

Summer 2010

MISSION: The Voice/Vision Archive promotes cultural, racial and religious understanding through unprecedented worldwide access to its collection of Holocaust survivor narratives. Our educational resources, programs and outreach provide quality Holocaust education to the metropolitan Detroit and global communities through engagement with teachers, civic groups and religious organizations.

VISION: The Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive seeks to strengthen the University of Michigan-Dearborn's position as a welcoming and nurturing institution, which supports diversity among its students, faculty, staff, and scholarship.

To accomplish this goal it is our vision to:

- Enable immediate connections to powerful, oral histories of survivors who experienced the Holocaust
- Reach out to Michigan's K-12 students and educators by offering guided discussions and focused dialogues
- Conduct content-specific workshops and colloquia aimed at metropolitan area educators
- Reach out to the metropolitan community's civic and religious organizations
- Provide an online Holocaust education curriculum
- Support Holocaust research
- Preserve the voices and memories of Holocaust survivors for future generations

THE VOICE

"We die twice when men forget."
—*Simonides of Ceos (c.556 - 468 BC)*

MUNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-DEARBORN

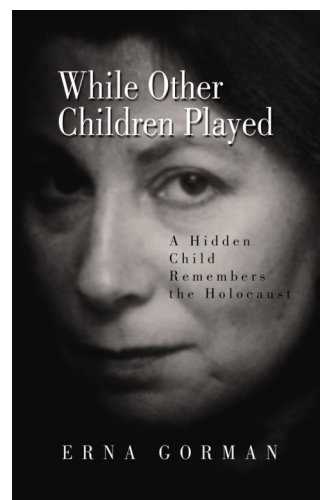


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Voice/Vision Archive Helps Publish Survivor Memoir

The Voice/Vision Archive is proud to announce that Holocaust survivor Erna Gorman's memoir, "While Other Children Played," is set to be released this spring. Mrs. Gorman's 1989 videotaped interview was one of the first to be transcribed and made available on the Voice/Vision Web site. Since that time, Mrs. Gorman has continued to be an avid supporter of the Voice/Vision Archive.

The Mardigian Library's Associate Director, Barbara Kriigel, collaborated with Mrs. Gorman on the memoir, which recounts how Erna and her family survived the Holocaust because a Ukrainian farmer had the courage to hide them in his barn. As Erna, her sister, and their parents climbed the ladder to a tiny hayloft, they never dreamed it would be their home for almost two years. The space was very small with just enough room for a small blanket that the family could lie or sit on as they whispered stories to pass the time. The family's health quickly deteriorated due to unsanitary conditions, vermin, and malnutrition. Although they could hear the farmer's children playing outside, Erna and her sister Suzanne had to maintain silence so the family's presence would not be revealed. As the days and months passed, the family stopped talking and merely existed. When Russian soldiers liberated the area, the farmer told the family they had to leave. Unable to walk due to atrophied muscles, Erna and her family crawled through frozen fields to join the soldiers. Sadly, Erna's mother was killed several days later by a stray bullet during an air raid. (continued on page 3)



The cover of Erna Gorman's forthcoming book, "While Other Children Played: A Hidden Child Remembers the Holocaust."

Commemoration Highlights Role of Survivor Testimonies

Community members, students and educators gathered for the annual Holocaust and Armenian Genocide Commemoration on Sunday, April 18 at Wayne State University.

Titled, "The Challenges of and Opportunities of Oral Testimonies," the commemoration featured Voice/Vision Director Dr. Sidney Bolkosky's presentation, "Have We Misdirected Survivor Interviews?" focused on the necessity of creating rapport between interviewers and survivors. Because survivor interviews personalize the historical event of the Holocaust, they should be an integral part of the Holocaust education curriculum. To be effective, he said, interviewers must become partners in the conversation and bear in mind that life histories encompass more than the four-year period in question. (continued on page 3)

Children's Book Project Connects Students and Survivors

Once again, high school students from Everett, Washington used interviews from our Voice/Vision Archive Web site to study the Holocaust and create a collection of children's books. The students' English teacher, Linda Fredin, recently wrote a letter explaining the importance of the interviews: "After the students learn about their chosen survivor, they use symbolism to create a children's book detailing their survivor's life. At first they look at me as if I have asked the impossible. How can such a horrible event become a children's book? But once they begin, their creativity begins to flow and their stories are full of character and depth. The stories they create are simply amazing, and through the process, they truly begin to experience empathy."

Copies of the books, along with letters written by the students, are forwarded by Dr. Jamie Wraight to the survivors or their families. In some cases, the survivor writes back to the student, enabling the two of them to become friends. As one student said, "It allowed me the chance to show someone that what they endured wasn't in vain. We are able to learn about them and help others hear their stories."

We couldn't have said it any better.

From the Director

As the academic year comes to a close, I look back with some satisfaction over 2009-10. We continued to post interviews on the Voice/Vision Web site and completed several new ones. Thanks to the generous help of the Holocaust Education Coalition, we have made considerable progress with placing the curriculum "Holocaust: Life Unworthy of Life" online. Jamie Wraight has delivered lectures to schools around the state and he continues to assist students and teachers around the world. In December, Barbara Kriigel and I had the pleasure and honor to attend commencement at Northern Michigan University where we watched as our own Erna Blitzer Gorman received an honorary Ph.D. and then delivered a stirring, inspirational commencement address to over 1500 students and their families. With the collaboration of Barbara, the UM-Dearborn, Mardigian Library and Voice/Vision will help publish Erna's memoir.



When the Holocaust Memorial Center opened in West Bloomfield, The University of Michigan-Dearborn provided them with their initial interviews and two video programs which ran in the video theater. Because of differences over educational access to the interview materials, we decided to continue the project at the University. Now, with the arrival of a new director of the HMC, Steven Goldman, we have renewed our relationship and begun collaborative efforts for joint projects. I am pleased to announce that Jamie Wraight and I will participate in two events at the HMC. I have also delivered a lecture to their docents and taken a graduate seminar from Wayne through the museum. All this bodes well for the future.

Finally, several survivors have expressed concerns about the fate of Holocaust history and education. Let me renew our commitment to guaranteeing the maintenance of the integrity and professionalism of those subjects. With your continued support, we can assure that.

—Sidney Bolkosky

New Outreach Initiatives Help Area Teachers

In keeping with Voice/Vision's commitment to providing education and community outreach, curator Dr. Jamie Wraight visited several area schools, where he conducted presentations focusing on the experiences of those deported to Auschwitz.

Incorporating survivor interviews, photographs, and maps, the presentations illustrated for the middle and high school students the day-to-day conditions in the camp. The talks were designed to expand the students' understanding of real-life experiences of Holocaust survivors. In addition, they provided context for materials many of the students were already studying.

Dr. Wraight said the presentations act to augment the students' lessons by providing a visual component that helps them contextualize the events they have read about. "This combination of classroom lessons, survivor interviews, maps, and photos allows them to begin to understand the enormity of the Holocaust, without forcing them to confront graphic images," he said. The five school visits over the past year represent the initial phase of what will be a permanent component of the Voice/Vision Archive. For more information, or to schedule a visit, contact Dr. Jamie Wraight at jwraight@umd.umich.edu or 313-583-6300.

Gorman (continued)

As an adult, Mrs. Gorman had to come to terms with the horrific experiences of her childhood. She became determined to share her story with others, especially school children, so that they could understand the effects of intolerance, hatred, and bigotry.

She has been working with school groups for over twenty years. In 2009, she received an honorary doctorate in education from Northern Michigan University, in recognition of her work with students. She received her degree during the December graduation, and gave a moving commencement speech to the new graduates.

Mrs. Gorman's book is being published under the auspices of the University of Michigan-Dearborn and the Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive. For more information, contact Barbara Kriigel at bkriigel@umd.umich.edu or 313-593-5614. To listen to Erna's 1989 interview, visit: <http://holocaust.umd.umich.edu/blitzer/>.



Erna and her sister Suzanna pose for a photograph with their father in early 1947.

Voice/Vision Collaborates With JET

The Jewish Ensemble Theatre, as part of its Youth Education Services program, presented its annual stage production of "The Diary of Anne Frank" at the Ford Community and Performing Arts Center in Dearborn. Approximately 1500 area students attended four "school matinees" presented during the week of March 22. In addition, two weekend showings were presented for the general public.

Voice/Vision partnered with JET and the Dorfman Family Foundation to provide "talk-back" sessions with students at the end of each weekday performance. JET's Education Outreach Coordinator, Mary Davis, and Voice/Vision Curator Dr. Jamie Wraight co-hosted the question and answer sessions, along with the show's actors.

In addition to the talk-back sessions, Voice/Vision Director Dr. Sidney Bolkosky, Dr. Wraight, and Rene Lichtman, president of the Holocaust Education Coalition hosted a forty-minute panel discussion at the conclusion of the final performance on Sunday, March 28. Panelists discussed the significance of Anne's diary in connection with other hidden children and the importance of the diary in contextualizing the Holocaust for students.

For 15 years, JET Youth Education Services has offered age-appropriate educational productions addressing a variety of topics, such as bullying, friendship, and fitting in. For more information, call 248-788-2900, or e-mail outreach@jettheatre.org.



Dr. Jamie Wraight and Mary Davis, Outreach Coordinator for the Jewish Ensemble Theater answer questions during a "talk back" with area students.

Commemoration (continued)

Dr. Bolkosky warned against an insistence on happy endings in survivor interviews, against structuring survivor interviews in a rigorously formal way, and asked that all those undertaking oral history projects examine their motives. He went on to urge greater sensitivity in writing, speaking, and thinking about the Holocaust. "Professionalism does not demand cold impersonality," he said.

The commemoration also featured Dr. Gerard J. Libaridian, the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor's Alex Manoogian Visiting Professor of Modern Armenian History, who presented, "Remembering for Self, Remembering for History."

***"Professionalism
does not demand
cold impersonality."***

Sponsor an Interview!

It takes over 100 hours from the time an interview is conducted to the time it is cataloged and posted on our Web site. We work diligently to make sure each interview is properly transcribed, researched, and cataloged. This attention to detail takes the expertise and work of many dedicated individuals. Although painstaking work, it is a labor of love. 143 interviews have been cataloged and 134 have been posted online. There are 100 more interviews that need transcription and we continue to conduct more interviews when possible.

A one-time gift of \$500 will allow us to continue our efforts collecting and preserving these important interviews. By sponsoring an interview, you can help make it accessible to anyone, anytime and virtually anywhere.

For more information on sponsoring an interview, please contact Jamie Wraight at 313-583-6300 or jwraight@umd.umich.edu

We Need Your Help!

Secure the Archive's Future!

You can help to build the endowed fund of the Voice/Vision Archive. Your generous support of this important project is sincerely appreciated.

Please detach and mail this form to:

The Voice/Vision Archive
University of Michigan-Dearborn
4901 Evergreen Road 1040AB
Dearborn, Michigan 48128-1491

I have enclosed:

_____ My/our check payable to the University of Michigan-Dearborn for the first payment of a \$5,000 pledge to support the Voice/Vision Archive endowed fund. I/we will make gift payments: _____ monthly _____ quarterly _____ semi-annually _____ annually over a period of 5 years beginning in 2010-2011.

_____ My/our check payable to the University of Michigan-Dearborn for a gift of:
_____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$250 _____ \$500 _____ Other
_____ My/my spouse's matching gift form

You may charge my gift to:

_____ Visa _____ MasterCard _____ Amex _____ Discover
Account No. _____ Exp. Date _____
Signature _____ (Required)
Name(s): _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

You are welcome to call Cecile Aitchison in the Office of Institutional Advancement at 313-593-5409 with any questions. EID 570502 AGG BSA07 DRBN

<http://holocaust.umd.umich.edu>