

Polish teens find heritage is rewarding

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — You don't necessarily have to be a terrific athlete, musician or student to be considered for this scholarship.

In fact, the one basic qualification is something that recipients don't achieve, but have when they are born: a little bit of Polish heritage.

For the past 38 years, the Rochester Polish Peoples' Home, Inc., has offered college scholarships to Monroe County residents of Polish descent.

According to Thaddeus W. Kucharski Sr., scholarship committee chairman, these grants are a top priority for the non-profit organization.

He added that past recipients "have become lawyers, doctors and engineers."

Polish Peoples' Home is a 77-year-old social and cultural group, with a current membership around 225.

The scholarships are of considerable sizes. Recipients for the 1992-93 school year were announced last month, with 12 recent high school graduates due to receive \$2,400 each — an all-time high for the organization.

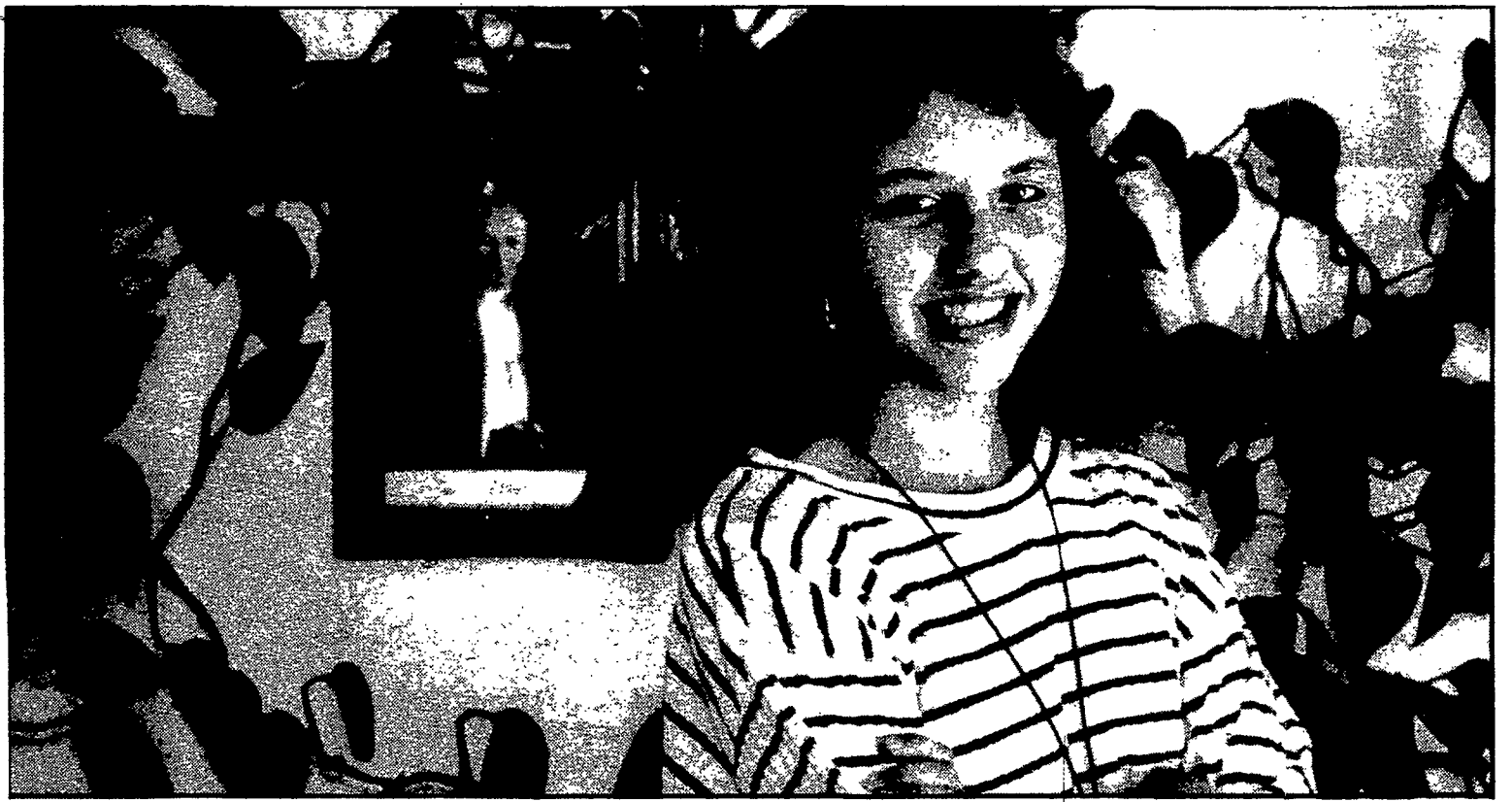
Each January, the five-member Polish Peoples' Home committee circulates news of the scholarship's availability to all Monroe County high schools. In order to qualify, students must have a full or partial Polish background. Students can have any religious affiliation.

To further determine eligibility, the committee considers academics, involvement in Polish community affairs and financial need. Each senior must also submit an essay along with his or her application.

Teresa Tryt, an 18-year-old graduate of Eastridge High School, noted that she wrote about "the traditions we have in our family and that I'm proud to be Polish."

Tryt is an active parishioner at St. Stanislaus Church, 1124 Hudson Ave., where she serves as a member of the Polish choir as well as a lector.

This fall, Tryt will attend Daemen College as a physical therapy major. Her sister, Krystina, an Our Lady of Mercy High School and Niagara Uni-



Teresa Tryt is one of the 12 recent high school graduates who will receive a \$2,400 scholarship from the Polish Peoples' Home, a 77-year-old social and cultural group located in Rochester.

Bebeth G. Augustin/Photo editor

versity graduate, also received the award.

In addition to Tryt, this year's recipients and their high schools are:

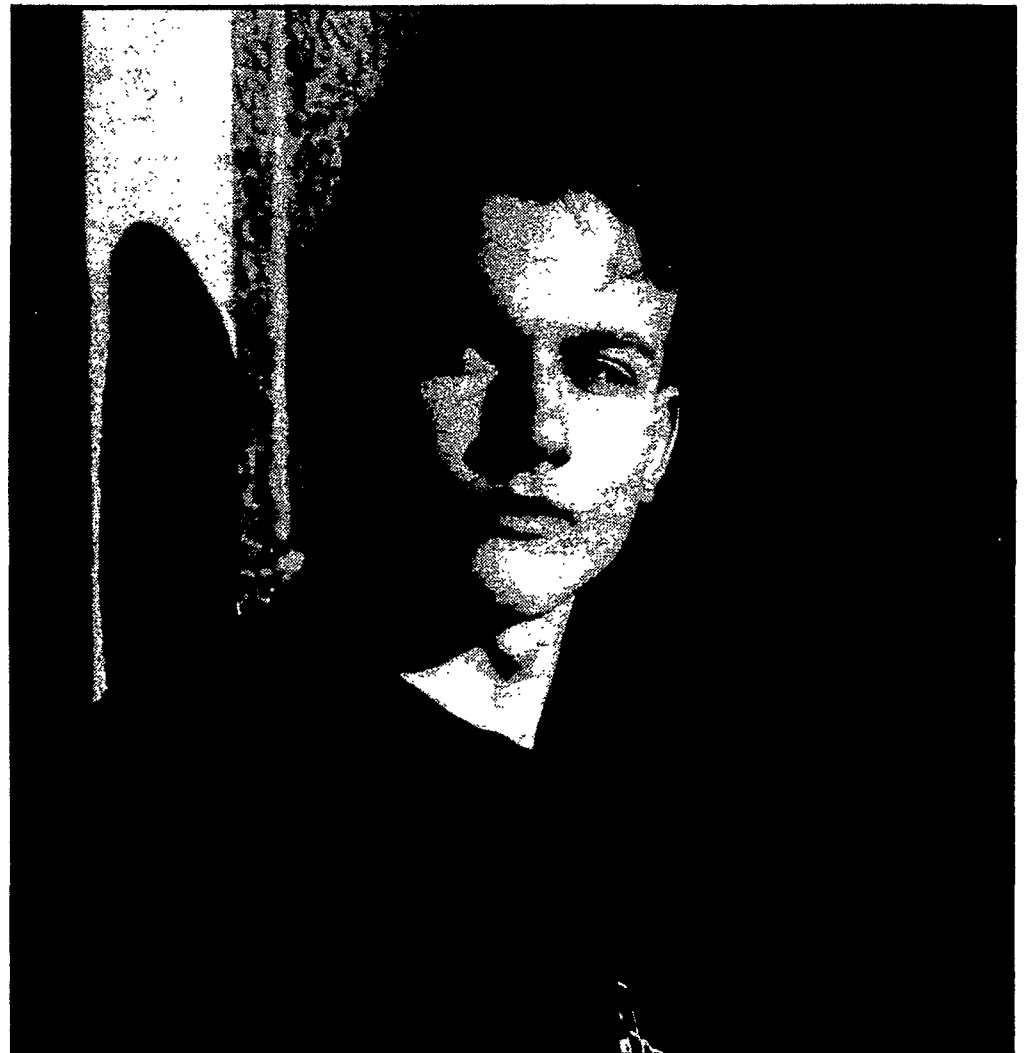
Michel P. Karpinski, McQuaid Jesuit; Alice L. Wolpiuk, Bishop Kearney; Stephen P. Firlit, Greece Athena; Katarzyna Hasinski, Wilson Magnet; Debra L. Matyjakowski, Rush-Henrietta; Jeffrey A. Mitchell, Greece Olympia; Michael A. Mrozek, Edison Tech; Therese A. Murray, Greece Athena; Thomas C. Suchodolski, Webster; Brian D. Waniewski, Fairport; and Robert S. Wyrozowski, Franklin.

Recipients are notified by mail, and allotments are then distributed in \$300 increments at the beginning of each college semester. This year's 12 winners were chosen from a group of 38 applicants.

Kucharski noted that the program began when the late Stanley Broki, a former Polish Peoples' Home member, requested that his estate be used to pay for the scholarship grants.

For the first several years, the organization allotted "three or four" scholarships, Kucharski said. Fund availability increased five years ago when the Polish Peoples' Home clubhouse on Hudson Avenue was sold.

"We then found ourselves with quite a bit of capital, and since we're a non-profit group, we put it toward the scholarships," said Stanley Bartles, president of Polish Peoples' Home.



Scholarship recipient Michael Mrozek and his family emigrated from Poland in the mid 1980s.

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