

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 Bertha Szeliga named Fraternal MVP.*

**OAK BROOK, IL, October 15, 2007** – The National Fraternal Congress of America (NFCA) is proud to recognize Bertha V. Szeliga—a member of Polish Roman Catholic Union of America (PRCUA), Society #2019, Trenton, New Jersey—as a Fraternal MVP (Most Valuable Participant) for the week of October 15, 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 Katharine E. Rounthwaite. “As a Fraternal MVP, Bertha Szeliga embodies the heart of fraternalism through her hard work, dedication and generosity.”

Szeliga is a 64-year member, having joined Union of Polish Women in America (which later merged into PRCUA) in 1943. Not such a remarkable feat until one is told that she was 36 when she joined. Szeliga will celebrate her 101<sup>st</sup> birthday on December 9. Her appetite for life drives her, living a happy, wonderful and fulfilling life. Every day she is picked up by bus and taken to the Lipinski Senior Center where she works as a volunteer. The center threw her a birthday party last year and she was up early that day, because she was helping cater her own party. She is so

well-loved in her community that Mercer County Executive Brian Hughes proclaimed it “Bertha Szeliga Day.”

Szeliga regularly opens her home to new immigrants and helps them to find jobs, learn English and she cooks for them.

With PRCUA, she has held the offices of group secretary, then president for many years. She was responsible for hosting fundraisers, running monthly bus trips and was noted for her delicious catering. She is involved in parish activities at St. Hewig’s Church as a member of the Alter Rosary Society and Mothers Club. She also volunteers at Mercer Geriatric Care Center and spends one day a week tending to the needs of her younger sister, who is 98 and not in good health.

If you ask any of Szeliga’s friends and family they will tell you that she is a kind woman with a good heart and is known for always being ready to help whoever may need her, whenever she is needed.

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

### **About the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America**

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](http://www.prcua.org).

## **About the NFCA**

The 121-year-old NFCA unites 75 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 \$329 billion of life insurance-in-force and, in 2006 alone, contributed almost \$410 million to charitable and fraternal programs, and volunteered nearly 95 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](http://www.nfcenet.org).

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