

# UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

## Polish Lecture Series

In spring 2005 the Rosenstiel Foundation of New York donated \$150,000 to the University of Virginia to promote the study of Poland. In discussions with the American Institute of Polish Culture, the University quickly established an endowment to fund a Polish Lectures Series to supplement existing course work with ongoing extracurricular talks by leading scholars on Poland.

Since the inauguration of the program in the 2005-06 academic year, 15 scholars have given a total of 18 lectures on various aspects of Polish history, literature and culture, society, politics and international relations.

The Polish Lectures Series is administered by a committee of Virginia faculty with expertise in Polish Studies under the direction of the Center for Russian & East European Studies.



University of Virginia

### **In the 2007-08 academic year, the following lectures were given:**

On April 8, 2008, Krzysztof Jasiewicz, Professor of Sociology at Washington & Lee University in Lexington, Virginia, spoke on "Recent Electoral Trends in Polish Politics in light of the general and senatorial elections held in Poland on October 21, 2007."

On March 27, 2008: Professor Bogdana Carpenter of the Department of Slavic Languages, University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) gave a talk entitled, "Encounters with Czeslaw Milosz," based on her long friendship with the Nobel laureate in poetry. Professor Carpenter also gave a public lecture that evening with her husband and collaborator John at the Virginia Festival of the Book entitled, "Praise for the Unfinished: Julia Hartwig's Poetry."

On February 22, 2008, Professor Beth Holmgren of the Department of Slavic & Eurasian Studies, Duke University (Chapel Hill, North Carolina), lectured on the theme, "From Immigrant to First Settler: Helena Majeska and the California Dream," as a microcosm of the Polish immigrant experience in the United States.

On February 8, 2008, Professor Genevieve Zubrycki of the Department of Sociology, University of Michigan (Ann Arbor), spoke on the subject, "The Crosses of Auschwitz: Religion and Postwar Polish Nationalism," in which she examined how controversies over the symbolism of the Auschwitz extermination camp and the common victimhood of Catholic and Jewish Poles reflect debates over Polish national identity itself.

On January 24, 2008, Professor Bill Johnston of the Department of Comparative Literature, Indiana University (Bloomington) and a distinguished translator of Polish literary texts into English, gave a lecture on, "Adventures in Translation: What Literary Translation is Really Like."

On October 7, 2007, Professor Marci Shore of the Department of History, Yale University (New Haven, Connecticut), spoke on, "Caviar and Ashes: A Warsaw Generation's Life and Death in Marxism, 1918-1968," in which she traced the evolution of Marxist currents in Polish cultural and political life from their pre-Stalinist foundations to their general demise in the late 1960's.

**In the 2006-07 academic year, lectures included:**

On April 20, 2007, Zdzislaw Krasnodebski, Kosciuszko Foundation Visiting Scholar, Columbia University and Professor of Sociology at the University of Bremen, gave a lecture on "Issues in Current Polish-German Relations."

On March 30, 2007, Professor Elizabeth Dunn of the Department of Geography & International Affairs, University of Colorado (Boulder), spoke on the theme, "Privatizing Poland: Baby Food, Big Business and the Remaking of Labor," in which she looked at the challenges that Polish accession to the European Union has posed for Poland's rural economy.

From November 8-10, 2006, Adam Michnik, Editor-in-Chief of Gazeta Wyborcza, former Member of the Polish Parliament, Solidarity activist and writer of renown, gave a series of three lectures in the Dome Room of the Rotunda of the University of Virginia on the general theme, "Democracies, Dictatorships, and Intellectuals." These lectures, which were co-sponsored with the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia, were as follows:

November 10, 2006: "Democracy: Between Relativism and Absolutism."

November 9, 2006: "An Intellectual in the World of Dictatorship."

November 8, 2006: "Religion and Totalitarian Challenges."

As of the time of writing (late August 2008), the Polish Lectures Committee at the University of Virginia is planning its series of events for the 2008-09 academic year, including the convening of the Southeast Regional Conference of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies at the University from March 26-28, 2009. It wishes to express its appreciation to the Rosenstiel Foundation and to Lady Blanka Rosenstiel in particular for their enlightened philanthropy on behalf of higher education in general and Polish Studies in particular.