

*Honorary Doctorate
of the University of Gdańsk
and
Jan Karski Award
for
Professor Elie Wiesel*

Program

14.00 Professor Elie Wiesel and Rector of the University of Gdansk Professor Andrzej Ceynowa enter the hall

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"Gaudeamus Igitur" (academic anthem; 1.5 min)  
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- ⋈ Ambassador Andrzej Towpik welcomes the guests
- ⋈ Speech by Rector Andrzej Ceynowa of the University of Gdansk
- ⋈ Laudation for Honorary Doctor presented by Professor Marek Wilczynski
- ⋈ Recommendations by Dr. Madelaine Albright, Professor Bronislaw Geremek, and Archbishop Tadeusz Pieronek presented by Professor Grzegorz Berendt (excerpts)
- ⋈ Rector Ceynowa reads out the decision of the Senate of the University of Gdansk awarding Professor Elie Wiesel with Honorary Doctorate
- ⋈ Ambassador Towpik presents Jan Karski Award to Professor Elie Wiesel

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"Gaude Mater Polonia" (academic song; 1min)  
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- ⋈ Acceptance speech by Professor Elie Wiesel

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*Piano music in honor of Professor Elie Wiesel performed by Professor Bogdan Kulakowski,  
Rector of Musical Academy of Gdansk*  
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15.30 End of ceremony; glass of wine

Jan Karski

(1914-2000)



Professor Jan Karski

Professor Jan Karski was born in Lodz, Poland (as Jan Kozielski) in 1914. A Roman Catholic and a member of a noble Polish family, Karski earned Master's Degrees in Law and in Diplomatic Sciences at the Jan Kazimierz University at Lvov in 1935. Having completed his education in Germany, Switzerland and Great Britain in the years 1936-38, he entered the Polish diplomatic service. But his career was interrupted by the Nazi invasion of his homeland in September 1939.

Mobilized in August 1939, he was eventually taken prisoner by the Red Army and sent to a Russian camp at Kozielszczyna (now Ukraine). He escaped in November 1939, returned to German-Occupied Poland and joined the Underground. Well-traveled and fluent in several languages, Karski was used as a special courier between the government-in-exile and Underground authorities in Poland. In this capacity, he made several secret trips between France, Great Britain and Poland.

In June 1940, he was arrested by the Gestapo in Slovakia and tortured but escaped in a daring rescue engineered by the Polish Underground. After a few months of medical treatment, he resumed his dangerous work as a courier.

He bore witness to the murders of Poland's Jews by the Nazis and in 1942, he was the first eyewitness to bring word of the Holocaust to the West. In July of 1943, he personally reported to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Felix Frankfurter, Cordell Hull, Henry Stimson and other high government and civic leaders in the United States, as well as to leaders of the American and world Jewish community. Alas, Karski was not believed. The free world reacted with silence.

After the war, Karski refused to return to communist Poland and settled instead in the U.S. In 1954, he became a U.S. citizen. In 1952, he received his Ph.D. at Georgetown University and since then taught Eastern European affairs, comparative government and international affairs at the School of Foreign Service (with Bill Clinton as a student, Class of 1968) until 1995, when he retired as Distinguished Professor. In 1962-63, he taught at Columbia University as a Visiting Professor.

In 1956-57, and again in 1966-67, he was sent by the State Department on six-month lecture tours to sixteen countries in Asia and in French-speaking Africa. On numerous occasions, he was called upon by various Congressional committees to testify on Eastern European affairs. He lectured extensively at the Pentagon and other government and civic organizations. His articles have appeared in numerous magazines and encyclopedias.

He related his war experience in the book, "Story of a Secret State" (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1944), which became a Book-of-the-Month-Club selection and a WWII bestseller with 400-thousand circulation. The book was a first massive public report on the Holocaust. Its way to Polish readers found 55 years later thanks to Waldemar Piasecki who prepared a Polish version of the book ("Tajne państwo", Twój Styl, 1999).

In 1974, he was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to inspect Polish, British and French archives for his major work, "The Great Powers and Poland, 1919-45 (From Versailles to Yalta)", (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985).

In 1977, director Claude Lanzmann persuaded Karski to bear witness again as part of his Holocaust documentary, "Shoah." And three years later, Karski repeated the tragic story of Europe's doomed Jews at Elie Wiesel's International Conference of the Liberators of the Concentration Camps.

Karski's efforts are recounted in "Karski: How One Man Tried to Stop the Holocaust", by F. Thomas Wood and Stanislaw M. Jankowski (John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1944: paperback February 1996) and in the documentary film "My Mission" (Polish TV, 1997 by Waldemar Piasecki and Michal Fajbusiewicz)

Jan Karski received order of the White Eagle (the highest Polish civic decoration) and twice received the Order Virtuti Militari (highest military decoration awarded for bravery in combat). He was an Honorary Citizen of the State of Israel. In Jerusalem, a tree bearing his name was planted along the Avenue of the Righteous Among The Nations at Yad Vashem.

Georgetown University, Oregon State University, Baltimore Hebrew College, Hebrew College of America, Warsaw University, Marie Curie-Skłodowska University and Lodz University awarded him honorary doctorates.

In 1998, for the 50th Anniversary of Israel, Dr. Jan Karski was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his mission try to stop the Holocaust.

In 1999, "Newsweek" Magazine named Jan Karski as one of the biggest heroes of 20th Century.

In April 2000, Jan Karski established the Eagle Award for the humanitarian service to others.

In 2003, the Jan Karski Society (JKS) was founded to preserve his mission and ideas.

Honorary Presidency of JKS accepted Elie Wiesel, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and a great friend of Jan Karski.



Karski's coffin covered by Polish and American flags and Star of David badge from Warsaw Ghetto...

Jan Karski Eagle Award

Laureates

2000: Jacek Kuron, legendary Polish freedom-fighter, one of the 'Solidarity' movement leaders and Poland's democracy champions, humanitarian;
Father Professor Jozef Tischner, philosopher, moral authority, Catholic Jewish dialogue leader.



2001: Rabbi Jacob Baker, religious leader and humanitarian, born in Yedwabne (place of pogrom done by Polish neighbors) historian of shtetl;
Krzysztof Godlewski, Mayor of Yedwabne, decided to honor the Jewish pogrom victims and after was fired from his position



2002: Marek Edelman, Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Commander, international human right's fighter;

Father Grzegorz Pawlowski (Hersz Griner), RC priest from Yafa, leader of Polish Jewish dialogue in Israel, as a Jewish boy saved by Polish family while his own family was exterminated at Izbica ghetto



2003: Archbishop Professor Alfons Nossol, leader of inter-religious dialogue and European unity promoter;
Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Poland's struggles for freedom and democracy leader and first chief of non-communist government in Eastern Europe



2004: President of Ukraine Victor Yushchenko, democracy promoter, leader of 'Orange Revolution' changed his country;

Profesor Feliks Tych, Holocaust researcher, historian of anti-Semitism, director of Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw.



2005: Oriana Fallaci, world famous, passionate journalist and writer;
'Tygodnik Powszechny' Catholic Weekly Magazine (Cracow), media leader of Polish struggles for freedom and democracy, publication which intellectually formed Karol Wojtyla (future Pope John Paul II)

2006: Abraham Foxman, National Director of Anti-Defamation League, fighter against defamation, hatred and anti-Semitism, Jewish Christian dialogue leader.

Adam Michnik, legendary Polish freedom-fighter, one of the leaders of Poland's transformation into democracy, Editor-in-Chief 'Gazeta Wyborcza', the most prestigious Polish newspaper



The Award was established by Jan Karski in 2000 to recognize humanitarian service to others, with a special connection to Poland. This is the only award on his name authorized by himself. The award consists of: the Statue of Eagle which design was accepted by Professor Karski and the Diploma.

Jan Karski participated in the first presentation of 2000. After his death on July 13, 2000, the Award Chamber (Committee) continues this noble work without him but follows his values the best possible way.

ILLUSTRISSE PROFESSOR ELIE WIESEL TITULUM,
HONORES, IURA ET PRIVILEGIA OMNIA DOCTORIS HONORIS
CAUSA UNIVERSITATIS GEDANENSIS IN TE SOLLEMNITER
CONFERO.