

Elzbieta Wolska

(1946-2006)

Journalist, TV producer, social activist



POLISH SPIRIT



Elzbieta Wolska was born in Warsaw, Poland, where she studied special pedagogy at Warsaw University. Since her immigration to Canada in 1973, she was active in community services and Polish organizations, and widely recognized for her work in the media.

Wolska served as director of the Canadian Polish Community Services in Toronto, and vice president of the Canadian Polish Congress (Mississauga Chapter). She was also a co-founder of the Circle of Friends of the Foundation of John Paul II in Rome, co-founder and vice president of the John Paul II Thousand Professionals and Businesspeople Club, member of the Charitable Foundation of the Canadian Polish Congress, and founder of the Sick Children's Fund at the Hospital for Sick Children. As a member of the Polish Canadian Action Group against Martial Law in Poland, she took part in protest demonstrations at the Polish Consulate in Toronto and the Polish Embassy in Ottawa, as well as organized aid for imprisoned journalists and Solidarity activists in Poland. In cooperation with doctors and hospitals, she helped organize transports of medicines and medical supplies for Poland, so badly needed at the time.

Wolska is best remembered for her work in Polish media, especially on the weekly Polish TV programme on Channel 47 in Toronto which she co-produced and hosted for over a decade. Even earlier, she co-produced TV community programme *Polonia Review* on Mclean Hunter Cable TV, as well as initiated and co-hosted two Polish radio programmes. She also co-operated with some Polish Canadian newspapers, and organized a number of celebrations to commemorate important national events.

Wolska was a member of the Board of Directors of the National Ethnic Press Council of Canada, and of the Polish Journalists' Association. Among her distinctions may be named: Volunteer Service Award from the Ministry of Citizenship of Ontario, Community Service Volunteer Award from the City of Toronto, Ethnic Media Award from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, and Award of Merit from the Canadian Senate for Outstanding Services for Polonia and Canada. In 1994, Wolska was named woman of the year by the Art and Science Foundation for Promoting Polish Culture. She was also a recipient of the Cross of Merit of the Republic of Poland (1995).

Photos from top left clockwise:

- Elzbieta Wolska, recipient of the Cross of Merit of the Republic of Poland
 - With Paul Martin, Minister of Finance, at Sam Bulte's fundraising reception in Toronto
 - With Lech Walesa during his visit in Toronto
 - E. Wolska, recipient of Volunteer Service Award from the Ministry of Citizenship of Ontario
- All photos – Teresa Wierzbicka's archives