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MARIA KUNCEWICZ (Koon-tse'-vich), a distinguished literary figure in contemporary Polish literature, has been named Visiting Professor of Polish Literature at The University of Chicago.

The appointment was announced by Hugh McLean, Chairman of the University's Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures.

Mrs. Kuncewicz is the first appointment under a program announced in September, 1961, to strengthen studies in Polish language and literature.

The University has set as a long-range objective the establishment of an endowed chair in Polish language and literature. At the same time, it is seeking immediate support for a larger faculty in Polish Studies. The launching of the fund-raising program for the establishment of a permanent professorship coincides with the celebration of the One Thousandth Anniversary of the Polish State.

The Legion of Young Polish Women, 2222 North Kedzie Avenue, Chicago, agreed to provide financial assistance for the program for several years and to seek the support of the 700,000 Polish-Americans living in Chicago.

During the Winter Quarter, Mrs. Kuncewicz is teaching an undergraduate survey course in Polish literature and a class in Polish literature, 1918-1939, for graduate students.

Her novels, short stories, essays, travel accounts, and dramas have earned her a high place in contemporary literature.

In 1937, she was awarded the Literary Prize of the City of Warsaw and in the following year she received the Polish Golden Cross of Merit and the Golden Laurel of the Polish Academy of Letters.

In this country she is best known for The Stranger, a psychological novel written in 1945 and translated into ten languages, including five editions in both English and Italian, French, Dutch, Spanish, Czech, Finnish, Estonian, and Lithuanian.

Her other well-known novels are The Keys, a journey through Europe during the war, published in 1946, and The Conspiracy of the Absent, published in 1950. In 1954, she completed a play in English, Thank You for the Rose, and a novel in Polish, Lesnik,

which was translated into English as The Forester and published by Roy Publishers in New York in 1955.

All the five books she wrote after the war were reprinted in Poland after 1956 plus six pre-war novels and one first publication of a selection of essays covering both the pre- and post-war periods of her writing.

While on the campus, Mrs. Kuncewicz will complete work on another novel, Spanish Notes, and begin writing a book on Warsaw. In the Spring, Little, Brown and Company will bring out her newest book, The Modern Polish Mind, an anthology of Polish prose of the last ten years.

Besides teaching and writing, Mrs. Kuncewicz will give lectures on campus and in the Polish community in Chicago.

"To my mind the study of a foreign literature should be primarily a means of acquainting the student with a foreign mentality, a people, a country, and a way of life," she said.

"Polish literature, because of the political eclipse of Poland in the 19th Century--lack of embassies, lack of international prestige--has been grossly neglected in the world," she said. "Even at that time we had great poets and excellent novelists, two of whom won the Nobel Prize. The 20-year inter-war period of Polish independence was too short a time to repair the damage and it was not until the 1940's that Polish culture began to spread more widely in the West with political emigration. "

Mrs. Kuncewicz is the Founder of the International Pen Club Centre for Writers in Exile, of which authors of fourteen nationalities are members. It has headquarters in London and an American Branch in New York.

in 1899
Maria Kuncewicz was born in Samara, Russia, and for many years lived in Kazimierz on Vistula, Poland. She was educated at the Universities of Cracow and Nancy and studied music in the Warsaw Conservatory and in Paris.

In 1939, she left Poland to make her home in England, living there until 1955 when she came to the United States. She and her husband, Jerzy, a lawyer by profession and writer by avocation, live in New York City. She is an American citizen. They have one son, Witold, a building contractor and farmer, who lives in The Old Kennels, Flint Hills, Virginia.

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