

# THE VOICE

VOICE  
Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive  
VISION

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## Voice/Vision Archive and PBS Host Screening of Landmark Holocaust Film

In January, the Voice/Vision Archive was proud to host a special advance screening of the landmark documentary, *"Auschwitz: Inside the Nazi State."* This PBS/BBC series was released to coincide with the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

An audience of 175 people attended the event, which was the result of a collaboration between the Archive and the local PBS affiliate network, Michigan Television. "We chose the University of Michigan-Dearborn as the site for this special screening because the campus has done so much to document this history through the Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive, under the direction of history Prof. Sidney Bolkosky," according to Jennifer White, interim station manager of Michigan Television.

The three-part, six-hour program was the first series to explore the decision-making process of the Nazis in such detail. Based on the work of author Laurence Rees, the series drew on a number of newly-uncovered sources, such as material from the Russian archives which were made public in the 1990s. The film also incorporated the expertise of leading

historians, along with testimonies from Jewish and non-Jewish survivors of Auschwitz and interviews with Germans who had served as guards and administrators there.

After the movie screening, a panel discussion explored the topic in further detail. The panelists were Dr. Jamie Wraight, the Voice/Vision curator; Professor Larry Wilcox from the University of Toledo; and Voice/Vision Director Sidney Bolkosky. The panel was moderated by NPR/Michigan Radio's Todd Mundt.

Each panelist offered brief remarks on the nature and history of Auschwitz, and responded to questions and comments from the audience. Several attendees spoke of their experiences as Holocaust survivors, and concluding comments focused on the value of Holocaust education. From the most depressing of subjects arose a confirmation of the significance of the Voice/Vision Archive at the University.

DVD copies of *"Auschwitz: Inside the Nazi State"* are available for purchase from PBS at [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org).



Panelists (left to right) Dr. Jamie Wraight, Dr. Larry Wilcox from the University of Toledo, Dr. Sidney Bolkosky and moderator Todd Mundt from NPR/Michigan Radio



Panelists field questions from audience members after the screening of *"Auschwitz: Inside the Nazi State."*

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



## From the DIRECTOR

There is an undercurrent in my own tradition that tells us that the reclamation of memory and words is a mitzvah, a good deed, a good thing to do. Elie Wiesel, in *The Oath*, wrote: "Jews felt that to forget constituted a crime against memory as well as against justice: whoever forgets becomes the executioner's accomplice." I'm not sure that this most venerable tradition of recording memory convinced Wiesel himself of the virtue of speaking. After twenty-five years of listening, it has not completely convinced me, either.

To study and think about the Holocaust eventually leads to questions more disturbing than those that are obvious. The same intellectual and material forces that produced and motivated the best aspects of our civilization--rational thought, scientific experimentation, organized educational systems, even great art, music, philosophy and high culture--also produced gas chambers, bureaucratically indifferent killing, cost-accounting related to slave labor and virtually every part of that awful event. Higher education did not serve the world well during that time: it did not prepare people to show compassion or to refuse either active or passive engagement in the process of destruction. The killers included Ph.D.s and businessmen, students and doctors, opera singers and artists and clergymen.

If it offers any direction, studying the Holocaust demands that we examine the civilized project critically, questioningly, cautiously. And we do it--all of us, in one way or another. In the last ten years I have altered my somewhat pessimistic attitude regarding Holocaust education. We do it here at UM-D and that is significant; more significant than doing it at our sister campus in Ann Arbor, or in Lansing or New York or LA.

# To Never Forget: Supporting a Labor of Love and Conscience

## The Archive is fueled by people

It is this place that matters, and these people, from **Jamie Wraight** our remarkable Curator, to **Tim Richards**, Director of the Mardigian Library; from **Barb Kriigel** and **Beth Taylor**, who began it, to **Chancellor Dan Little** and **Provost Robert Simpson** who, despite looming State budget cuts, nevertheless re-funded the Archive this year; from the **Dean of CASL, Katie Anderson-Levitt**, to **Tom Baird**, Vice Chancellor of Institutional Advancement, and **Diane Mattick** of that office, whose energy and professionalism breathed new life into Voice/Vision, the University in general has been overwhelmingly solicitous and supportive of this project since its inception, each unbelievably dedicated to preserving the Archive. **Greg Taylor** and **Dave Daniele** in the studio, my colleagues, the staff who help them, the students, like **Aimee D'Agostini**, the volunteers like **Abe Pasternak** and **Max and Renah Bardenstein**--they matter, and they have brought a measure of hope about the prospects of consequential Holocaust education.

Let me be candid: no institution, no group, in Detroit or elsewhere, does what they do better, or is more dedicated, devoted to the proper, professional and accurate care and conservation of one testimony at a time. We are arguably the premier Holocaust education institution in this country--and while I prefer the work to speak for itself and not trumpet these feelings, there it is. The Detroit community for years has called for quality Holocaust education. I am deeply grateful for the early support from **Beverly Franzblau Baker** and the **Max. M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Foundation**, but it is time to recognize what quality Holocaust education means and where it happens and wholeheartedly support it.

## The future of the Archive

To guarantee continuation of the excellence of the Archive, we must have serious financial support: at a time when budget cuts trouble us here, I cannot thank these people enough, but it is not for me, but for the community to acknowledge this institution's extraordinary dedication. My friend, **Joel Dorfman**, discovered his father's interview almost by accident and has become a central part of that commitment. We are all grateful, honored to be somehow connected to him.

In the recent past, several survivors have died and their families have found some solace in going to our website to listen again. This does not happen for free. It will take a substantial endowment to guarantee that the interviews, the memories and stories remain where they are forever. There is no financial benefit in this; it is as close to a labor of love and conscience as you will see anywhere. No place near or far matches the impact of the Voice/Vision Archive--some 2500 hits per day, at least five scholarly works recognizing the excellence of the Archive, and some 1500 students on campus have learned of the power of the testimonies. Each of us believes we are making a difference, perhaps one student, one researcher at a time. And that, according to my tradition, is a good thing to do.

## Our goal: A lasting endowment

Our goal is a \$1.5 million endowment. To secure the Curator's position and preserve and maintain some 300 testimonies will cost approximately \$5,000 per interview. This means three hundred people committing \$1,000 per year over five years. The Voice/Vision Archive is not only a source of pride to the University of Michigan--Dearborn; it should share that distinction with the Detroit Metropolitan community. I urge you, at still another critical moment in our history, to give it your support.

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# University Hosts Holocaust/Armenian Genocide Commemoration

On April 8, UM-D hosted the Annual Holocaust and Armenian Genocide Commemoration. More than 125 people attended the event inside the University's Kochoff Hall.

The Voice/Vision Archive co-sponsored the event along with The Armenian Research Center of UM-D; the Cohn-Haddow Center for Judaic Studies and Judaica Resource Center at Wayne State University; and the Mardigian Library of UM-D. This is the second consecutive year that V/V has co-sponsored the event.

Guest speaker Simon Payaslian, Ph.D., of Clark University in Worcester, Mass., spoke on the topic of U.S. policy toward the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1932. Dr. Kenneth Waltzer of Michigan State University, the day's other featured lecturer, discussed the liberation and consequences of internment camps during World War II.



## Archive Curator Jamie Wraight Earns Ph.D.

In December, V/V Archive Curator Jamie Wraight earned his Ph.D. in modern German history, focusing on Holocaust studies.

"I've always had a passion for history," said Wraight. "I used to watch World War II documentaries with my father and grandfather, and was fascinated."

Wraight earned his Ph.D. from the University of Toledo, his undergraduate alma mater. He studied under Professor Larry Wilcox, a long-time friend and supporter of the V/V Archive. The Archive extends its heartiest congratulations to Dr. Wraight!

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# Gershman Commitment Honors Riva and Erwin Baker

For Steven Gershman, Riva and Erwin Baker were like family. Riva Baker (born Rivka Burko) and Gershman's father, both Holocaust survivors, grew up in the same hometown in what is now Ukraine. They reconnected by chance on a street in Detroit, where both had emigrated after World War II.

Steven Gershman, who lives in Oak Park, remained close to Erwin and Riva Baker throughout their lives. After Erwin died, Gershman looked after Riva.

When she died in September, 2004, Gershman felt the loss deeply. "In essence, Riva was my family after both my parents were gone," he said.

In tribute to the Bakers, Gershman has made a \$25,000 gift to establish the Erwin and Riva Baker Memorial Holocaust Collection of reference materials within the Voice/Vision Archive.

"I want to preserve their memory," he said. "I want people to know who they were."

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## Watch for ...

**September 19, 2005:** Opening reception for the exhibition "Children of the Holocaust" featuring artwork by Miriam Brysk and exhibits about child survivors. The reception is from 5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. Ms. Brysk will speak about her work at 6:30 p.m. Berkowitz Gallery, Mardigian Library, University of Michigan-Dearborn. The exhibition runs from Sept. 19 until Oct. 19. For information call Jamie Wraight at 313-583-6300.

**October, 2005:** The Jewish Ensemble Theatre Company will present Neil Simon's Broadway Bound with proceeds benefiting the Voice/Vision Archive. Details forthcoming.

**April, 2006:** Annual Holocaust and Armenian Genocide Commemoration, Wayne State University, Detroit. For information, call Jamie Wraight at 313-583-6300.

## Excerpt from Marton Adler interview (7/13/1989)

*"We were in these barracks and you could see the chimneys and I remember in Auschwitz this is what my father told me this I'll always remember. He says, 'You know Marton, they say,' he says, 'they say that, see those chimneys, they say that that's where your mother and your brothers and sister were burned'... I didn't answer him and he did not elaborate any more."*

# Secure the Archive's Future!

How 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  
Office of Institutional Advancement  
University of Michigan-Dearborn  
4901 Evergreen Road 1040AB, Dearborn, MI 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 five years beginning in 2005.

\_\_\_\_\_ 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 Diane Nye Mattick in the Office of Institutional Advancement at 313-593-5504 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.*

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

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