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Polish American Heritage Month, 1985

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The history of Polish Americans is an inspiring part of our Nation's heritage. The first massive wave of Polish immigrants came to America to flee the political and economic oppression thrust upon their homeland by the 19th century imperial powers of Eastern and Central Europe. While they came with few material possessions, they brought something much more important—a deep faith in God and a determination to succeed in this land of opportunity. And succeed they did. They established churches, schools, and fraternal benefit societies. They worked hard in the mines, steel mills, and stockyards. They understood the importance of education, so that today, the children and grandchildren of the first immigrants can be found in America's leading businesses and educational institutions.

Americans of Polish descent have made, and continue to make, enormous contributions to the culture, economy, and democratic political system of the United States. The names of Tadeusz Kosciuszko and Kazimierz Pulaski, heroes of the American Revolution, have left a lasting imprint upon our history. Highways, bridges, and towns dedicated to the preservation of their memory dot our countryside. In the future, other public facilities and institutions will be named for today's prominent Polish Americans, such as those serving our Nation in the Executive branch, in Congress, the armed services, and in state capitols and city halls from coast to coast.

The dedication of Polish Americans from all walks of life to the ideals of freedom and independence, which Kosciuszko and Pulaski fought for in America and in Poland, and which their worthy successors within the Solidarity movement are struggling for in Poland today, serves as a model for all Americans. That struggle remains alive today and two Polish leaders of international stature—Pope John Paul II and Lech Walesa—provide inspiring examples of moral leadership for us all.

The Congress, by House Joint Resolution 106, has designated August 1985 as "Polish American Heritage Month" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this month.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim August 1985 as Polish American Heritage Month. I urge all Americans to join their fellow citizens of Polish descent in observance of this month.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirteenth day of August, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and tenth.

Ronald Reagan