

**NATIONAL
FRATERNAL
CONGRESS
OF AMERICA**



**JOINING HANDS
TO TOUCH LIVES**

The Association of America's
Fraternal Benefit Societies

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

NFCA Honors “Fraternalist-in-Action” for Volunteerism *Polish Roman Catholic Union of America* *Member Rita Cerankowski named Fraternal MVP.*

OAK BROOK, IL, July 23, 2007 – The National Fraternal Congress of America (NFCA) is proud to recognize Rita Cerankowski—a member of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America in Detroit, Michigan—as a Fraternal MVP (Most Valuable Participant) for the week of July 23, 2007. Fraternal MVPs are “Fraternalists-in-Action” who volunteer their time and energy to strengthen their communities through participation in local lodge activities and other charitable endeavors.

“The NFCA wishes to salute those individuals as true fraternalists,” said NFCA Chair of the Board Janice U. Whipple. “As a Fraternal MVP, Rita Cerankowski embodies the heart of fraternalism through her hard work, dedication and generosity.”

Cerankowski has been involved with the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America (PRCUA) Halka Dancers since 1969, when she enrolled her daughter Laura, in the newly organized “East Side PRCUA Dance School.” She served as President of the Parents Club until 1981, at which time she accepted the position of Director, celebrating her 26th year as School Director this year.

Cerankowski has been actively involved in planning all 16 PRCUA Michigan State Balls for the graduating seniors, including the five joint presentation balls held at the old Polish American Century Club in Detroit.

Cerankowski is a member of the Polish Museum of America, St. Mary's Orchard Lake Ladies Auxiliary, Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish Council, Vice President of the PRCUA Women's Division in Michigan and a choir member at Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish. Active with the Halka dancers promoting fraternalism and Polish heritage, she has participated in Polish/American Night with the Detroit Tigers every year since the beginning (1970); St. Mary's Orchard Lake Polish Country Fair (17 years), St. Florian Parish Strawberry Festival (6 years), and the PRCUA Youth Bowling Day (6 years).

Cerankowski's fraternal spirit reaches across geographic, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. She is very active with the Michigan Fraternal Congress, volunteering for such projects as Project Hope – for residents of Roscommon County, Saginaw Neighborhood House, Kids in distress services, RAVE – for the needy, Father Fred Foundation, Operation Toy Box, and the Ann Arbor Peace Neighborhood.

She helped organize a group of youth and adults to participate in JOIN HANDS DAY activities through the Michigan Fraternal Congress at the Polish Army Veterans Home in Sterling Heights, Michigan, in May 2004 and May 2007. Cerankowski encouraged her PRCUA dance school families to donate money as part of "Pennies for Poland: Children helping Children" campaign. The proceeds went to the American Polish Assistance Association to assist in sending clothes, school supplies and other necessary items to Eastern European orphanages.

Cerankowski is the wife of the late Eugene Cerankowski, mother of Marc, Paul and Laura (Dan) Hejza and *babcia* (grandmother) of Brandon and Katelyn Hejza.

Fraternal MVPs are part of the NFCA's Fraternalists-in-Action program, which recognizes individuals whose unique stories best represent 21st Century fraternalism. These fraternalists demonstrate exceptional compassion and vision through their volunteer activities.

About the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America (PRCUA)

The Polish Roman Catholic Union of America (PRCUA) is the oldest Polish American fraternal in America. It was established in 1873 in the spirit of brotherhood to unite and help Polish immigrants. Today, PRCUA performs religious, charitable, educational and civic work on behalf of

its members and the Polish American Community. PRCUA is headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, with additional offices in Wisconsin, Ohio and Pennsylvania. For more information, visit www.prcua.org.

About the NFCA

The 121-year-old NFCA unites 76 not-for-profit fraternal benefit societies operating in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Canada. The association represents 10 million fraternalists in 37,000 local chapters, making it one of America's largest member-volunteer networks. Fraternal benefit societies provide their members with leadership, social, educational, spiritual, patriotic, scholarship, financial and volunteer-service opportunities. Combined, the NFCA's member-societies maintain more than \$324 billion of life insurance-in-force and, in 2005 alone, contributed almost \$400 million to charitable and fraternal programs, and volunteered 93 million hours for community-service projects. These statistics demonstrate the commitment that fraternalists make to those in need and exemplify the true meaning of the NFCA signature phrase: *Joining Hands to Touch Lives*. For more information, visit the NFCA's Web site at www.nfcenet.org.

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