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## Quietly Sharing with Others

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# Quietly sharing with others



John Jankowski in his early 40s in Canada

From war-torn Poland and through POW camps, John Jankowski survived despite seemingly insurmountable odds.

He believed there was a reason he survived and he spent the rest of his life sharing his wisdom and wealth with his family and his adopted community. He became a successful businessman and supported many local organizations, including Linfield College. Even

since his death in March 2009, students continue to benefit from his generosity through an endowed scholarship that supports Yamhill County students majoring in elementary education or history.

Jankowski's journey to McMinnville began in 1939 at the outbreak of World War II. A member of the Polish Army Reserve, he was ordered to report for duty and spent a final night with his family – the last time he would see them for 26 years. Within a month, he had been captured and spent the next five years in POW camps.

Jankowski wrote that shortly before his capture, “a friend of mine, the intelligence officer, came to me and said goodbye. He felt that he would be the first one tortured and he took his own life instead. As a reserve officer, I decided to take my officer's insignia from my uniform, my pistol and my Army book and bury them in the ground. This saved my life,” as all Polish officers were executed at Katyn.

After his capture, he was in a Russian prison camp until a prisoner exchange sent him to German authorities. Over the next five years, he was transferred to three different camps. When he became seriously ill, he received treatment because a doctor switched his x-rays with those of a man who had died.

After his liberation in 1944, Jankowski was sent to Italy where he rejoined the Polish Army. He received word via his mother not to return to Poland, and immigrated to Canada where he worked on sugarbeet farms in Alberta and taught himself English at night. He and his first wife, Rene, bought a motel in Harrison Hot Springs and later in Victoria, British Columbia, where they lived until 1960. They moved to McMinnville and opened the Safari Motor Inn in 1961 and added the restaurant in 1969. Rene passed away in 1983. Jankowski married Jacquelyn Harden Woeltjen in 1988.

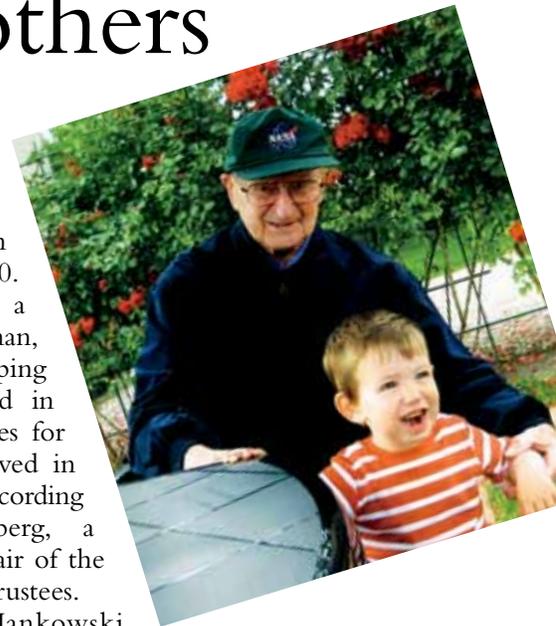
In 1965, after 26 years, Jankowski returned to Poland for an emotional reunion with his family. He was profoundly moved by the conditions his family faced and the lack of opportunity for business and education. Jankowski returned to Poland frequently and gave his family their inheritance at the end of the communist era in order to help them obtain educations, build homes

and start businesses.

Jankowski owned the Safari Inn for more than 40 years until he retired in 2004 at the age of 90. He was known as a kind and loyal man, interested in helping people succeed and in finding opportunities for others to get involved in the community, according to Dave Haugeberg, a close friend and chair of the Linfield Board of Trustees.

Although Jankowski graduated from forestry school in Poland, he often said he would have liked to have attended a school like Linfield, Haugeberg said.

“He was a very generous man and spent many years and significant donations to help ensure that Linfield was successful and committed himself to doing everything he could to enhance the college,” Haugeberg said. “He felt a social commitment to share and provide opportunities not only for his family in Poland, but also for students from Yamhill County who might not otherwise have education opportunities. It wasn't as important to him that an individual be an outstanding student, but rather be a student who had potential and who, without his financial assistance, would not be able to attend college.” ■



## A significant gift

Help keep Linfield accessible to all students – regardless of their financial status – by including Linfield in your will or living trust. It is a simple gift that carries great significance.

For information about estate planning, contact Craig Haisch '95 at 503-883-2675, [chaisch@linfield.edu](mailto:chaisch@linfield.edu).

**Did you know?** There are more than 300 members of the Founders' Society. The Founders' Society recognizes individuals who have made a deferred gift commitment to Linfield, through a bequest in a will or living trust or a remainder designation in a life-income gift, retirement plan or life insurance policy.

John Jankowski with the youngest family member, Maciej Zientarski in Milomlyn, Poland, 2008.