

Joseph Majcher on Polishness in Orchard Lake Schools

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Alicja Karlic (AK): I would like to invite Mr. Józef Majcher, vice president of the Board of Regents at Orchard Lake Schools, to join us in conversation. Hello and thank you for the opportunity to talk. Would you please introduce yourself and tell us something about yourself?

Joseph Majcher (JM): First of all, thank you for inviting me and it's always nice to talk to you. I am an alumnus of the high school, so I have quite a long connection with Orchard Lake Schools. My parents immigrated from Poland, they were raised in Poland and emigrated to the United States. I was born in 1948. We always spoke Polish at home. My father insisted and I'm glad he did. I will say that when I entered the first grade, I did not know a single word of English. Thank God that the Franciscan sisters taught there and they also spoke Polish, so I didn't have any problems. And we lived in Detroit, and after a while my mother sent me to Orchard Lake High School here because we came in the summers. There were pilgrimages here several times, so my parents knew this area. I knew this area a little, because back then we used to come by bus in the summer. Well, there were various pilgrimages, they were very popular in the Polish community, and I graduated from school here in '66. I went to University and studied engineering and worked my entire career at General Motors as an engineering director. I had a very, very great career at General Motors and retired several years ago now. And the time came when Mr. Koterba called me, because I knew him well, because we were here in school at the same time. He called one day, because he was vice chancellor here at that time, and he asked me if I would like to be, if I would agree to be on the Board of Regents. Well, I thought about it and I accepted it with great pleasure, because when I talked to Mr. Koterba, he said that we needed some help with the Seminary and that in order to somehow maintain the Seminary, to be honest, if it weren't for that, I don't know if I would have accepted this position. I'm glad I finally accepted. But the goal really was to help the Seminary and since then, I think it was maybe 9 years ago and since then I have been a member of the Board of Regents. Well, I am glad and recently they elected me as vice-chairman, and I am in this position and I help as much as I can.

AK: Is it related to your Polish origin, because everyone knows that you are an American, but of Polish descent. Does this influence your responsibility for Polishness in Orchard Lake? Or doesn't it make any difference?

JM: I was born here, but I can somehow manage to speak Polish, I must tell you that unofficially, but I have been asked many times whether I would address things, whether I would take care of the Liturgical Center, because of this that I am, well, somewhat active in the Polish community in metropolitan Detroit. I know many members of the Polish community, I am a member of the parish of Our Lady of Częstochowa, well, well, I am in this environment, well, for a while I was the head of the Polish Mission, I left it after a while, and now Richard Walawender took over this position, and I help as much as I can in these Polish matters, yes.

AK: Today I would like to talk to you about important aspects regarding maintaining Polishness and promoting it in Orchard Lake Schools. We are located, as you can see, in a beautiful renovated gallery, it is one of the oldest buildings in Orchard Lake Schools. In 2016, I remember, the gallery was closed due to the poor condition of the building's structure, and in June this year it was reopened. This building is located in a beautiful estate located...

JM: Well, yes, yes, and how...

AK: on the lake and this property was purchased in 1909 by the rector of the Polish seminary in Detroit, Father Witold Buchaczowski. Walking around the Orchard Lake Schools campus, you will notice that the objects here are given Polish names. For example, sports facilities are named after their founder, Robert Dombrowski, who graduated from this local high school in 1951. Another founder with a Polish surname is Frank Padzieski and his wife, a retiree, who financed the science building with specialized laboratories in chemistry, physics and biology. In the year 2000, a new chapel was added to the seminary building, which was also funded by a man of Polish origin, Stanley Bielawski. In 2004, the library was expanded and the beautiful glass part of the library building was added and named after Cardinal Adam Maida. I remember I was at the grand opening of this building. Also on campus is the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, which was also founded in 1941 by Josephine Rzeppa. On the campus square you can admire the Katyń monument, which was created by Mr. Marian, the sculptor Marian Owczarski. In later years, a monument was erected next to it, dedicated to all those who died in the plane crash near Smoleńsk. It was

sculpted by Jan Siuta, a sculptor from Krakow. The newest work, which we recently celebrated with a solemn opening, is the academic center named after Joseph Burkacki. Isn't it true, we have Trzcinski Square and so on and so forth. May I say that because these buildings have Polish names, Polishness was very deeply rooted here. Yes?

JM: Yes, yes.

AK: We also know that two years ago, the Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary, which you mentioned earlier, ceased its operations. It is closed today, and let me just remind you that the opening of this seminary took place on December 16, 1886 (one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six). Similarly, there was also Saint Mary's College, which ceased operations in the year 2000 and was incorporated into Madonna University in Livonia, right. The Cardinal Maida library, which I mentioned earlier, has changed its character, it is no longer a library, it has been adapted for secondary school classrooms. Spreading and promoting Polish heritage was implanted in the Polish seminary by the founder, Father Józef Dąbrowski, and his successors took over these ideas and it was once said that these were Polish scientific institutions in Orchard Lake. Today it is Orchard Lake Schools. From the beginning, they were not only a religious center, but also the center of Polish Culture and Science. Do you think that today I can say that the Orchard Lake Schools group protects and promotes Polish heritage?

JM: Well, you know the history of this area well.

AK: I've been doing this for twenty years.

JM: Yes, and you speak the truth that many of these buildings have names where...

AK: Founders.

JM: Who gave for this, donors. Well, you have a very important question. What's next for Polishness here? We need to define this abstract word "Polishness". First, let's take a few steps back and start with culture. There are several components that make up culture. It is art, indeed, customs, stories, hymns, music, dances, dishes (foods). I think that the most important ingredients are literature and language, and adding all these ingredients we have culture. Polish culture is inextricably linked with Catholicism and they interpenetrate. And this is a very important, very important point, I must add, and I am looking at this graphic. And whoever watches this film sees these illustrations, we must add that Catholicism is

bigger than Poland. Catholicism is global, but Poland is rooted in Catholicism. I must also add that, as you recall, in the first Polish Constitution, May 3, it is specified that the Roman Catholic faith is the preferred faith in Poland. And this is very important. Here again we have illustrations defining Polishness. What do the cultural components and roots of Catholicism show in this red circle? Polish culture evolved over thousands of years and was rooted in Catholicism, and this is an important point. But this is Polishness, these components of Polish culture and rooted in Catholicism. What am I striving for? In order to maintain this Polishness here in the area (on campus), we have authorized and responsible organizational branches, two branches. Namely, the Saint John Paul II Liturgical Center and the Polish Institute.

AK: How is the Liturgical Center responsible for Polishness?

JM: Well, let me explain a little further, thank you, good question. The Liturgical Center is responsible for ensuring that the area (campus) and this School complex comply with canon law, and we continue to publish these "Pan z Wami" (The Lord be with You) prayer books.

AK: Yes.

JM: Which are used in Canada and the United States in many Polish parishes. And this adds a lot to the universality of Polish culture. On the right we have the Polish Institute. It is authorized and equipped to spread Polish culture and promote Polish culture on and outside the area (campus). I must add that the Polish Institute is entirely financed by the Wikiera Foundation. The founding statutes of the Wikiera Foundation clearly specify that its assets can only be used to promote Polish culture.

AK: Polish history, Polish language, as far as I know the by-laws.

JM: Yes, yes, yes, and it is specified that, and this, and, and these and this fund is a lifetime fund. And we can only withdraw our earnings annually, but we cannot touch the principal. It means that it will be forever, I hope, we hope that the Polish Institute will be funded by it forever. And in such a case, the Polish Institute is legally and morally obliged to stick to this goal of maintaining, disseminating and promoting Polish culture. And this is very important, and we have established these two branches so that, excuse me, they will cooperate to maintain Polish culture and Polishness within and outside the area (campus). Well, I think I have answered the question about what the team did to ensure this.

AK: Do I understand, because the Polish Mission was established in 2008? Today we call it the Polish Institute of Culture and Research. I remember how it took a year to form, the chancellor at that time was Father Whalen, and we know the bylaws, i.e. the status of today's Polish Institute, that the main mission of this Institute is to promote Polish culture, history and the Polish language.

JM: Yes, it is.

AK: So you think that it was entirely assigned to this Institute and that the Institute is today responsible for this Polishness in Orchard Lake Schools?

JM: Without a doubt, once you read the regulations.

AK: Yes.

JM: Yes, this Orchard Lake Schools corporate team, it is very clearly specified that the Polish Institute is the official intermediary between the Polish community and the schools. Well, this is the responsibility and obligation of the Polish Institute and it is specified very clearly in the regulations, there is no question.

AK: Beyond that, coming back for a moment to the Liturgical Center named after Saint John Paul II. You mentioned these songbooks, "Pan z Wami" and what else should be done? How can this Center take care of and promote Catholicism and Polish culture? We know there are Masses, yes?

JM: I'll come back to this question in a moment, so I'll go back to these components. I said that literature and language are basic, I have such a graphic here. I like to use these illustrations and it shows that language is the foundation, it is the basis, I emphasize, language, language is the basis, it is the foundation, without language there is no literature, without language there is no culture, without language there is no society, there is no country.

AK: That's right, a Pole's identity is defined by his Polish language.

JM: Sure.

AK: Okay, but we are in the United States, we are in Orchard Lake Schools, it is an American corporation as we will talk about in a moment, and we know that the administrative language is English, right.

JM: In this country.

AK: Despite this, we believe that we should promote the Polish language.

JM: Very, very much, I, we must try to use Polish language. I am convinced that everyone wants to hear their native language. If someone was born and raised in Poland and emigrated to the United States, it is a pleasure to hear the Polish language and we have the opportunity to create a comfort zone

for these people here in this area. I think they deserve it, but not only that, but in order to maintain this culture, to spread the culture, we also need to spread the Polish language.

AK: Yes, sir, you know very well, a long, long time ago, it was as if these Polish Sundays were created, the first Sunday of every month was a Polish Sunday, and even with my small children, we used to come to Orchard Lake as a family. There was a lot going on here. Various guests from Poland came, which was also an attraction for us, because there was this longing for Poland and we were very happy to meet either the cardinal or another person from Poland, the Mass was in Polish. Everything was about this, the gallery was open, you could visit museums, you could come to the gallery, see Polish works by Polish artists and so on. Do you think this functions well today?

JM: We could do more. I must mention that two weeks ago we celebrated May 3rd. I decided that this event should be entirely in Polish, and so it was. And I'm really delighted and I was pleasantly surprised that a lot of people showed up. At a glance, I would say there were at least 300 people in the church. I was really happy about it and the proof is that people want to hear the Polish language. A lot of people showed up, they knew that this Polish Mass would be in Polish and the entire event would be in Polish. The Academy program and then dinner, and I say, there were a lot of people in the church and that was, well, one example of what we do to keep these Polish events on the grounds (on campus). Well, I often hear people say that Polishness is dying out here, in this area, and in my opinion, you have to be reasonable, I think that this is largely unjust criticism directed at the schools in Orchard Lake. Compared to other Polish organizations, I often find myself at a meeting in a Polish organization, say the Polish Congress or the Friends of Polish Arts, and I must say that I am a bit disappointed that all these meetings are conducted in English. I rarely hear a Polish word, and that, in my opinion, also defeats the purpose, no, because if it's really a Polish organization and you don't hear a Polish word, then there's one, I say, that defeats the purpose, and I hear that here in our area, in our school, Polishness is dying out. And I don't know if this is really a valid criticism compared to these other organizations, because I could say the same about other organizations.

AK: Friends of Polish Arts, are you talking about?

JM: Yes, yes, Polish Congress, Cultural Center. And I say, on the one hand, I can understand that it is in this country, and yes, the proceedings have to be in English, but at least they can be, well, half and half, bilingual. But no, well, I don't want to, I don't want to insult anyone, I don't want to accuse anyone, but I think generally, we have this problem here in the Polish community. Not only in this area, but everywhere, it looks like this is actually dying out, little by little. If the language disappears, the culture will also disappear, Polishness will disappear and it will be a pity.

AK: Well, if we don't take care of it, if we don't want to promote Polish culture, we know it will disappear.

JM: It will die off, won't it?

AK: Well, because the excuse that there are no new arrivals, I don't know, in history, you know, like the emigration wave, this was repeated. Every few years, we don't know what the future holds, maybe, I don't wish it, that a group of Poles will come again and emigrate to America for some reason, right, but I saw perfectly well that by organizing the May 3rd run, how many Polish youth, over 120 people ...

JM: Yes, that's how I remember it.

AK: I took part in the first race on May 3, almost everyone spoke Polish, although they were also of Polish descent, but when one of the women who won the race, a young girl said, "this is a Polish Pride" and she was very happy that she took part in it.

JM: And I have to acknowledge and commend you for organizing it, I was here for half of the race and I heard with my own ears that a lot of people actually spoke the language.

AK: So there are these Poles, it is not true that we no longer exist.

JM: And they were, and you speak the truth that there were a lot of young people and I even heard some of them, these young men, talking...

AK: In Polish...

JM: In Polish, yes, but we need to have more such events. Coming back to the Liturgical Center, as you know, every Sunday at nine o'clock we have Masses entirely in Polish in the chapel and the Mass there is recorded on the radio. And it's also recorded on Facebook and I have to say, thank God and Father Witek celebrates these Masses. But lately I've been a bit disappointed that not many people come to this Mass, and maybe three, four, five years ago such a chapel was actually quite full. Now fewer people come and I don't know why, it's a pity.

AK: I think, you know, that it is related to the fact that there was a Seminary and there were a lot of seminarians and therefore more people who took care of these seminarians. It's likely that they then don't come to Sunday morning Mass.

JM: Well, maybe, I'm not arguing, but it's a pity, but I also understand that all these people are definitely members of some parish and maybe even members of the parish in Sterling Heights. And maybe they will go to Mass there once in a while, but no matter what, we are still committed. We have these Masses and we will have these Masses, and at this time, in this case, and the Liturgical Center adds to this. But not only this Mass, the Liturgical Center celebrates the anniversary of Saint John Paul II, Divine Mercy, Christmas Eve, Soldiers' Day, Saint John Bobola's Day, and the Constitution of May 3. The first Sunday of the month is always a Polish Mass and lunch, and this is thanks to Father Witek. He conducts a Bible group once a month, so at that time, I think the Liturgical Center, if possible, adds to it. Well, all these events and celebrations are in Polish. I don't want to brag, really, but I will brag a little. So that we do what we can here and we maintain it and we promote the Polish language and Polish culture.

AK: And now back to the formalities. I have these questions regarding the formal situation of Orchard Lake Schools. This is a privately held 501c3 corporation, right?

JM: Oh yes.

AK: Can you explain what this means?

JM: Yes, I'd love to. 501c3, it is a certain corporation, I mean, non-profit, it means that it is not an industry, it is not a corporation that earns money and spends these earnings on investors, what earns money stays in the account (coffers) and it can only be used to advance this corporation and that's what we do, it's just a different structure.

AK: And who owns this land?

JM: Corporation, corporation. This whole property, this area here, this is the property of this corporation. Yes.

AK: For example, let's assume if there was a need to sell a piece of land, who decides about it?

JM: Well, that's a decision of the Board of Regents.

AK: Okay.

JM: They, the Board of Regents, have the authority to make such decisions. I must say that during my time as Regent I do not remember that there was even talk of us looking to sell a piece of land.

AK: I'm just asking out of curiosity. If such a situation occurred in the future, who would decide.

JM: Board of Regents.

AK: Do you remember or do you know how many members there are? I know that this Board of Regents is quite extensive, how many members are there, how many regents are there on the Board of Regents?

JM: Just so I don't get confused, today I think 27, 28, around that number.

AK: Do you know how many Poles or Americans of Polish origin, Polish, there are in it?

JM: Just so I don't get confused, I think 9, of Polish origin.

AK: I understand, because as far as I know, to be a Regent one has to meet certain conditions. I don't want to talk about gossip, but it is said that if you want to be regent, you have to give the appropriate amount of subsidies, donations to Orchard Lake, is this true?

JM: No.

AK: No, so we clearly hear that this is not true. If I wanted to be a regent, what conditions must I meet in order for the commission that decides whether I can be a regent or not to qualify me? Could you please let us know this secret?

JM: Well, there's really no secret. Yes, we now have such a committee, I think, we have three members who are regents on this committee and when someone either comes forward or someone recommends..

AK: That means a recommendation, right? Someone can recommend?

JM: I would recommend that you were a regent, then you would have to prepare your biography and you would have to describe what you could add...

AK: Why would I like to come here, why would I want to be regent?

JM: What could you add? Why do you want to be a regent, and at this time you are giving all these documents to this Committee and at this time this Committee will finally present to the entire council of regents and either way or...

AK: I am presenting my candidacy.

JM: And whether one is promoted or not and that's a whole process of nothing, nothing.

AK: And if so, is there any pattern on how often this committee decides to add or change members of the Board of Regents? Because is it based on status or is one a regent for life and forever?

JM: It was changed previously. This term of office was for 3 years. Then the regent could petition. He tells them that he would like to stay for another 3 years. It could still be for another 3 years and in total the regent could not serve for more than 6 years. Then he would have to take a break. At least one year's break and then he again proposed that he would like to be regent. A few years ago, I forget already, this would probably be a good five, six years ago, it was changed. And now there is no such thing that there is a certain term of office of three years or six years, what is happening now, that every three years the Committee that selects the regents, evaluates all the regents...

AK: And rightly so, right?

JM: Is this regent active, does he work, what does he add? And this Committee at this time brings to the entire board of regents...

AK: Conclusion. Can this person continue...

JM: (The Committee's) opinions, opinions, whether this regent is suitable to extend his term of office or not. And that's just what's happening now.

AK: So this is something new, I didn't know about it.

JM: It was overturned, well, I don't know, maybe five years ago, and now there is no...

AK: Automatically extended, yes, this term of office as regent. Okay, but is it, for example, ok, tomorrow I will decide, I want, I will write my CV, a justification and I will send to this Committee a request that I would like to be regent. Do I have to wait for autumn, will it be in November or next year? Like, how is it?

JM: Usually we, I forget, whether it was in spring or autumn, because it changed so much. What I remember is that now in the fall, when I have a meeting of regents in the fall, at this meeting this Committee brings its candidates, yes, yes, yes.

AK: Thank you very much. But now we also know, I'm going back to this legal form (formality), this Orchard Lake structure. And it is a legal organization separate from the church, right. Does Orchard Lake fall under the Archdiocese in some way because we know the Seminary (SSCMS) no longer exists? I understand that when there was a seminary, it was certainly

methodical, or was it subordinate to the Archbishop of Detroit, what does it look like today?

JM: Oh, this is a complicated matter. Yes, and it's a difficult question. What you say is true, from the very beginning of this group it was a seminary and then, according to church law, it was a very simple matter. The seminary is under the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese and so on, and it ran, ran, ran, and no one paid attention. Now, when the Seminary is no longer open, the Archdiocese approached the president and said that now, so that the high school can advertise, that there is still a Catholic school, and that in this area we have a Eucharistic church, and so on and so forth, that according to the Archdiocese, according to canon law, we must have an agreement between the Archdiocese and this corporation. And this contract specifies what can and cannot be done. In this contract, the legal term is that this school would become a legal entity (legal person)...

AK: Legal entity...

JM: Yes, legal entity. What does it mean? This means that this corporation would have to cede some control to the Archdiocese.

AK: Controls over High School, and Prep, right?

JM: Over this whole corporation, ok, and we received a rough draft of what the Archdiocese would require. And it really requires a certain degree of control over the corporation, to the point where they would have to empower regents. Yes, and if, say, a school wanted to either borrow a certain amount, the Archdiocese would have to approve it...

AK: Accept...

JM: Yes, if the school, as we said, if the school wanted to sell a piece of land, the Archdiocese would have to approve it. And we've been working on it for probably a year now. And this is a really controversial issue. Some regents are very willing to sign on to this agreement. Well, and let's go further, some regents are objecting and saying that we're really not prepared to give that much control to the Archdiocese. And here it is at this stage.

AK: And what do you think, if you could reveal your own opinion, would it be beneficial, yes, for Orchard Lake?

JM: My opinion, and it is only my opinion, each regent sees things differently.

AK: Every regent has the right to his own opinion, I understand.

JM: And I'm a little afraid, why? To be honest, when this corporation had financial problems a few years ago, no one helped us with the Seminary, it was almost finished, it was losing money, lots of it. At the end of the day, the Seminary was losing several hundred thousand dollars a year. The Archdiocese did not come to the rescue to maintain...

AK: Seminary.

JM: The Seminary, and so I look at it honestly, that, well, on the one hand, I understand why the Archdiocese, the church, wants to have some control over an organization that declares itself to be a Catholic organization.

AK: That's right.

JM: I can understand it, I really do. Like I'm sitting on this stool, but my responsibility, I'm sitting on this stool as the Regent of this corporation. My legal and moral responsibility is solely to this organization. And really, I, I'm the Regent and I'm sitting in the regent's meeting, I don't care about the Archdiocese and I say that carefully. I am Catholic, well I go to church and I wish the Archdiocese the best future, but as I say, my responsibility really is here.

AK: Yes, but in connection with this, this question occurred to me. Will High Schools then retain their Catholic character?

JM: Well, absolutely, well, there is nothing to discuss. Well, we absolutely want to. It must be a Catholic school, because we announce that it is a Catholic school, we promote that it is a Catholic school. I am convinced that many parents who send and pay tuition require it.

AK: That's right

JM: And they want it to, well, to send them to a Catholic school, if it wasn't a Catholic school, well, I don't know if we would have so many students, so absolutely...

AK: And how many students do you know now?

JM: In the coming year we will have 930 students, which is really, really good. Five, six years ago we dreamed that when we could reach 600, now it is 930, we opened this school to girls.

AK: For the girls, I think it was a very good decision.

JM: A very, very great decision, a very good decision and now we have a new school building and we would also really have to...

AK: The building is beautiful.

JM: Because really, without this new building we couldn't place...

AK: As far as I know, 5 million from Mr. Burkacki's foundation...

JM: And even now it's nine hundred, nine hundred something. Well, maximum, because the dining room can't do more, the chapel and so on. Well, I'm saying more than, let's say, 950, we can't accept because, well, the buildings can't hold more, we can't accept more, but I don't know if I answered, I answered this question. Please, one more thing, please, let me add now, we are in the process of putting together this, this strategic plan. We are waiting for it to come to fruition, because in this strategic, strategic plan, we are considering the future of this whole complex, where are we going, "Quo Vadis", where are we going, how do we want this the group (campus) to look ten, twenty years ago...

AK: Does it mean backwards or forwards?

JM: Sorry forward, not backward. Moving forward, we are waiting for it to come to fruition and what will really come out of it, and it will tell us a lot about what we will be like, what we want to look like ten years in the future, twenty years in the future, or, will we have a chancellor?

AK: Exactly!

JM: Will we have a chancellor? This is, this is an open question and this is...

AK: Does the chancellor have to be a priest or can he be a civilian? Well, there would be a lot of questions here?

JM: Now, today the regulations still state that the chancellor must be a priest. And historically, we always had the Seminary, in fact, even Archbishop Vigneron said that no, you don't have to have a priest as chancellor, it's not required. We can change the regulations so that it doesn't even have to be. It's a question of whether there even needs to be a chancellor, because, to be honest, there's only one school left, we're talking about the school in Orchard Lake. There is only one school, the high school, and thank God we have the high school because if there was no high school, there would be no Orchard Lake. High school supports this whole complex financially and that's it. But it's interesting, what structure, what will come out of it, what structure will we have in the future? Now we no longer have a chancellor, for three years we no longer have a chancellor.

AK: The school is functioning, the school complex is functioning, right?

JM: It's going well, as I said. Well, to be honest, I don't know how it will all work out, no one knows until...

AK: Is this Plan, I hope it will be completed soon. This strategic plan, but I suspect it won't be mandatory for the Board of Regents that, will you have to follow this plan? Are you yet to decide whether this plan suits you?

JM: Oh yes, yes, yes, finally, if we have advisors who help us with this plan, they are professionals. This is their job, they've done it, and they, well, have a lot of experience with it, but it's true that eventually they'll present their report and the Board of Regents has to, well, decide. We accept this or perhaps we may have to change this, we can accept this and not the other, this and not that. And it may be that this Plan will change a little bit, but in the end the Board of Regents must vote and adopt this Plan. But is this an oath that, that, that it is, we have to swear that we will follow this plan...

AK: They implemented it, right?

JM: Well, every detail of this plan may change...

AK: I am adapting to...

JM: But this Plan can always change, something unexpected will always happen anyway. But, well, it would be really stupid for the Board of Regents to pass it, adopt it, and then do nothing about it. Well, there will be a lot of initiatives in this plan, and we have to prioritize a bit. Well, this year, these initiatives, the next ones, and there are also initiatives for high school...

AK: For the Institute too?

JM: Yes, yes, absolutely.

AK: As far as I know, Dr. Radziłowski would probably like to adapt it as a Research Center, is that why?

JM: It's true, it's true and, I know, the Polish Institute is looking at it and even hired an architect to, well, bring a plan. How can Polish Institute transform this building to its benefit. I think what Dr. Radzilowski proposes is that he could move these archives there, in this building. And these museums in this building, but I don't really know more than that because it's also in progress now...

AK: We will talk to Dr. Radzilowski about this.

JM: I know that they, I say, this architect, now he is working on it and making plans and proposals and so on.

AK: And the castle, a historic building, the first oldest building in this area.

JM: You know what, it breaks my heart and it really breaks everyone's heart that this building is just standing there, empty and unusable. But we had a plan to renovate this building, but that was about 4 years ago and it was supposed to cost almost a million dollars to bring this building into use. And

always the same problem, if we have a million dollars, is that the most important thing? And finally, no, it's very difficult to invest a million dollars in this building, we don't have a chancellor. And we are at this stage, it's a pity that there is not enough money to renovate all these buildings. Well, we have to decide the first, second, third, fourth priority, and I think this plan will help us.

AK: And in your opinion, what is the most important thing about this, this, the first goal, because you are talking about priorities here, what would be the first thing to be implemented in Orchard Lake Schools? Is it related to High School or...

JM: Uh... now I'm trying to answer this wisely so that I don't go astray. We have girls on this campus now and we know that some of these conditions for girls, let's say, these like, well, sports conditions are not that great. Well, for now, we're working on it. It's like building a little addition to the Dombrowski building somewhere to give girls space for sports. I would say, first of all, when we have girls on campus, we have an obligation to somehow meet this need, I think it is...

AK: Well, knowing the history of Prep and Orchard Lake, I looked at very archival photos. Sport has always been important, do you know that?

JM: In my day, yes, fifty years ago in my time, sports on this campus were always very important. I remember when I was here, we had this trainer, Father Rakoczy, he was excellent, even the old gym...

AK: It's in his name.

JM: The greatest coach, I think, in the history of this school. And sports were very, very important then and to this day, but I must say that in almost all of these high schools today sports are very important. Well, whether we like it or not, sports are important and I say nothing has changed and I say, I even saw photos old from the seminary, maybe eighty or ninety years old photos and the seminarians played soccer.

AK: Regatta...

JM: Well, well, yes, well, well, yes, yes, yes, it's nothing new really and it's good that you mentioned it. Well, I've heard this criticism from a lot of people, well, sports, sports, sports, I say whether we like it or not. Today's school, today's conditions, and you have to adapt to it. And what else, if we don't have sports, many of these students wouldn't be here. Well, these are some of the students who have this goal to go out and enter the professional community, football, hockey...

AK: Yes, I know that hockey is popular and students later receive scholarships at universities, and that is what I wanted to refer to these two other Poles from Poland, Prep students, who will graduate tomorrow on Sunday. I know that somehow, they came here to Orchard Lake to study in our High Schools? Do you know if it was, they were selected (recruited), they applied themselves, what is the way to...

JM: You know what, this is Father Król's service, I admit that I don't know the details of how it started. But I know that Father Król had a hand in this that these students were in high school here.

AK: Is there still a need to come to study from Poland?

JM: I want that, I have been working on it and continue to work on it.

AK: Do they get scholarships here or on some terms?

JM: They get some relief, yes, yes, yes, yes, the Wikiera Foundation has allocated \$50,000 for this purpose to bring them and have them here on campus. Well, I don't know, a certain number of one or two students and this responsibility fell on the Polish Institute.

AK: Oh, I didn't know.

JM: And I don't know what's going on with it. I must say that this is not an easy matter. It's a big effort, someone has to take care of it, well, the visa, someone has to fly to Poland and somehow look for students who are willing. I know this teacher - Dr. Włoch, she volunteered and said that she would help with this, but somehow it is difficult to get it started.

AK: Can I suggest something? Is this \$50,000 which is not transferred and can in some way finance students of Polish origin. Wouldn't it be worth it here, in Michigan or in other states, to do some advertising, advertisements and scholarships for children of Polish descent from the United States?

JM: Who live also...

AK: Yes, yes, and in this way instead of bringing, let's say, two of them from Poland, and in this way it seems to me that if later a student of this high school tells his friend and so on, the news will spread. Maybe more Polish children will come back here because, as we know, it was a Polish high school. There was Polish (language), there were students.

JM: Is it possible? You know what, I really don't know. I know that the Wikiera Board of Trustees allocated the \$50,000 for this purpose in order to have students from Poland here. I don't know whether the council would agree to this proposal.

AK: I would think so, because there are also Polish families who cannot afford to pay tuition fees at a Catholic school, yes, they would definitely like to send their children, so maybe we could present such a proposal to the council today?

JM: Yes, there are scholarships, and qualified students can apply for these scholarships. Even this Mr. Burkacki left, I think, 5.5 million dollars, so 5 million dollars was intended for the building, the rest was intended for a scholarship and this scholarship is only available to students of Polish descent. But, what it is, you know, it's also a lifetime fund, so you can only draw from it...

AK: From the interest, what you earn.

JM: Now, well, there's really not much from it, but...

AK: There is some help...

JM: It will help one or two students, and really, to this day, I don't know how many students of Polish descent...

AK: We have in the High School...

JM: No, that...

AK: But will they take advantage of this help?

JM: They will take advantage of it, I don't know.

AK: And the Polish language, well, I think it was thanks to your initiative that the Polish language class was started, which was undertaken by Dr. Marta Włoch.

JM: Yes, yes, it's the first year and Dr. Włoch intends to expand it a bit by the end of the year.

AK: Would you like to add anything else at the end of our conversation? What should we know about Orchard Lake Schools? What else would you like to tell our viewers and readers of the Polish Media Center?

JM: I don't know what to add to that. We had a really good conversation, for my part, and I have to say, and I say this very frankly, some people have heard this criticism, and some people say that the Regents don't care about Polishness, they would prefer there were no Polishness on this campus. I must say 100% that it is false.

AK: No, false opinion, yes!

JM: Absolutely, I have been a regent for eight or nine years now. I know these regents, and I can honestly say that for non-Polish regents, they are not indifferent. Well, actually, they are indifferent, they will not fight for this Polishness. But to be in opposition, absolutely not. Everyone understands

what the beginning of this school was like. Everyone understands and accepts it, and everyone knows that we have the Polish Institute, the Liturgical Center. They support it, but to say that there really is some hostility, I absolutely don't feel it, I didn't feel it, I don't feel it. I say, well, they are indifferent, if it is, it is, if not, then not, but I say, there are nine regents of Polish descent who (speak up about) remind us of this and I always encourage members of the Polish community to visit the campus. So that they can come, so that they can attend Masses and all these events. Well, I hope that the Polish Institute, like you, this race and such new events...

AK: Well, you can offer other things, but you know, I go to a party (function) or an event that is attractive to me, right...

JM: Well...

AK: So we have to offer something that will be attractive to people. Thank you very much for the interview and I hope that if the need arises, I will be able to invite you again.

JM: Anytime. I'm sorry, I don't use Polish very often.

AK: Well, I wanted to thank you for speaking in Polish. Thank you very much.

JM: But I wanted to talk in Polish. I must admit that my Polish vocabulary...

AK: It's rich...

JM: When my parents were still alive, we always spoke Polish and I must admit that I am slowly forgetting. That's why I'm fighting for us to use Polish more, so that we can use it.

AK: Well, I appreciate that you agreed to speak Polish today. Again thank you very much.

JM: Thank you very much.

(Polish to English translation from Google Translate app) with some adjustments for clarity and context