

# Seweryn Nowakowski - The Lost Mayor of Białystok

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The exhibition commemorates and shares knowledge about the fate of one of the most outstanding local government officials of Białystok in the years of the Second Polish Republic, Mayor Seweryn Nowakowski. We would like to recall his achievements in favor of the city, his heroic attitude at the outbreak of World War II, as well as the tragic and still unexplained circumstances of his death (he disappeared after the NKVD arrest in Białystok in October 1939). We will also try to answer the question why Seweryn Nowakowski was in the top ten plebiscite of the "Białystokers of the Centennial" - among people who had a significant impact on the development and history of our city.

The exhibition devoted to Mayor Nowakowski shows his professional path - from the 1920s, when he started working in the police, through his career in the Piotrków and Częstochowa municipalities, to the most effective period of activity for the years spent in Białystok. Fragments of his private life were also made available - in addition to materials belonging to the family of Seweryn Nowakowski, archives and museums, you can hear the memories of the mayor's daughter-in-law, Krystyna Nowakowska.

**Seweryn Nowakowski** (1894-1939) was the last mayor of pre-war Białystok. He was renowned as a great organizer and host. In the memory of contemporaries and the following generations, he is viewed as an energetic man with a vision of the development of Białystok. It was during his tenure and on his initiative that, among others, Planty park, Marshal Piłsudski People's House (later known as Aleksander Węgierski Drama Theater) or Market Hall in Bojary came to life. He stayed with his inhabitants to the very end, paying with his life.

Initially, in 1931, he was appointed to the position of the city's governmental commissioner. He was doing his job well. He found recognition in the eyes of Białystok residents, among various elites of the city and central authorities, and the confirmation of this status was taking office as a mayor of Białystok in 1934. Seweryn Nowakowski restored the city budget balance, started building sewage system, electrified the city, ordered chaotic buildings. During his term of office, many investments were initiated and completed, which changed Białystok from a neglected and devastated by Russian occupiers place into a real city, where living became more pleasant and safe. This constructive work was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II. The Russians arrested the mayor. To this day, we do not know how and where he died.

**The project is carried out as part of the celebration of the centenary of regaining independence by Białystok.**

