

# Piast & PNA host Citizenship Ceremony



by Barbara Gronet

The Piast Institute and the Polish National Alliance Council 122 hosted a Citizenship Ceremony on February 22, 2008. The Ceremony took place at the PNA Banquet Facilities in Hamtramck. Over 200 new citizens took the Oath of Allegiance.

The program started with welcoming remarks from Stella Szczesny, President of PNA Council 122, who then turned over the podium to Dr. Thaddeus Radzilowski of the Piast Institute. After the Knights of Columbus, Cardinal Mercier, 4th degree, presented the colors (brought up the US flag), Dominique Davis, a student at Hamtramck High School led those in attendance in singing "God Bless America." Dr. Radzilowski then introduced Waldemar Raczkowski, a member of the Piast Institutes Board of Directors. In his comments, Raczkowski spoke of imagining seeing his father, who was a naturalized citizen, among those taking the oath that day. The pride he showed was understood by many of those attending.

Mick Dedvukaj, District Director of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service, then took the podium speaking from his memories of becoming a citizen. He spoke on the importance of becoming a citizen and the doors that would open for them. By becoming a citizen, one could vote and an individual can obtain federal employment, among others. He stated that he was living proof of that.

Then came the moment that those two hundred plus were waiting for. The Clerk of the US District Court called everyone to order and called for Judge George Caram Steeh to take

charge. After a few thoughts, he asked all the applicants to raise their right hand and proceeded with the Oath of Allegiance: "Do you hereby declare, on oath, that you absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, of whom or which you have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that you will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that you will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that you will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law; that you will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by law; that you will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and that you take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God."

The resounding "I do" was followed by the Judge declaring them as citizens and boisterous applause coming from all those attending: New Citizens, officials, family and friends alike.

Dominique Davis then again took the microphone to lead everyone in the singing of the National Anthem of the United States, followed by Aleksandra Porter leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

With the formalities completed, the withdrawal of colors and closing remarks, only one task remained for the new citizens: receiving their official Certificate of Citizenship.

With that task completed, 200+ individuals walked into the building as aliens and left as United States Citizens. Congratulations to all!