

MEDIA RELEASE

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Polish Arts Club of Buffalo Dedicates Józef Sławiński Mural At Downtown Central Library

"Spirit of Buffalo," a mural created in the rarely-used medium of sgraffito by Polish-born artist Józef Sławiński (1905-1983), was dedicated earlier today at the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library's downtown Central Library. The mural was donated by the Polish Arts Club of Buffalo, Inc. The ceremony was attended by the artist's son and daughter-in-law, Jerzy and Tonya Sławiński. It was followed by a tour of the Library's vast genealogy resources including those from the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State.

Józef Sławiński trained in Poland and Italy as a muralist. His work includes a variety of media, such as fresco, wrought iron, scratched tempura and hammered copper. He relocated to Buffalo in 1964 and remained here until his death. His favorite medium was sgraffito, a subtractive technique involving two or more layers of cement, worked on while still wet. "Spirit of Buffalo" contains four layers of colored cement, which is highly unusual in this medium.

Although his artwork is displayed all over the world, the largest body of Sławiński's work appears in the Western New York region, at locations including Buffalo City Hall, Villa Maria College, St. Stanislaus Church and the Stella Niagara Education Park (Lewiston). "Spirit of Buffalo" was gifted to the Polish Arts Club by Sławiński's son last year with the hope that it would be publicly displayed.

"It was with great pleasure that the Board of Directors of The Polish Arts Club at its October 2022 meeting agreed to transfer ownership of the mural to the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library for permanent display at the Central Library. We are delighted the community can see the spectacular piece in its new home," said Felix W. Klempka, president of the Club.

"We are extremely pleased to accept this glorious artwork celebrating Buffalo and to have it hanging where the public can enjoy it," said Library Director John Spears. "The Polish community has, over generations, added so much rich cultural flavor to our region and to Buffalo, and the work of this renowned artist is an excellent example. We are grateful to the Sławiński family and the Polish Arts Club for this gift."

The Polish Arts Club of Buffalo stages a variety of events including lectures, readings, musical events, film showings and social events that provide the Western New York public with the opportunity to savor Poland's culture and heritage and to discover the contributions of the American Polonia. All of the Club's events, scheduled in a variety of venues in the Greater Buffalo area, are open to the public. For a list of upcoming activities, visit www.polishartsclubofbuffalo.com.

"Spirit of Buffalo" is hanging inside the Central Library at the Ellicott Street entrance. For more information about Library services visit www.BuffaloLib.org or call 716-858-8900.

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Photo below



The *Spirit of Buffalo* mural by Polish-born artist and former Buffalo resident Józef Sławiński (1905-1983).
The mural hangs at the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library's Ellicott Street entrance.

Left – right Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz
Felix Klempka, president, Polish Arts Club
Tonya Sławiński, daughter-in-law of the late artist
Jerzy Sławiński, son of the late artist
John Spears, Library Director

Photo: courtesy of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library