

**Margaret speech before the screening of CRAZY BRAVE - My Mothers Story
At the Polish Embassy in Ottawa and at the Polish Consulate in Toronto**

Aug. 1st MARKED THE 75 ANNIVERSARY OF THE WARSAW

UPRISING A VERY IMPORTANT DATE IN HISTORY.

Growing up in the Konopacki family where the Polish language was spoken and Polish school on Saturdays was mandatory and “kosciol” church was mandatory, I quickly embraced all things Polish. Most of mom and dad's friends were immigrants like themselves and as a youngster I was immersed in the Warsaw Uprising through the eyes of a child. The stories of tragedy, sadness, transformation and loss were endless and it filled the mind of this impressionable emotional kid.

Quo Vadis, War and Peace,, Pan Tadeusz, Pan Wlodejowski, w Pustyni i Puszczy were bedtime stories from a very early age. Imagine a 12 year old thinking about these stories — there was no Harry Potter or Beatrix Potters Peter Rabbit stories!

Over the years while in Toronto in my Entertainment Publicity career I tried to get a series going on History Television called War Women because the heroism of women under oppression inspired a rebel like myself; however — the finance was not available.

I directed a number of documentaries that aired on Vision TV and Learning Television in the 80's and 90s and always carried an amateur video camera and stills camera wherever I travelled. So when in Warsaw with mom and dad a number of times I recorded some home movies hoping to string them together down the road.

Fast forward to 2017 — this assignment to string some home movies together would not have been made unless my only precious musician son David had not died from a tragic situation — he died from mental illness.

As I struggled through the first few debilitating months of bereavement I looked at some of these old videos I had shot of mom and dad in Warsaw and decided this was the right time to make a commemorative documentary about mom. Like a drowning person I

needed to pull strength from somewhere and I grasped at my mother — in fact lived in her house for the first few months and I saw her character and perseverance — almost for the first time. We were devastated together.

Through the making of this documentary and also the beginnings of a new charity for musicians struggling with mental illness — I gave myself purpose to keep going.

Watching and witnessing the actual footage from the Warsaw Uprising made me feel like I too was part of that sadness and process of loss and under the unbearable weight of grief. I had never experienced this sort of loss before.

This documentary was financed and made by me as a gift to the veterans of the Warsaw Uprising like my mom and dad and like so many of their friends. This documentary is dedicated to those who made the unbelievable sacrifices in the name of freedom from oppression.

I want to thank my editor Jack Chadwick and my friend and advisor Jim Hanley who kept me on track through the bleakest editing sessions in Toronto through last winter in my airbnb.

Through the making of this documentary and as I struggled with my loss I realized that loss is life for so many. You can never reclaim life as it was — you have to reinvent and transform into something and someone else in that moment — one day at a time.

The exercise — strength through loss.

I thank you all for coming tonight — especially my friends. My mom wanted to come but she is too frail for travel now and she too told me to say that she is forever grateful for your time.

Today we feel, we breath in the strength and loss and we honour our veterans like my mom EWA PONINSKA-KONOPACKI and my dad THADDEUS KONOPACKI and all of you who have family and friends who were in that terrible war

I also want to mention that in the Polish Home army (AK) there were a number of Polish citizens of Jewish descent who took up arms to overthrow perhaps the greatest evil of the 20th century — the Nazi's.

The largest failed attempt to overthrow the Nazi's in 1944 is a story that needs to be told and honoured. We will not forget.