

Lord and Lady of the Manor - 2008**Arthur and Amelia (Millie) Grabowski**

Millie and Art became active in our Polish Center back in the mid 70's when they moved to Huntington Beach. They started to attend services at St. Justin's shortly after the new Diocese of Orange was formed in 1976. The late Fr. Joseph Karp was assigned to shepherd the Polish community in this newly formed Diocese. Millie, Art and their family could be found at St. Justin's helping wherever needed or at mass. They were one of the Polish Centers original supporters. Without their hard work and dedication our faith community would not have grown and prospered in its dedication to our Lady of Częstochowa.



Millie is a native Californian, born in Los Angeles. She has three brothers and one sister. Her Polish roots come from her parents who emigrated from Poland to seek a better life for the family. Millie was baptized at Christ the King Church, the first Polish church in Los Angeles which preceded the current Our Lady of the Bight Mount on Adams Blvd. She attended and graduated Fremont High School in Los Angeles. After graduation Millie went to work at McKesson/Robbins working in the purchasing department and at night she attended Compton Community College to further her business skills.

Art is a native of Michigan born in Hamtramck. He has two sisters. His Polish roots, like Millie's were very similar as his parents were also born in Poland and came to the United States seeking a better life for the family. Art attended St. Florian's Parish and School and went on to graduate from Hamtramck High School. After high school Art attended Wayne University and took classes in Aircraft Engine Mechanics and Engineering. Art joined the Air Force during the Korean War and specialized in radar while serving for four years mainly stateside in the South. In 1955 after his release from the military he went home for three months. When a huge snowfall hit his area Art decided that was enough. He applied to IBM and requested to be located on the West Coast hopefully in the Los Angeles area. IBM granted that request, and off he went to California. When he retired after 38 years at IBM he held the position of Customer Engineer Product Specialist.

One evening Art decided to go to the Polish Parish in Los Angeles after he heard that they had Polish folk dance classes. He thought he would enjoy meeting some other Polish people. Lo and behold, he saw this tall blond haired young girl dancing the Krakowiak and that was it for him. Shortly thereafter Millie and Art were married at the Our Lady of the Bright Mount Polish Church in Los Angeles in October of 1958. They lived in Inglewood after they married, until June of 1974 when they moved to Huntington Beach.

Millie has been Vice President of the Ladies Guild and most recently was nominated as Catholic Woman of the Year representing our Polish Center. She also served as recording secretary for the Polish Roman Credit Union, St. Joseph Society for over 15 years. Art is a member and former officer of the Knights of Columbus at the Pope John Paul II Polish Center and a current Board member of Fr. Kolbe Charities Inc. He also is a Lector at the 9am Mass. For many years the Grabowski family and *only* the Grabowski family ran the soda booth at the annual Dożynki Festival every year Art still helps out with a lot of the electrical work behind the scenes.

Art and Millie have two daughters and two sons that they claimed they planned it that way. Their 11 grandchildren keep Babcia and Dziadek very busy. They are very proud of all of their children and can always tell you a good story about each of them.

The Polish Center congratulates Art and Millie for their countless contributions to our Center. We honor them as Lord and Lady of the Manor for 2008 and wish them many more years of good health, happiness and abundant blessings as they celebrate 50 years of marriage. Sto Lat! □

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„DOŻYŃKI” - HARVEST FESTIVAL*Pope John Paul II Polish Center in Yorba Linda*

Dożynki is an old, beautiful tradition, which has been celebrated in Poland since the XVI century. It has its roots in old rural Poland, in the life and customs of the people, both landowners and farmers inhabiting agricultural parts of the country. Harvest was the culmination of long days and months of hard work in the fields and gardens. Finally, when the crops and grains were gathered, the people of the fields - these tillers of the soil - were ready to rejoice, celebrate and give thanks.

Dożynki was a happy holiday, symbolic of joy and gratitude and lasting often for few days. It was celebrated with ritual and pageantry followed up by good food, music, dancing, friendship and general merriment. The first day of the *Dożynki* would always start with Holy Mass, to offer thanksgiving to God for all the blessings, for bountiful crops, good weather, health and prosperity. After Mass, a traditional procession of people dressed in their regional finery - colorful native costumes - would proceed to the landowner's manor with the gifts - symbols of the harvest. Singing happy songs, they carried beautiful wreaths made of greenery and flowers, bunches of wheat, baskets of fruit and vegetables, and prominently, a large loaf of bread, freshly baked from the harvested grain.

For the Polish Community in Orange County, under the leadership of late Father Joseph Karp - the first Director - *Dożynki* became an annual event. This was initiated in 1978 by Alexander and Marie Romański and Krystyna Zagórska, and it took place for the first time at the Rosary High School in Fullerton. The event was enthusiastically received by the Orange County community, and since then has annually drawn thousands of people from all over Southern California, and has become a very popular Polish social event. Moreover, in addition to all the festivities and merriment, *Dożynki*, has always been a main fundraiser for the Pope John Paul II Polish Center.

In the following years *Dożynki* was held at Servite High School and at St. Justin Martyr Parish until 1985, when it was celebrated for the first time at the Pope John Paul II Polish Center in Yorba Linda. For a few years the "*Waleśa Inn*" - initiated in 1983 by Mike and Lila Ciecek - was a special attraction, where authentic Polish cuisine specialties were served. Presentation of the Polish culture, history, customs, food, and folk dancing have always been an important part of the *Dożynki* festivities. In 1985 Father Karp started a new tradition of presenting the „Lord and Lady of the Manor” - members of the Polish Center Community, who were chosen by the Director and honored in a special way during the *Dożynki*. Millie and Art Grabowski, the longstanding and distinguished members of the Center, will this year be honored as the „Lord and Lady of the Manor.” They are also celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversary - Congratulations!

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