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Josef Blass and Ewa Schaff-Blass Establish Endowment to Honor U-M Professor

The Center for Russian and East European Studies (CREES) is pleased to announce the establishment of an endowed Marjorie and Maxwell Reade Graduate Fellowship thanks to a \$50,000 gift from Josef S. Blass and Ewa Schaff-Blass, M.D. The Marjorie and Maxwell Reade fund will be administered by CREES in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. It is named to honor Professor Emeritus Maxwell Reade, of the U-M's Department of Mathematics, and recognizes his tireless commitment to furthering scholarship and cooperation with faculty and students in Poland and Central Europe. The Marjorie and Maxwell Reade fund will provide support for one or more graduate students each year in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, whose work and/or research focuses on Poland or Central Europe.

The Donors

Josef Blass (AM '69, PhD '71) and **Ewa Schaff-Blass** (MD '73) came to the University of Michigan from their native Poland in 1968 to study mathematics and medicine, respectively. Josef and his brother Piotr, who also received a Ph.D. in mathematics from U-M, were brought to the department by Maxwell Reade.

From 1970-99, Josef Blass was professor of mathematics at Bowling Green State University and founded Pension Research Institute, Inc. , a company created to bring academic research to the investment field. Over the years, he developed a 401(k) plan for Fidelity Group as well as investment products for individual and institutional clients and established a privately-owned transportation company in Poland and a financial consulting firm in Eastern Europe. Since high school, Josef was involved in the dissident movement in Poland, generously helping to fund the Solidarity movement during the difficult period of martial law.

From the end of communism in 1989, Josef Blass has worked with each successive Polish government, offering advice and support on issues dealing with pension reforms and privatization. He was instrumental in helping CREES organize a 1999 conference, "Communism's Negotiated Collapse: The Polish Round Table, Ten Years Later." For these contributions he received the Knight's Cross of Merit from the Polish government in 1999.