

## **70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Special**



The Grand Casino Hinckley will host the Chmielewski 37<sup>th</sup> International Polka Festival May 29-31, 2015. This entire event will be dedicated to Florian Chmielewski, who at the age of 88, will be celebrating his 70<sup>th</sup> year playing the accordion at the festival. Since 1882, the Midwest's most well-known entertainers, the Chmielewski Family have been synonymous with polka music. Over 100 years later and into five succeeding generations, the Chmielewski Family music has never stopped.

In 1945, at the age of 18, Florian's music career began when he was hired to play his first job for a wedding dance with a repertoire of only four songs. As time went on and serving 3-1/2 years in the Army Air Force, he organized the original five Chmielewski Brothers Polka Band and in 1955, he produced the Polish TV Party on WDSM TV, which was televised in black and white.

Since then, Florian produced over 3,000 TV shows known as, Chmielewski Funtime, which were televised on 42 stations Nationwide including the RFD-TV Network out of Branson, MO. In 1972 their TV show aired in 59,000 homes in the Midwest, beating NFL Football and America's #1 show "Archie Bunker". The Chmielewski Funtime band included his children, Florian Jr., Jeff, Mark and Patty. The Chmielewski Funtime family band extended their travels and performed all across the United States and Canada including Germany, Switzerland, Norway, Hawaii and Mexico.

In the 1980's, the Chmielewski Band was nominated by the Minneapolis Aquatennial and performed in the Bahama Islands for a cultural exchange mission. After their return, the Chmielewski Band appeared at the Minnesota Music Academy at the Orpheum Theatre collecting nine out of eleven awards in the polka categories for two years in a row. The Chmielewski Band has performed at both the MN State Fair and America's Largest Scandinavian Festival, the Hostefest in Minot, ND for over 20 years.

In 1994, Florian was inducted in the Minnesota Music Hall of Fame in New Ulm and in 1995, he was inducted in the Ironworld USA Hall of Fame in Chisholm, MN where his daughter Patty resides alongside her father as a Hall of Fame recipient in 2003.

In 2013, after delivering the commencement address at the Fond Du Lac College in Cloquet, MN, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate Degree in Law and Music for his 26 years serving in the MN State Senate and his outstanding music history.

Florian still actively performs over 100 performances annually and has managed Funtime Tours, bringing followers to Branson, MO every year, amongst several other tours throughout the year by motor coach. He has now given management of both the band and the tours to his daughter Patty. She has brought new energy and excitement to his businesses and has renamed the tours as "ChmieBell Tours", to reflect both her name, Patty Chmielewski and Michael Bell. They personally manage and give one-on-one personal service to all their travelers. You can participate in their motor coach tours throughout the year by contacting their website, [www.ChmieBellTours.com](http://www.ChmieBellTours.com).

The Chmielewski Family will be honoring Florian as part of their 37th Annual International Polka Festival hosted by the Grand Casino Hinckley. During this celebration, the Chmielewski Funtime Band will perform each day, showcasing 4 generations of musicians. Other bands participating in the celebration are Wisconsin's Band of the Year, Steve Meisner, Chicago's Entertainer of the Year, Eddie Korosa, MN Hall of Fame Recipients, the Wendinger's & other Nationally known band favorites, the Singing Slovenes, Bill Koncar, DyVersaCo, Leon Olsen Show, Nathan's Oldtime Band, Alaska Polka Chips & the Top Notchmen. There will even be a Polka & Waltz dance contest Saturday afternoon at 2:30PM.

Join the Chmielewski Family on May 29-31, 2015 at Grand Casino Hinckley for the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual International Polka Festival and come celebrate with Florian and the family! Ticket prices for the event are \$15 a day/\$40 all 3 days. For group motel rates at the Grand Hinckley Inn for \$89 or Grand Northern Inn for \$79, call 1-800-472-6321 and ask for the "Polkafest Discount" or visit their website to purchase advance tickets at [www.grandcasinomn.com](http://www.grandcasinomn.com). For additional information on the event or band booking, contact Patty Chmielewski at (612) 597-8116 or email [pchmie@charter.net](mailto:pchmie@charter.net)