

Pulaski Scholarship Winners 2025

Six (6) winners of the 25nd annual \$5,000 Brig. Gen. Casimir Pulaski Scholarships were announced recently by the ACPC's Pulaski Scholarship for Advanced Studies Committee. The scholarship program was initiated 25 years ago as a result of a sizeable endowment by the Conrad R. Walas family with the continuing support from Polonia.

Serving on the 2025 Pulaski Scholarship Committee were Dr. Stephen E. Medvec, Chairman; Deborah M. Majka, Patricia Malski, Carolyn Meleski, and Peter J. Obst.

The exceptional qualities of schoolwork and research plus dedicated community services performed by the applicants made the final selection process difficult. The Committee wished that funding was available which could have allowed for several more scholarship awards.

The Pulaski Scholarships Committee wishes these six outstanding students continuing success and is confident that they will attain their career objectives fully. The Committee trusts that they will honor their heritage by ultimately remaining close to the Polish community wherever possible during their careers.

Marta Lasota: A native of Maryland, Marta is currently a second-year Ph.D. student at Northwestern University in Comparative Literary Studies and Slavic Literatures, with a focus on Polish literature. She holds her BA in English with a minor in Psychology with a Language Citation in Spanish from Harvard University with studies in Buenos Aires, Argentina and a MA in the Humanities with concentration in Polish and Spanish from the University of Chicago. At present, Marta is translating Polish philosopher Jolanta Brach-Czaina's collection of essays, "Szczeliny istnienia" ("The Cracks in Being"), into English. She was also a member of the Harvard Varsity Fencing Team, Women's Team Captain, NCAA Championships (2018, 2020).

Maximilian Miniewicz. A native of Warsaw, Poland, resident of New York City, Maximilian is a dual Polish-US citizen. He is a first-year graduate student at New York University, pursuing an MA in Economics while completing a double BA major in Economics and Politics through the BA-MA program. He wishes to use economics in innovative, interdisciplinary ways to drive change in public policy, shaping initiatives that foster stability and peace. He also has completed an internship at Orbit Capital in Prague, with a focus on cybersecurity, and studied in London to conduct a project assessing the 'true' cost of war in Ukraine and its impact on neighboring European nation-states, including Poland. He also served as a youth representative and media spokesperson to the United Nations on behalf of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. He has marched in the Pulaski Parade on behalf of Columbia University. He established NYU's first Polish and Eastern European Club.

Paola Piascik. Born to Polish immigrants at the US Army Base in Landstuhl, Germany, while her father served in the US Army, settled in Sarasota, Florida, Paola holds her BS in Psychology on a Pre-Medical Track from the University of Florida. She is currently pursuing her MD at the Florida State University College of Medicine, expected graduation in May 2027. She has been associated with the All Faiths Food Bank in Sarasota and with the Sarasota Pain Relief Center. She also worked at the Department of Clinical Psychology at the Bauer Neuropsychology Lab in Gainesville, Florida, among other groups like Meals on Wheels at Habitat for Humanity. She is

fluent in Polish. Her family home in Sarasota was flooded by Hurricane Debby on August 5th, 2024.

Maya Rakoczy. A native of Vernon, New Jersey, Maya completed a combination BA/MS Dual Degree in Biology with a specialization in Neurology on the pre-medical track at Boston University in January 2023. She is currently a first-year medical student with strong interests in Neurology and Endocrinology at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM), expected in June 2028. She has used technology to improve the lives of patients with neuropsychiatric disorders and done research in the field of Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy, which primarily affects pro-athletes, women, and persons with autism. She was active in the Polish Scientific Network in Boston, BU's running club and triathlon team, and French Club. At PCOM, she is Co-President of the Student Interest Group in Neurology. She sings and writes poetry in the Polish language.

Adam Rybczynski. A native of Baltimore, Maryland, Adam holds his BS in Biological Sciences with a minor in Music - Piano Performance from the University of Maryland Baltimore County and his MS in Evolutionary Biology from the same institution. He is currently a Ph.D. Candidate at Johns Hopkins University and conducting research in the Program for Cellular and Molecular Medicine at Boston Children's Hospital, Harvard Medical School, expected graduation in May 2026. Adam's research delves into the fundamental mechanisms of a groundbreaking innovation in gene editing, CRISPR-Cas system. He wishes to pursue further investigation into the infrastructure of therapeutic discovery and development, ultimately to patients. He also has taught sailing to middle- and high-school students and the ecology of Chesapeake Bay, and also has led recent graduates of the US Naval Academy (Ensigns) through Basic Sail Training. He has taught science lessons to high school students in the English language in Olsztynek, Poland via the Kosciuszko Foundation TEIP Program. He was a Polish Folk Dancer in the Krakowski Dance Troupe in Baltimore and a pianist at Saint Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Baltimore. .

Alexandra Szul. A native of Chicago, Illinois, Alexandra Szul is the daughter of two Polish immigrants who met and married in Chicago. She attended General Władysław Anders Polish School throughout her childhood and high school years, where she studied Polish grammar, reading and writing, and the Catholic faith to which she is devoted. She holds her BS degree in Health Sciences with a minor in Spanish from De Paul University in Chicago. She also studied abroad at Nabrija University in Madrid, Spain. She is currently in her final year at the University of Illinois at Chicago to obtain her Doctorate in Physical Therapy. She has worked for the Chicago Public Schools to provide direct services to pediatric patients with cerebral palsy, spinal bifida, autism, and deafness. She can communicate in Polish and Spanish, with senior citizens affected by stroke or Parkinson's disease.