

## **The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **POLISH GOVERNMENT AWARDS PRO PATRIA MEDAL TO HEAD OF THE JEWISH FOUNDATION FOR THE RIGHTEOUS AT WARSAW EVENT**

### **N.J.'s STAHL IS FIRST U.S. JEWISH LEADER TO BE RECOGNIZED BY POLAND FOR SUPPORTING RIGHTEOUS GENTILES & HOLOCAUST EDUCATION**

WARSAW, Poland – The Government of Poland has bestowed its Pro Patria Award upon Stanlee Stahl, the executive vice president of The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous (JFR) for her work in support of Polish rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust and her contributions towards global Holocaust education. The ceremony took place at the annual JFR Warsaw Rescuers luncheon at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, bringing together one of the largest groups of still-living area rescuers.

Since these remaining Righteous Gentiles range in age from late 80s to 100 the JFR luncheon is likely to be the last of such commemorations and marks the event's post-COVID return.

The Pro Patria Medal is a civil state decoration, established in 2011 and awarded by the Head of Poland's Office for War Veterans and Victims of Oppression. The medal is awarded to mark special merit in strengthening and treasuring the memory of the Polish people's fight for the independence of the Polish Republic during and following World War II.

Ms. Stahl's ceremony marks the first time the award has gone to the leader of an American-Jewish organization. Ms. Stahl heads up the West Orange-based foundation and resides in Essex County, New Jersey.

Anna Stupnicka-Bando, a previous awardee and the president of the Polish Society of the Righteous Among the Nations attended the ceremony along with some 14 rescuers, foreign diplomats, religious and community leaders and 12 U.S. middle and high school teachers and Holocaust center personnel from across five of the United States who are active in the JFR's

educational programming and currently traveling with Ms. Stahl on the foundation's annual European Seminar for Holocaust Educators.

"I'm truly honored and humbled by this recognition," said Stahl. "The last 31 years of my life have been devoted to serving the Righteous and ensuring the legacy of their heroism is never forgotten. I am extremely grateful to the Polish government for not only recognizing me, but the impact that the work of the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous has had on these rescuers and in global Holocaust education."

"In the wake of the horrific events of the Holocaust, words were not enough. The Polish Righteous who rescued Jews are a symbol of humanity at its best. Events like this are a signpost between Poland and Jews that represent something beautiful. The Righteous Among the Nations are the pride of our country and Stanlee Stahl has worked diligently for the past 31 years to help support, recognize and tell their story to the world," said Magdalena Sawka, a representative of Poland's Office for War Veterans and Victims of Oppression, who presented the award.

Ms. Stahl serves as executive vice president of the non-profit Jewish Foundation for the Righteous. The JFR seeks to fulfill the traditional Jewish commitment to *hakarat hatov*, searching for and recognizing goodness. The organization's goals are to repay a debt of gratitude on behalf of the Jewish community to those non-Jews who during the Holocaust, risked their lives and the lives of their families to save Jews. Currently, the Foundation provides ongoing monthly financial assistance to 100 aged and needy Righteous Gentiles in 11 countries. JFR also preserves the memory of the rescuers through its national Holocaust education program, which educates teachers in the history of the Holocaust. The subject of moral courage and the rescue of the Jews—is addressed within this context.

Before joining the JFR as its executive vice president, Stahl established Extra Helping, New Jersey's first prepared food transfer program. Before that, she spent 20 years working for the United States Department of Health and Human Services. She has consulted to non-profits, speaks on fund raising and proposal writing, teaches a grant writing course and lived in Israel where she worked for *Magen David Adom*, Israel's Red Cross Society.

Stahl attended Miami University in Ohio and has graduate degrees from George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and New York University in New York City.

The JFR continues its work of providing monthly financial assistance to 100 aged and needy Righteous Gentiles, living in 11 countries. Since its founding, the JFR has provided more

PRO PATRIA MEDAL  
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than \$44 million to aged and needy rescuers. Its Holocaust teacher education program has become a standard for teaching the history of the Holocaust and educating teachers and students about the significance of the Righteous as moral and ethical exemplars. For more information, visit <https://www.jfr.org/>.