

Polish Award Named for Righteous Gentile

Courtesy of 2B Productions, Iwona Hoffman



Irena Sendlerowa, who died on May 12, 2008, saved more than 2,500 children from the Warsaw Ghetto. An annual award bearing her name has been created by the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture.

SAN FRANCISCO (JTA) A non-Jewish Pole who worked to preserve Jewish heritage in Poland is the first recipient of an award named for a righteous gentile.

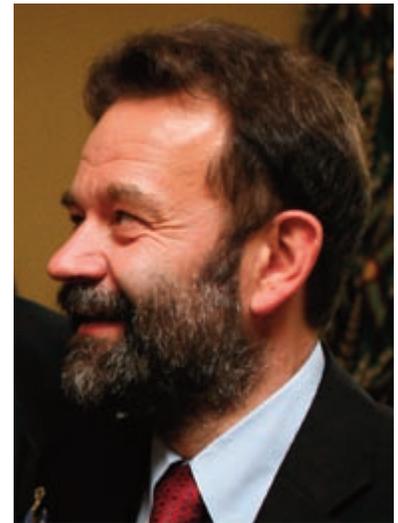
Janusz Makuch, the creator and head of the Jewish Culture Festival in Krakow, will receive the Irena Sendlerowa Memorial Award by the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life and Culture.

Sendlerowa, also known as Sendler, saved more than 2,500 children from the Warsaw Ghetto during World War II. Even when captured and tortured by the Nazis, she refused to give up the identities of the children she had rescued.

Her heroic actions went largely unnoticed until nine years ago, when some Kansas schoolgirls wrote a

play about her. Sendler, who died May 12 in Warsaw at 98, was nominated last year for a Nobel Peace Prize. She was named Righteous Among the Nations by the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in 1965.

Makuch held the first Jewish Culture Festival in Krakow in 1988 with a program focused on a scholarly conference on the encounter between Jewish and Polish cultures. In the 1990s, the festival became an annual event, and now draws more than 20,000 people from all over the world.



Wojtek Radwanski

Janusz Makuch, creator and head of the Jewish Culture Festival in Krakow, will be the first recipient of the Irena Sendlerowa Memorial Award..

The award will be presented in Krakow each year on the anniversary of Sendlerowa's death.

“Irena was a true hero to the Jewish community of Poland, and we want to do something to commemorate her incredible life in a meaningful way,” said Tad Taube, the head of the Taube Foundation and an honorary Polish consul. “We hope that honoring people like Janusz, who have worked so diligently preserving Jewish heritage and today's cultural renewal, will be a fitting tribute.”