

# Wanda Bujalska

(b. 1925)

Educator, community activist



POLISH SPIRIT



With the unveiling of a commemorative plaque in January 2009, Wanda Bujalska completed an ambitious task of establishing a permanent Polish Language Fund at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. For eighteen years, she had carried on her fundraising activity, collecting over \$180,000 to secure Polish courses at the university. For her outstanding dedication to preserving Polish culture in Canada, she was honoured with Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit by the Polish government.

Wanda Bujalska was born in Warsaw, Poland. During World War Two, after the fall of the 1944 Warsaw Uprising against the German occupiers, she was sent to a labour camp in Germany. After the war, she taught in Polish schools in Germany until 1950 when she left for Canada.

Her engagement in the Polish education system in Canada is unprecedented. A member of the Polish Teachers' Association for the past forty years, she was its president for eighteen years. For the past twenty-five years she has been a teacher and principal of the School of Polonia in Hamilton, one of the largest schools in Canada, with more than three hundred fifty students between four and fourteen years of age. The school curriculum includes study of the Polish language, literature, history and geography. Traditionally, students participate in the Christmas Pageant and Polish national holidays, among them the Constitution Day celebration at Hamilton City Hall. Since her husband's death in 1989, Ms Bujalska has been the Coordinator of the Polish Language in Hamilton.

Wanda Bujalska is also a recipient of Tadeusz Glista Memorial Award, which "recognizes the volunteer effort of the Polish community member who gives time and energy to benefit Polish and Canadian society."



Photos from top left clockwise:  
• Wanda Bujalska, holder of the Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit • W. Bujalska with children in the Polish school in postwar Germany • Unveiling a commemorative plaque of the Polish Language Fund at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, 2009 • Polonia school, Hamilton, end of the school year  
All photos – private archives