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**AMERICAN HALL OF FAME TEACHER RECEIVES AWARD FROM POLISH GOVERNMENT AND  
TAUBE PHILANTHROPIES**

*Kansas Student History Project Brought Polish Woman's Anti-Nazi Heroism to the World*



*From left to right: Shana Penn, Tad Taube, Norman Conard, Minister Piotr Tadeusz Gliński*

WARSAW, POLAND – On June 11, 2018, San Francisco-based Taube Philanthropies founder Tad Taube and Polish Culture Minister Piotr Tadeusz Gliński presented the 2018 Irena Sendler Memorial Award to Norman Conard, a renowned educator from Kansas who, together with his high school students, brought the untold story of Irena Sendler to public view, illuminating her historical importance and enabling the world to celebrate her anti-Nazi activism in her own lifetime and in perpetuity. Conard is the first American to receive the award.

“We are thrilled to have the opportunity to honor Norman Conard for his pivotal efforts promoting Irena Sendler’s courageous aid to Jewish victims in Nazi-occupied Warsaw and keeping the memory of the Holocaust alive,” said Mr. Taube. “Through his innovative teaching, centered on unsung heroes throughout history, Mr. Conard has built a bridge of Holocaust memory between Poland and the United States.”

Sendler was a Polish social worker who saved several hundreds of Jewish children from the Warsaw Ghetto during the Nazi occupation, but who lived in total obscurity after World War II until being rediscovered through Conard's student history assignment. The award in her name honors Polish citizens committed to strengthening Polish-Jewish relations and preserving Polish Jewish heritage and Holocaust memory. Conard was chosen as a special recipient to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Sendler's passing and to honor her life's work, since it was his assignment—combined with the intrepid work of his students—that brought her daring efforts out of the shadows.

“It is an honor to accept an award from Taube Philanthropies and the Ministry of Culture,” said Mr. Conard. “The life of Irena Sendler is one of great heroism and bravery. Getting to know this wonderful person was life-changing.”

In the fall of 1999, Conard encouraged high school students from Uniontown, Kansas (population 247) to research Sendler's work and present their project to the National History Day program.

Their efforts took the form of a play, [\*Life in a Jar\*](#), which depicts Sendler's heart-stopping rescue mission to smuggle children out of the ghetto and into the safety of adoptive families, convents and orphanages during the war. Since the play was developed, it has been performed almost 400 times throughout the world, adapted into feature and documentary films, and released as a bestselling book.

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#### **Note to Editor**

Norman Conard's June 11, 2018 acceptance speech of the Irena Sendler Memorial Award is available on the final page following this release. Photos from the event are available [here](#).

#### **About the Irena Sendler Memorial Award**

The Irena Sendler Memorial Award was created in 2008 by Taube Philanthropies in memory of Irena Sendler whom Yad Vashem named a “Righteous Among The Nations.” Each year, in commemoration of the May 12 anniversary of Sendler's passing, the award is presented to Polish citizens who have been exemplary in preserving and revitalizing their country's Jewish heritage. Nominations for the annual award are reviewed by a panel of Taube Philanthropies advisory board members and Jewish cultural leaders in Poland. For more information about Sendler, the award, and previous recipients, visit: <http://nagrodairesendlerowej.pl/>

### **About the 2018 Irena Sendler Memorial Award Recipient Norman Conard**

Inducted into the National Teachers Hall Fame in 2007, Norman Conard is a third-generation educator who taught for over 30 years, during which time he developed non-traditional teaching methods that extend the boundaries of the classroom. One of his great sources of pride is having seen over 60 of his students achieve national recognition in the national history competition, and almost 200 students receive state history awards. He is known internationally for his development of projects that teach respect and understanding among all people and for innovation in project-based learning. Mr. Conard retired from classroom teaching in 2007 to become Executive Director of the Lowell Milken Center for Unsung Heroes.

### **About Taube Philanthropies**

For more than 30 years, Taube Philanthropies has been a leader in supporting diverse educational, research, cultural, community, and youth organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area, Poland, and Israel. Founded by businessman and philanthropist Tad Taube in 1981, and now led by Tad and his wife Dianne Taube, the organization works to ensure that citizens have the freedom and opportunity for advancement of their goals and dreams. Taube Philanthropies makes this a reality by issuing grants through its two foundations, the Taube Family Foundation and the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture. For more information, visit <http://www.taubephilanthropies.org>.

### **Norman Conard Speech** **Irena Sendler Memorial Award - June 11, 2018**

Thank you. There are many people who have impacted history, in extraordinary ways. Irena Sendler stands out because of her incredible courage and undying love for children. 'People caring about others' was her mantra, understanding the need to 'repair the world,' was her motto.

I salute the Taube Philanthropies and the Ministry of Culture for the Country of Poland, for their wonderful desire to 'preserve Jewish heritage and to help renew Jewish culture in Poland.' Many years ago there was a thriving Jewish life in this country. May that again be the case, as awards like this bring out heritage and history. The two entities involved with this ceremony both believe in the future of the Jewish people in Poland.

Almost 20 years ago, a project began in Kansas, which would change many lives. It would also lead to a close personal relationship for my students and myself, with Irena Sendler. It was our privilege to travel to Poland and be with Irena on five occasions. These times with her would be filled with laughter, with tears, and with a transparency from Irena that would transform everyone in the room. She also would share many, many rich thoughts and wishes. Until her

death in 2008, she constantly spoke out for those people who were downtrodden and would say again and again, that we must respect all people, regardless of race, religion or creed.

As stated many times by Irena, her one regret in life was not being able to rescue more children. She also would want me to say, that these rescues were done by her network of over 25 people, always being humble and giving credit to them. She would always give the names of those in this brave, powerful, and passionate network, who assisted her in the rescue, hiding, and care of these children and adults from the Warsaw Ghetto and the streets of Warsaw.

It is a beautiful honor to be here and share about Ms. Sendler and to also be recognized by the Polish government and the Taube Philanthropies. But I also stand here representing 3 high school students in Kansas and many other students and adults who have shared her story with the world. For Megan, Liz and Sabrina, I say, "Job well done," but there is much more in the process of repairing the world. To Bieta, Renata and other child survivors, I say, "Your love of sharing Irena's story has made a tremendous impact on Poland and the world." To those presenting this award, I say, "Your honoring of courage and valor is so appropriate in our day and time. Her story is needed as much today, as ever before.

In the performance of *Life in a Jar*, there is a line that says, "Irena Sendler was a light, a spiritual light in the darkness. She repaired the world, one child at a time, and made a difference."