



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE

PRESS RELEASE

December 14, 2010

Borys Wrzesnewskyj's gift to Polish Studies at U of T honours father

TORONTO, ON – A \$35,000 gift from Borys Wrzesnewskyj, MP for Etobicoke Centre and owner of Future Bakery and M-C Dairy, and his family will support the teaching of Polish language at the University of Toronto. The gift, which establishes the *Roman Wrzesnewskyj Polish Endowment Fund*, pays tribute to Mr. Wrzesnewskyj's father, who passed away in 2009.

“When we speak of Canada's many blessings, most people point to our abundant natural resources; however, I believe that it's our deep reservoir of human resources that represents our greatest asset,” says Mr. Wrzesnewskyj, who graduated from the University of Toronto (U of T) with a Bachelor of Commerce in 1983. “The family motto was, ‘Look to the future in your adopted country, and yet never forget where you came from, your ancestral roots.’”

Canada's Polonia community, of which Mr. Wrzesnewskyj is a distinguished member, has played a significant role in building this country and strengthening its cultural mosaic ever since the first major Polish-group settlers arrived in Ontario in the 19th century. They include such notables as Alexandre Édouard Kierzkowski, the first MP of Polish descent who served in Canada's inaugural parliament, and the hundreds of thousands of immigrants who have worked as labourers and professionals in every sector. Among them are Mr. Wrzesnewskyj's grandfather, Felix, who founded Future Bakery, and his father, Roman.

“I fondly remember my father patiently teaching me and correcting my Polish,” says Mr. Wrzesnewskyj. “It is with the contributions of Polish Canadians to Canada in mind that our family is making this contribution to the Polish Endowment Fund at U of T. And it is with fond memories of my late father, Roman, that it is being named in his honour.”

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Polish Studies, which encompasses language, literature, culture and history, has been an important part of humanities teaching and scholarship at U of T since the 1960s. Its strong presence reflects U of T's belief that fluency in world languages and knowledge of other cultures are critical building blocks of global citizenship and essential tools for cultivating leadership in multicultural societies.

“As the largest undergraduate and the only graduate Polish language and literature program in Canada, we feel it is our responsibility to provide our students with comprehensive, comparative and interdisciplinary perspectives on Polish in a cross-cultural university setting,” says the program's director, Professor Tamara Trojanowska. “Canada's Polish community has been an invaluable partner in helping us to achieve this goal and we are grateful for their ongoing support to secure our Polish language courses.”

“I would like to use this occasion to thank Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj for his contribution, which is of significant importance for our community and for the University of Toronto,” says the Ambassador of Poland to Canada, His Excellency Zenon Kosiniak-Kamysz. “I do hope that other representatives of Polonia will follow Mr. Wrzesnewskyj's steps in order to guarantee instructional stability and the assurance of an excellent teaching and learning environment.”

The University of Toronto is Canada's largest and most distinguished university, offering teaching programs in 17 academic divisions located on three campuses and in 10 fully affiliated teaching hospitals. In 2010, U of T placed 17th overall, and 12th in the arts and humanities, in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings. U of T's Faculty of Arts and Science is home to Canada's largest and strongest clusters of expertise in world languages and literatures. It hosts one of the largest Polish language and literature programs in North America. The University continues to fundraise for Polish language support through the council of the Canadian Polish Congress for the Support of Polish Studies at U of T.

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