a performance issue is to acknowledge that each of us sometimes share the same frustrations, problems and shortcomings in fulfilling our judicial duties. The important thing is to be able to assess and respond to any criticism you receive in a positive and productive way. Often this involves the evaluated judge and the facilitator comparing notes on how the court calls or legal cultures in their respective circuits may be similar or different. It's also important to identify what stressors may affect the judge's performance. Ultimately these discussions lead to brainstorming specific solutions for improvement in the identified problem areas.

Depending on the results of the evaluation, these discussions could include strategies for keeping your cool in stressful circumstances, how to determine when to speed up or slow down while managing a high-volume court call, making sure to clearly state the reasons for a ruling, or how to deal with self-represented litigants fairly and effectively. I have frequently learned quite a bit from the judges I work with in the program, and often continue to communicate with them after the formal process is completed.

I think the most important takeaway for attorneys reading this article is that they should trust that the process is taken very seriously by the evaluated judges. Although I've seen a wide array of responses

to the evaluations from different judges, I can honestly say that judges take the results very seriously and that most of them benefit from the process and develop concrete plans for improving their performance. This of course is not possible unless attorneys also take the process seriously, and that means taking the time and making the effort to fill out the questionnaire honestly and completely. By responding with your honest input, you'll be doing your part to improve the judiciary and to thereby enhance the quality of justice delivered to the public. That's the ultimate goal that both the bench and the bar are focused on achieving.



HON. MITCHELL L. HOFFMAN (RET.) is a Senior Mediator and Arbitrator at ADR Systems. He previously served as the Presiding Judge of the Civil Division in the 19th Circuit Court in Lake County.



Judge Marsalek, honored by the Chicago Society of the Polish National Alliance

On January 27, 2024, the Chicago Society of the Polish National Alliance held its annual Evening of Elegance and honored the Paderewski Symphony Orchestra and recognized Hon. Diann Marsalek with the Romuald "Ro" Mateszczak Member of the Year Award.



Some Advocates and friends who attended included: Hon. Michelle Gemskie; Roman Drewniak and his wife, Dr. Gabrielle Drewniak; Hon Jonathan Clark Green and his wife, Monica DeBartolo; Hon. Michael Chmiel; Hon. Steven A. Kozicki; Hon. James Pieczonka; Thaddeus J. Makarewicz; Kent Sinson; Ann Melichar; Justyna Regan; and Marta Almodovar (who spearheaded the event and was installed as the Chicago Society's Social Activities Director).



Save the Date

Polish Constitutional Parade Saturday, May 4, 2024

The Advocates' trolley will once again participate at the Polish Constitution Day Parade on May 4, 2024. The Parade not only commemorates the Centennial of the Polish Constitution of May 3, 1791, but also provides the Advocates opportunity to come together with other community organizations to celebrate Polish patriotism, culture, history, and heritage. For more information, please contact Third Vice-President, Roman Drewniak at Advocatessociety@gmail.com.

General Meeting and CLE on Domestic Relations Thursday, April 25, 2024

The Advocates' will hold a General Meeting on April 25th. There will also be a CLE which will include a lively panel discussion on domestic relations. Please visit the website to get more information and register for the event.

A SPECIAL THANKS TO THE ADVOCATES SOCIETY

Advocate members Bob Oleszkiewicz and Hon. Geraldine D'Souza thank the Advocates Society for honoring the passing Mary Jane Oleszkiewicz with a generous floral arrangement, and the presence of many Past Presidents, current Officers and many members at her wake and funeral.

Thank you to all those who extended condolences and made donations too.

May she rest in peace.



MARY JANE OLESZKIEWICZ
(BELOVED MOTHER OF PAST PRESIDENT BOB OLESZKIEWICZ)
(1935-2024)

Member News

Greetings from Maui! Past President **Anna Krolikowska** and her husband, Eric Hanis, and their adorable daughter, Lily, spent some time in Maui for a well deserved family vacation. They had a great time, especially Lily, who even got to sit in the cockpit of the plane. Mahalo!!



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ESTATE PLANNING - REAL ESTATE - BUSINESS

<https://www.magnolialawllc.com/>

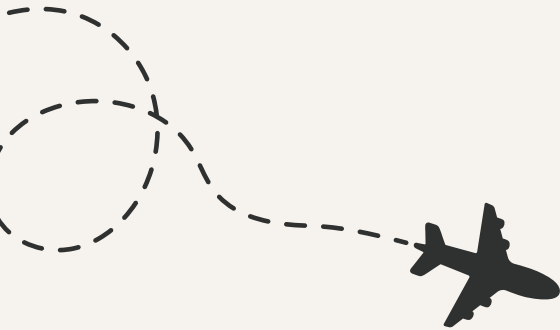
After practicing law for over 13 years, in both the government setting and private practice, Advocate Margo Webb has started her own firm, Magnolia Law. She is using her passion and bilingual skills (fluent in Polish) in helping clients to secure their legacies, and guide individuals, families, and business owners through the intricacies of estate planning.



Advocates' Second Vice President, **Kathy E. Bojczuk**, was recently awarded the 2024 Peggy A. Montes Unsung Heroine Award. This award is given to only 18 women in Cook County whose contributions to their communities, families, and professional endeavors have been so vital, but seldom recognized.

Kathy and her husband, Artur Zadrozny

Poland's History, Culture and Traditions



Krakow, The Heart & Soul of Poland

By Pamela Sakowicz Menaker

A trip to Poland isn't complete without visiting Krakow, located in southern Poland, one of the largest cities (with a population of about 750,000) and known for its amazing architecture. It even served as the capital of Poland for 300 years until 1611 when it was moved to Warsaw.

My sister lived there the summer of 1987 on a scholarship from the Kosciuszko Foundation, studying history and the Polish language at Jagiellonian University, a Medieval facility and the second oldest university in central Europe. It is accredited by the U.S. Department of Education.

Even though Poland still was under communist rule at that time, she along with the other international students of all ages could go about relatively freely, especially with planned field trips such as a visit to the shrine of our Lady of Czestochowa (the

Black Madonna) on her feast day, Aug. 26. Under this title, Mary was crowned the Patron and Protector of Poland since 1655, and this international icon became the symbol of national unity. My sister, Marya named for Mary, also was able to take a two-hour trip to the Zakopane Mountains, Poland's winter resort, breathtaking even in warmer months.

But her favorite spot was Saint Mary's Basilica (Kościół Mariacki), a Brick Gothic church adjacent to the Main Market Square in Krakow. Built in the 14th century, its foundation dates back to the early 13th century and serves as one of the best examples of Polish Gothic architecture. The main section of the church goes back to 1497, but its most stunning site is a stained glass window from 1370 and a magnificent altar (built 1477-89) by Viet Stoss (Wit Stosz) of Germany, considered one of the greatest sculptors and wood carvers of the 1500's. He did much of his work throughout Poland.

Photos and Info Wanted



Advocates, send us your photos and announcements!

Traveling somewhere special? Planning a trip to Poland? Received a special award or job promotion? Email the PR/Newsletter Committee so we can consider including it in the next Newsletter issue.

Email:

Advocatessociety@gmail.com

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/polishadvocates>

We encourage every Advocate to email us any announcements such as job promotions, awards received or personal achievements. Disclosure: All photos, information, and announcements received is subject to the PR/Newsletter Committee and Board review and approval.



Who qualifies to be a member? Any person of Polish descent or affinity, duly licensed to practice law in any jurisdiction, is eligible for membership in this Society, regardless of race or religion. A condition of membership shall be absolute and unqualified loyalty to the constitution of the United States of America.

When do I need to renew? Memberships are renewed every March.

How do I pay? You can visit our website, www.advocatessociety.org.

General Membership

(5 or more years) - \$175

Attorneys who have been admitted to the bar for five (5) or more years.

General Membership

(less than 5 years) - \$150

Attorneys who have been admitted to the bar for less than five (5) years.

Law Student Membership - \$30

Individuals who are not licensed to practice law in any jurisdiction, but are a student attending an accredited law school.

Associate Membership (non-attorney) - \$75

Individuals who are not licensed to practice law in any jurisdiction. This is a non-attorney, non-voting membership.



Amicus Poloniae Pro Bono Legal Clinic

Volunteers are needed (attorneys and Polish translators) for the Amicus Poloniae Pro Bono Clinic Sessions.

WHEN? 3rd Saturday of each month - 9am to 1:30pm
(Apr 15, May 20, Jun 17)

WHERE? In person at the Polish National Alliance (6100 N. Cicero Ave., Chicago), via Zoom, or by being "on call."

HOW? Contact us by emailing: Advocatessociety@gmail.com, and we will make sure you receive a CVLS volunteer registration form to fill out prior to the next session so you are all set for the session you want to attend and those for the rest of the year. CVLS provides legal liability coverage for registered volunteers.

THANKS!

The PR/Newsletter Committee gives thanks to the contributors who submitted photos, content and information to the current issue of Newsletter. We appreciate your time, support and dedication!

Contributors in this issue include:

Marta Almodovar

Hon. Michael Chmiel

Mark Dobrzycki

Hon. Michele Gemskie

Hon. Mitchell Hoffman, (ret.)

Pamela Menaker

Iwona Przonak

Justyna H. Regan

Julia Jensen Smolka

Margo Webb

Mariusz Zatorski

Happy Spring!



FROM THE ADVOCATES SOCIETY

Newsletter Submissions

The next deadline for newsletter submissions is May 15, 2024. Please send items to Advocatessociety@gmail.com.

Articles should be in Word format and pictures in jpeg or PDF format. Permission to publish as received or edited is assumed when emailed or submitted. Any announcements or photos may also be submitted. All is subject to review and approval by the PR/Newsletter Committee, as well as the Board.