

AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS

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**“Education is the only thing that could never be taken from us”
FROM ORPHAN CHILD TO WAR REFUGEE TO AMERICAN DREAM --
AN ACADEMIC SHARES HER GRANDFATHER’S REMARKABLE
STORY OF SKILL AND SURVIVAL THROUGH WWII**

A Professor of Management in the Eberhardt School of Business at the University of the Pacific, Stefanie Naumann, Ph.D. grew up hearing countless people tell her grandfather that his life story must be recorded. “Whoever was listening would keep asking questions for hours on end,” she recalls. “I felt like the luckiest girl in the world to be his only granddaughter.”

Born in 1919 in Mikolajki, Poland and orphaned at the age of 13, Naumann’s grandfather -- Tadeusz “Tad” Haska -- used his knowledge of nine languages to survive before, during, and after World War II. From translating newspapers for farmers and job instructions to French POWs (and impersonating a German on occasion) to escaping jail by the Soviet Secret Police and smuggling his wife to safety in a coffin on an all-male Naval ship -- ultimately immigrating to the United States, where he earned his Ph.D. and became a respected academic, teacher and beloved family patriarch -- Tad’s story is one of skill, bravery, and heroism rarely seen outside the bounds of film or fiction.

Tad began writing his memoir in the early 1990s, but had not finished it at the time of his passing in 2012 at the age of ninety-three. Determined to honor his life and her Polish heritage, and motivated by the belief that preserving eyewitness accounts is critical to learning about WWII and its effects on civilians, Naumann has used recordings, journals, and letters to complete her grandfather’s memoir in his own words.

On September 24, 2019, Naumann releases *How Languages Saved Me: A Polish Story of Survival* [Koehler Books] -- a singular and significant addition to the canon of World War II biography, an important contribution to the study of language and multilinguists, and a touchstone to the legacy of a remarkable man and the difference he made.

“There are still political refugees in the world, just as there were when my grandfather escaped Poland,” says Naumann. “He said that nations always begin calling people in opposing nations demeaning names as a first step in dehumanizing them and making them easier to oppress -- and he would have none of it.

“If we don’t record history, our descendants can’t learn from it,” she continues. “Each year there are fewer people alive with firsthand knowledge of World War II. It’s important to record our parents or grandparents’ histories. Even if all you do is hit the record button on your phone, you’re off to a good start.”

Stefanie Naumann has immediate availability for interviews, commentary, and byline article/op-ed opportunities in support of the Fall 2019 release of *How Languages Saved Me*. Among the topics she can speak to include:

- The remarkable true story of her grandfather, Tadeusz “Tad” Haska: how languages saved him (and occasionally got him into trouble) before, during, and after World War II, and the accomplished and fascinating life he built after immigrating to the U.S.
- Education as “the only thing that can never be taken away from us,” and becoming the third person to earn a Ph.D. in her family
- The process of completing her grandfather’s memoir posthumously: from unearthing a trove of documents and recordings in her mother’s garage to connecting with the children (now in their 80s) of the family who helped her grandparents as refugees in Sweden, how this project has helped her to connect with her heritage and gain a deeper understanding of her family and world history
- The importance of understanding refugees’ experiences and cultures, and of hearing the stories of courageous immigrants like Haska, who have contributed immeasurably to America’s values of bravery and freedom
- The many benefits of learning other languages, especially as technology has made it easier than ever to study and communicate with people all over the world
- Why it is crucial to know and record the stories of our ancestors, and how anyone who is interested in doing so can get started

STEFANIE NAUMANN is a Professor of Management in the Eberhardt School of Business at University of the Pacific, where she has taught for 20 years. She earned her Ph.D. from Louisiana State University, and has published over 30 journal articles. She is a 20+ year member of the Academy of Management, a lifetime member of the Polish American Genealogical Society of America, and has earned awards for her research, teaching, and service.

How Languages Saved Me [Koehler Books] will be available in hardcover, paperback, and ebook formats wherever books are sold as of September 24, 2019. Pre-order a copy today on [Amazon](#).

Connect with Stefanie Naumann on [Facebook](#), [Goodreads](#), [LinkedIn](#), and at <https://stefanienaumann.com/>

REVIEW COPIES OF *HOW LANGUAGES SAVED ME* AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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