

THE VOICE

VOICE
Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive
VISION

MUNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-DEARBORN

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Holocaust and Armenian Genocide Commemoration focuses on Education

More than 80 guests joined the Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive at the Holocaust and Armenian Genocide Commemoration held in the Alfred Berkowitz Gallery at the Mardigian Library on April 2. The event was co-sponsored by the University of Michigan Dearborn's Armenian Research Center and Mardigian Library, UM-Ann Arbor's Armenian Studies Program, and The Cohn-Haddow Center for Judaic Studies at Wayne State University.

The commemoration featured two renowned genocide scholars. Dr. Roger Smith, Professor Emeritus of Government at The College of William and Mary, is founder of the International Association of Genocide Scholars. Dr. Samuel Totten from the University of Arkansas is a leading scholar of genocide studies who has published extensively on genocide and education and has traveled to document atrocities in the Republic of Sudan and Rwanda.

Dr. Smith's presentation, *Should We Teach About Genocide? And If So, What Should We Teach?*, illustrated the importance of genocide education, while paying special attention to the issues involved in designing curricula that fully address the complexities of genocide studies.



Professor Samuel Totten of the University of Arkansas discusses the importance of education in preventing genocide.

Dr. Smith touched on concerns often voiced regarding genocide education, such as age appropriate lessons, deciding which genocides to include in curricula, and how to approach genocide education from a multidisciplinary perspective. The strongest motivation for advocating genocide education, he said, should be a sense of urgency regarding the necessity of preventing genocide, rather than commemoration alone.

Dr. Totten's presentation, *Confronting the Scourge of Genocide: From Knowledge to Action*, underscored the role of genocide education in allowing people to understand the necessity of protecting human rights throughout the world. Beyond straightforward education, he said, the purpose of teaching about genocide should be to raise awareness, "So that people will stand up and act."

Acknowledging that there are many approaches to teaching about genocide, Dr. Totten asserted that many instructors place too much emphasis on the killing itself. To allow students to understand the necessity of prevention, he said, not only the actual atrocities, but the historical antecedents of genocide must be emphasized as well as the aftermath. Such context is imperative if there is to be any hope of stopping genocide, he said. Dr. Totten also stressed the power and role of language in the process of dehumanization that leads to genocide.

The ultimate goal of teaching about genocide, according to Dr. Totten, is the protection of human rights, a topic important enough to be interwoven throughout the entire curriculum. He said that genocide education is critical in teaching individuals about what it means to be a bystander. For that reason, he said, "It can and it must be taught."

Earlier that afternoon, Dr. Totten hosted a program in UM-Dearborn's Social Sciences Building. His presentation on the genocide in Darfur attracted 80 students and faculty members.

Dr. Sidney Bolkosky
*Director,
Voice/Vision Holocaust
Survivor Oral History Archive*



From the **DIRECTOR**

Gelman Education Foundation funds Trip to Israel to Interview “Winton Children”

As she sat by herself on a train waiting to depart, a woman approached Ruth, age six, and handed her an infant. “Take care of him,” the woman said through tears, and then she left the train. Terrified, confused, Ruth turned to a 14-year-old girl who had a small child in tow. They exchanged children for the trip. Two days later she had arrived in London, a Czech Jewish immigrant who had been chosen to leave Prague in 1938 on a train arranged by Nicholas Winton’s staff. Winton would eventually rescue 679 such children from the Holocaust.

Winton, known as the British Schindler, came to Prague in 1938, after the Germans had occupied the Sudetenland and threatened the remainder of Czechoslovakia. Invited by a friend, he witnessed the beginning discrimination and persecution of Czech Jews, especially children, who were expelled from schools and public facilities, and were subjected to the equivalent of the Nuremberg Laws.

The British Consulate refused to help him, mimicking the Chamberlain line of no alarm. Seeing him as foolishly distressed, consular officials told him to “give it a go” if he desired. So he did. Part conman, part entrepreneur, he founded the Committee for Czech Jews Children’s Division and began to raise funds and solicit shelter in England. The last of nine trains was to leave on September 1, 1939, the day World War II began. All but two of the 250 children on that train were lost in

the War. Of those rescued in England, about half lost their parents and other members of their families.

Last January, at the request of the Gelman Educational Foundation, I interviewed 11 of the “Winton children” who eventually wound up in Israel. My wife, Lori, and I went to Jerusalem, Haifa, and Tel Aviv to talk with these extraordinary individuals. None of them knew about Winton until the 1980s and most had come to Israel shortly after World War II. Some appeared in the award-winning film about Winton, *The Power of Good* (funded in large part by the Gelman Foundation). All but one refused to identify themselves as “survivors”, as if they did not meet the suffering criteria of “real survivors”, people who survived camps like Auschwitz. Yet they were marked for annihilation, lived under the Nazi regime, and were persecuted and hunted. Like every survivor, the Holocaust haunts them, remains part of their lives. Their interviews will be posted on the Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive Web site under a special heading.

Let me thank the Gelmans for their generosity in making the interviews possible and thank all of you for your continued support in these difficult times.

Sid Bolkosky
Director, Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive

Voice/Vision Archive Receives Another Grant from the Claims Conference

The Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive is once again the recipient of a \$25,000 grant from the Rabbi Israel Miller Fund for Shoah Research, Education, and Documentation, which is administered by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany.

The grant provides two years of funding for the two research assistants who aid Voice/Vision Archive Curator Jamie Wraight in the preparation of survivor testimonies for publication in print and online. Because the primary goal of the Voice/Vision Archive

is to educate, historical accuracy is paramount. The publication process is complex, involving hours of meticulous research to verify dates, place names, and other details, as well as proofreading for clarity and consistency among all interviews.

Through this grant, the Voice/Vision Archive will continue to ensure that the survivor testimonies entrusted here will continue to meet the highest standards of historical accuracy, as well as accessibility to both scholars of the Holocaust and the general public.

Voice/Vision Archive Hosts Teacher Workshop

Area educators gathered at the University of Michigan-Dearborn on November 6, 2008 to take part in the workshop, *Teaching the Holocaust: Voices of the Past, Lessons for the Present, Visions for the Future*.

Presented by the Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive, in partnership with The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Gelman Education Foundation, and the University of Michigan-Dearborn's School of Education, the day-long workshop offered strategies for teaching the Holocaust to students at every level. Emphasizing the use of visual media and Web resources, workshop leaders outlined ways of personalizing Holocaust education to engage students, helping to make the process more meaningful for them than traditional history lessons.

Dr. Joyce A. Witt, of The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, opened the workshop with a presentation emphasizing the continuing importance of Holocaust education and offering guidelines for educators. Professor Larry Wilcox, of the University of Toledo then

discussed how teachers might use visual sources in the classroom. Wilcox focused on the history and use of documentary films about the Holocaust and gave suggestions on which are most effective for educators.

Dr. Fred Lessing and Voice/Vision Archive Director Sidney Bolkosky discussed survivor testimony and its importance to understanding the Holocaust. Professors Bolkosky and Wilcox, along with Dr. Lessing, discussed approaches to incorporating survivor testimony into Holocaust teaching through the use of resources like the Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive.

According to Dr. Jamie L. Wraight, Curator of the Voice/Vision Archive and one of the organizers of the workshop, "Having over 30 participants attend the workshop speaks to the importance of Holocaust education in Michigan. It shows that there is great interest among our state's educators in teaching their students about this event and The Voice/Vision Archive is committed to helping them achieve this.

Voice/Vision Interviews Inspire Children's Books

A group of junior high school students from Everett, Washington has created a collection of children's books inspired by the testimony of those who survived the Holocaust.

The Cavelero Mid High students used the Voice/Vision Archive's online collection to research the Holocaust. Moved by the personal stories of survival they encountered on the site, the students wrote and illustrated children's books based upon the interviews they studied.

The storybooks, with titles like *Tamara the Cricket* and *Motzi the Mouse*, use illustrations and symbolic language to recount the survivors' stories in a manner appropriate for young readers.

The students' English teacher, Linda Fredin had the finished stories professionally bound and has entrusted Voice/Vision Archive Curator Dr. Jamie Wraight to see that the books reach the survivors whose accounts inspired their creation. The student authors also sent photographs and letters addressed to the survivors. In the letters, students wrote of their admiration for the survivors' courage and thanked them for sharing their stories.



Motzi the Mouse, Rose in the Pound and Sammy and the Frightful Zoo, a sampling of some of the books written and illustrated by students in Ms. Fredin's class.

"We were very excited to be contacted by Ms. Fredin, to hear of the work her students were doing and to help them connect with the people that inspired their stories," said Wraight. "These books speak volumes about the quality of our collection and show the archive's supporters that their generosity sustains not only the work of the archive, it also allows teachers like Ms. Fredin to offer Holocaust education to their students that embraces the voices of those who survived. Having the interviews available online 24 hours a day, seven days a week offers unprecedented accessibility to our collection. That is what sets us apart from other Holocaust survivor oral history projects."

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 2009-2010.

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

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You are welcome to call Cecile Aitchison in the Office of Institutional Advancement at (313) 593-5409 with any questions.

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MISSION

The Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive exists to maintain a collection of oral testimonies of those who survived the Holocaust and make these widely accessible for educational purposes. Through interlibrary loan and the Internet and community outreach, we make the oral testimonies and transcriptions available to researchers, students and the general public.

VISION

The Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive strives to create personal links between listeners and survivors of the Holocaust for the purpose of providing an empathetic appreciation of the victims' experiences, thereby gaining greater insight into the historical event of the Holocaust. Through engagement of the listeners, the Archive seeks to reduce anti-Semitism and racism as it encourages tolerance.

World Wide Web: holocaust.umd.umich.edu

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Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor
Oral History Archive
University of Michigan-Dearborn
4901 Evergreen Road
Dearborn, Michigan 48128-1401
(313) 583-6300