

LEGACY

Keeping the History and Lessons of the Holocaust Alive



Winter/Spring 2016

DATES TO REMEMBER

Remember Their Voices

Lyric Fine Arts Theatre
March 5, 2016

BHEC Teacher Cadre

March 10, 2016

The Holocaust in Film

Emmet O'Neal Library
February 28, 2016
March 3, 2016
March 13, 2016
April 3, 2016

Library Speaker Series

March 2, 2016
March 9, 2016
March 14, 2016
March 22, 2016

DIL Exhibit

Vulcan Park & Museum
Through May 2016

Yom HaShoah / Holocaust Remembrance Programs

Jacksonville State University
April 5, 2016

Auburn University Montgomery
April 6, 2016

Birmingham Community
Temple Emanu-El
May 1, 2016

Montgomery—Temple Beth-Or
May 1, 2016

State of Alabama
May 3, 2016, Montgomery

Mobile—Springhill Ave. Temple
May 4, 2016

University of Alabama Huntsville
May 15, 2016

JMA Ride to Remember

May 19-22, 2016

L'Chaim 2016

Alys Stephens Center
August 21, 2016

BHEC Reaches 1,500+ with "A Lesson in Forgiveness"

Over 1,500 people were in attendance at Saint Luke's Episcopal Church on January 28 and 29 to hear Holocaust survivor Eva Mozes Kor tell her story of survival and forgiveness. This event was co-sponsored by the BHEC, Saint Luke's, and the Birmingham Islamic Society.

As young children, Eva and her twin sister Miriam spent nearly a year in Auschwitz enduring excruciating experiments by the infamous Nazi doctor Josef Mengele. Kor survived because she promised herself "to do anything and everything in my power" to ensure she and her sister would leave Auschwitz alive.

Thursday night, Eva spoke to nearly 800 people—a sell-out crowd in Saint Luke's nave PLUS an overflow area viewing a live video feed. She spoke again the next morning to 750 students, grades 6-12, from throughout Central Alabama.

"Today's presentation was pretty amazing—it is always good to hear one more story that I can talk to my kids about. We did a little research on Dr. Munch on the way home. Kids were very interested in a "compassionate" Nazi doctor. Her talk about forgiveness floored them. I have a student who has gone through a pretty horrific event and is dealing with being a victim, justice, forgiveness, etc., and she was really moved by what was said." -Teacher in attendance



Eva Mozes Kor



Student Program

Comments from Facebook:

"Amazing lady and an amazing talk about forgiveness, overcoming prejudice, and never giving up."

"A remarkable night with this wonderful woman. You could have heard a pin drop as she shared her story."

"Fabulous!! Helps to remind us what's important in life."

"Incredible, courageous lady with a message that I will forever remember."

Thanks to our partners, Saint Luke's Episcopal Church and the Birmingham Islamic Society, the staff and volunteers at Saint Luke's, and BHEC board members and volunteers for their hard work promoting and staffing both events.

A very special thanks to the people who made this event possible: Susan and David Silverstein, Emmy McGowin, Renny and Greg Silver (Indianapolis, IN), Rector Rich Webster, Melinda and Bill Powers, Johnna Wright, and especially those who live near Saint Luke's, whose neighborhood we took over for the evening.

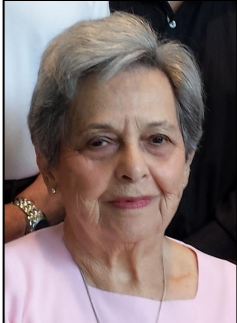
New Community Partners

The BHEC kicked off the new year with some new community partners. In addition to Saint Luke's Episcopal Church and the Birmingham Islamic Society, the BHEC made inroads with some new organizations and businesses in our community. Last month, TEDxBirmingham held their speaker focus groups at the BHEC office, and they will return this month for speaker rehearsals as they prepare for their flagship event in March.

We are also working with local storytelling group ARC Stories and will be their nonprofit partner during their May event. Also in May, a portion of the proceeds from book sales at Church Street Coffee & Books will be donated to the BHEC. Please be sure to support our community partners!

Letter from the President

Phyllis Weinstein, President



Phyllis G. Weinstein
BHEC President

Through Holocaust education, we have the potential to raise the consciousness of the *Shoah* (Holocaust) from a unique event, which Pope Francis recently called “the greatest evil known to humanity,” to a concern for all peoples of the world. In this regard, the Birmingham Holocaust Education Center is not a bystander to today’s events. The mission of the BHEC is to educate the people of the state of Alabama about the history of the Holocaust so that new generations will apply the lessons of the *Shoah* to the construction of a more just, humane, and tolerant future. This is a lofty goal.

I write this just two days after the visit of Auschwitz survivor Eve Mozes Kor to Birmingham. Eva spoke twice, once to an overwhelming crowd of 850 and then to 750 middle and high school students. In her inspiring message, she told of her willingness to forgive her tormentor, Dr. Josef Mengele, who performed daily experimental medical procedures on her and other young twins during their imprisonment in Auschwitz. With the extraordinary support of David and Susan Silverstein and the partnership of Saint Luke’s Episcopal Church and the Birmingham Islamic Society, we were able to offer this remarkable event to our community, truly the highlight of our month.

In addition, our devoted and dedicated Birmingham survivors, Max Herzel, Riva Hirsch, Bob May, and Max Steinmetz, and second generation speakers Denise Lewis and Esther Levy, were not idle, fulfilling speaking engagements throughout the state. We estimate the combined audiences totaled well over 2,000 people—that was just this month. Our calendar is filled with future speaking events. During this school year, 227 teachers were engaged in an intensive one-day workshop in four cities in Alabama, and our dramatic production *A Slippery Slope* traveled to Dothan to an audience of nearly 80. Our *Darkness Into Life* permanent exhibit remains on display at Vulcan Park and Museum and has been viewed by countless numbers on a daily basis. The traveling version of the exhibit remains booked at schools throughout Alabama. We are constantly amazed by how many people our program and services reach!

We are very fortunate and grateful to Rebecca Dobrinski, who came on our staff just over a year ago and was recently named our Executive Director, for extending our outreach ability and for bringing new university contacts as well as numerous other important interests to help put the BHEC on the map of Birmingham’s educational institutions.

No, we are not bystanders. Our 25 volunteer board members, as well as our thoughtful donors whose contributions make all our work possible, know there is so much more we need to do to achieve our goal.

Hollywood movie industry insider and Holocaust survivor Meyer Gotlieb, President of Samuel Goldwyn Films, once stated, “The truth of the matter is that the weapons of mass destruction are not bombs, they are hatred, intolerance, and bigotry.” We hope *Shoah* (Holocaust) education will make an impact upon all who learn from us, allowing us to move closer to our hopes for the future - to rid our world of hatred, intolerance, and bigotry.

BHEC Looks to Form Its Own Endowment

Joel Rotenstreich, BHEC Board

“You need an Endowment.”

These were the words of long-time Birmingham leader and philanthropist Jimmy Filler as he spoke to Phyllis Weinstein, founder and President of the BHEC. Realizing that demand is growing rapidly for “Teaching Teachers” and educating school children and adults throughout the state about the history and lessons of the Holocaust, Jimmy made this bold suggestions. While the discussion continued, Jimmy graciously offered to jump-start the BHEC Endowment Fund by raising the initial one million dollars.

Phyllis charged the BHEC Finance Committee to learn all that is required to create such a fund. The Finance Committee has met with Jann Blitz, the Executive Director of the Grafman Endowment Fund at Temple Emanu-El, and Sally Friedman, Executive Director of the Birmingham Jewish Foundation, to learn the “nuts and bolts” of forming, operating, and growing an endowment. The Committee hopes to meet with a representative of the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham as well so that they can recommend the best course of action for the BHEC.

Members of the Finance Committee/Endowment are Joel Rotenstreich, Wray Pearce, Phyllis Weinstein, Max Herzel, Ann Mollengarden, Leslie Allen, Jimmy Filler, Scott Goldberg, Andy Campbell, and Rebecca Dobrinski.

The BHEC is most grateful to Jann Blitz, Sally Friedman, and especially Jimmy Filler for their valuable guidance and leadership.

Anyone interested in assisting with the creation of the BHEC Endowment Fund, or making a contribution of any type, please contact BHEC Executive Director Rebecca Dobrinski at 205.795.4176 or Rebecca@bhamholocausteducation.org

L'Chaim 2016—Honoring Betty Allenberg Goldstein

Deborah Layman, Vice President

The BHEC's sixth annual *L'Chaim* event will be held Sunday, August 21, 2:30 pm in the Sirote Theatre at the Alys Stephens Center.

This year we will honor Betty Allenberg Goldstein, a tireless and dedicated friend and supporter of the BHEC and Holocaust education. *L'Chaim* Co-Chair Joel Rotenstreich describes Betty as "a giver, doer, goer, helper, and more. She is all heart, and the first one there." Betty's behind-the-scenes work through the years has helped the BHEC grow and develop valuable new partnerships.

The *L'Chaim* program will combine education and the arts to honor Betty and highlight the impact of Holocaust education on Alabama students. Carole Pizitz joins Joel as *L'Chaim* Co-Chair. Together they will spearhead the BHEC's annual fundraising campaign.



L'Chaim 2016 Co-Chair
Carole Pizitz with Honoree
Betty A. Goldstein

Because We Must

Ann Mollengarden, Vice President

How often is a teacher afforded the opportunity to study with the best and the brightest in their field, for FREE?

Each fall, the BHEC hosts an open enrollment for middle and high school teachers in Alabama to apply for a Brenda & Fred Friedman Teacher Scholarship. The scholarship provides funding to attend nationally-recognized Holocaust education workshops hosted by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous (JFR), the Jan Karski Institute, and others.

As a JFR "Center of Excellence," we are able to send two teachers each summer to attend their Lerner Fellowship Program. After several professional encounters with Mike Gadilhe, a Holocaust Studies teacher at John Carroll Catholic High School in Birmingham, I knew he would be a great candidate for further study with the JFR. Unlike other workshops, the JFR program requires extensive preparation and provides intimate learning sessions with leading Holocaust scholars such as Peter Hayes, Lawrence Douglas, Timothy Snyder, Robert Jan van Pelt, Samuel Kassow and others. Mike eagerly applied and earned a Friedman Scholarship for the summer of 2015.

During our Scholarship Teacher Reception in August, Mike shared these powerful thoughts from Elie Wiesel:



Mike Gadilhe

"The experience lies beyond our reach. Ask any survivor, he will tell you; he who has not lived through it will never know it. And he who went through it will not reveal it, not really, not entirely. Between his memory and its reflection there is a wall and it cannot be pierced. The past belongs to the past and the survivor does not recognize himself in the words linking him to it."

Mike continued, "This is a bleak outlook facing those of us who attempt in some way to pass on the memory of these experiences and the story of the Holocaust to our students. It presents an enormous challenge because of the enormity of the events. Why does one teach the unfathomable, the impossible, and provide some semblance of meaning? Because we must. We must tell the story. We must bear witness and ensure that these memories are passed on to succeeding generations. At the JFR Summer Institute, we were afforded the opportunity to hear the research and interpretations of leading Holocaust scholars that will afford us the opportunity to peer over that 'wall of memory.'"

Mike is now a mentor for his colleagues at John Carroll. This fall he was instrumental in bringing the BHEC's *Darkness into Life* exhibit to his school for the first time. Birmingham survivors spoke to Mike's classes as well as the theatre students who presented *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

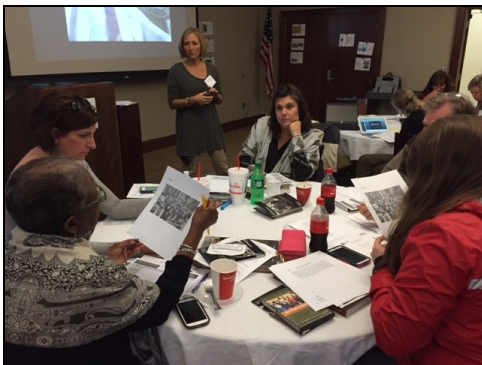
Mike continued his studies at the JFR's Advanced Seminar in January, funded in part by the Friedman Scholarship Fund. The BHEC encourages teachers to apply for second and third scholarships—effectively creating our own Alabama "teachers of excellence."

Mike's work has not just influenced his students and colleagues at John Carroll. As a member of the BHEC Teacher Cadre, open to all teachers and BHEC Board Members, Mike facilitated our February 4th session on "What We Knew And When." Following a personal passion, he discussed U.S. and British understanding of the tragedy unfolding in Europe, in particular, British secret intelligence gathered as early as 1941. He presented German Order Police decodes and other documents including Polish Bund reports and the Riegner Telegram. Mike's work speaks volumes for what we can achieve when teachers are given the opportunity to pursue and enrich their understanding of the Holocaust.

Mike continues to keep the history and lessons of the Holocaust alive, for his school and his community. Through the power of the Friedman Scholarships, the BHEC will continue to inspire and train teachers like Mike Gadilhe.

Teaching our Teachers

Ann Mollengarden



Amy McDonald presenting at University of West Alabama

Education is the "E" in the BHEC.

Providing sound Holocaust historiography and pedagogy is at the heart of what we do.

The BHEC recently completed four teacher workshops entitled "Teaching the Complexities of the Holocaust." These were hosted by the University of West Alabama (23 participants), Troy University (36 participants), the University Alabama in Huntsville (74 participants), and Samford University (94 participants).

I have been to many conferences, workshops, professional developments, etc. ... and your organization truly made us feel like the professionals we are. You and Troy catered to us so that we could focus on why we were there.

Evaluations indicated that each of our 227 participants taught an average of 84 students. Nearly 20,000 students will benefit from this training.

Our facilitators were Laura Boughton (Oxford, MS), a U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Regional Educator and Amy McDonald (Birmingham), a U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Teacher Fellow.

Their lessons focused on the period before deportations began, when targeted groups struggled with "choiceless choices." Participants modeled techniques for using timelines, for exploring the concept of emigration, and for the collaboration and complicity that occurred during this period. We were fortunate to have Holocaust survivors share their stories live and via Skype.

I have attended two others [workshops] from your organization. They remain the two workshops I have attended in 23 years of teaching that were worth attending.

Teachers returned to their classrooms with materials from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, including a copy of *The World Must Know*—a fundamental Holocaust resource—and a working knowledge of the resources provided by the BHEC.

Without our community partners, such an endeavor would not have been possible. Our sincere gratitude to the University of West Alabama, Troy University/Troy, the University of Alabama in Huntsville, and Samford University. Additional funding and resources were also provided by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Alabama Holocaust Commission, the BHEC, the Jewish Federation of Huntsville and North Alabama, the Alabama Humanities Foundation, and an anonymous donor.



Survivor Dr. Robert May speaks to workshop teachers via Skype

Remember the Past...Transform the Future — The JMA's Ride to Remember

The Jewish Motorcyclists Alliance (JMA) selected Birmingham and the BHEC for their 2016 destination. The JMA has been riding for 12 years to support the teaching of today's youth to sustain the defining doctrine of all free men and women around the world — that people of all races and religions must be treated equally and without prejudice.

The goal of the JMA is to fund Holocaust education at local community centers, schools, museums, universities, and colleges throughout the world. The JMA and its supporters have undertaken this mission to work for a future where people of all backgrounds may enjoy a life of equality. This is the task of the annual Ride to Remember events.

The JMA will be visiting Birmingham the weekend of May 21, 2016. Please be sure to welcome them to our community.

More on Forgiveness ...

If you are interested in further exploring the concept of forgiveness, Holocaust survivor Simon Wiesenthal's book *The Sunflower* will challenge your beliefs.

Wiesenthal describes his visit to the bedside of a dying member of the SS. Haunted by the crimes in which he has participated, the soldier wanted to confess to—and obtain absolution from—a Jew. Faced with the choice between compassion and justice, silence and truth, Wiesenthal said nothing. But even years after the war had ended, he wondered: Had he done the right thing? What would you have done in his place? Fifty-three distinguished men women respond to Wiesenthal's questions. They are theologians, political leaders, writers, jurists, psychiatrists, human rights activists, and victims of other genocides. Their responses, as varied as their experiences, remind us that Wiesenthal's questions are not limited to events of the past.

The Sunflower is available for checkout from the BHEC Holocaust Studies Library.

The Holocaust

FREE

in Film

FREE

Emmet O'Neal Library, 50 Oak Street, Mountain Brook, 205-879-0459

Sunday, February 28, 2:00 pm

Karski & The Lords of Humanity

Discussion led by Dr. André Millard, UAB

Combining unique archival footage with animated sequences, Slawomir Grünberg tells the story of Jan Karski, hero of the Polish underground and the first person to reveal to the Western Allied governments the atrocities and mass murders committed by the Nazis in occupied Poland. Karski infiltrated the Warsaw Ghetto and a Nazi transit camp and carried his dreadful eye-witness report of the atrocities to Britain and the U.S., hoping that it would shake the conscience of the powerful leaders or – as he would later call them – the Lords of Humanity.

2015 | 72 min. | Color | English | Not Rated

Thursday, March 3, 6:30 pm

Einsatzgruppen: The Death Brigades

Discussion led by Dr. André Millard, UAB

These Nazi mobile killing squads, dispatched throughout Eastern Europe, systematically murdered 1.5 million Jews, Roma (gypsies), Communists, handicapped, partisans, and Soviet prisoners of war. Highly educated officers delegated most of the killing and were assisted by local collaborators. Featuring newly discovered archival film and photographs (some in color), this extraordinary film also includes testimony from Holocaust survivors, witnesses, and perpetrators.

2009 | 90 min. | BW | Some Subtitles | Not Rated

Sunday, March 13, 2:00 pm

Radical Evil

Discussion led by Dr. André Millard, UAB

In *Radical Evil*, Oscar-winning director Stefan Ruzowitzky asks why ordinary people become mass murderers. The particular focus is on Nazi soldiers in Eastern Europe who murdered Jewish civilians with pistols and rifles in the period from 1941 to 1943. The film is based on quotations from the perpetrators and features interviews with psychiatrists, historians, and genocide experts as well as with Benjamin Ferencz, one of the chief prosecutors at the Nuremberg trials. Its conclusion is very bleak - there was nothing unique about the Nazi killers; we might all have done the same in their place.

2013 | 93 min. | BW | Some Subtitles | Not Rated

Sunday, April 3, 2:00 pm

Phoenix

Discussion led by Dr. André Millard, UAB

A haunting portrait of identity, loss, and the search for answers in post-WWII Berlin. A disfigured concentration camp survivor (Nina Hoss), unrecognizable after facial reconstruction surgery, searches ravaged Berlin for the husband (Ronald Zehrfeld) who might have betrayed her to the Nazis. *Phoenix* weaves a complex tale of a nation's tragedy and a woman's search for answers as it builds towards an unforgettable, heart-stopping climax.

2014 Toronto Film Festival, Best Narrative Feature
2015 Seattle Film Festival, Nina Hoss, Best Actress

2014 | 98 min. | Color | Subtitles | PG13

2016 Film Series Sponsored by:

The Birmingham Holocaust Education Center • The Emmet O'Neal Library

Why Teach the Holocaust?

Dominique Linchet, PhD, Teacher, ASFA



Dominique Linchet

In July, I attended the Arthur and Rochelle Belfer Conference at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. For three days, participants had the opportunity to access the museum's resources, to gather pedagogical tools, and to delve into issues pertaining to the Holocaust with trained teachers and scholars. We also had the privilege to interact with survivors and to explore the museum after hours.

The conference was a great preparation for a new course on the Holocaust I am teaching this year at the Alabama School of Fine Arts (ASFA). The inclusion of Holocaust studies in the ASFA curriculum is exciting for the school and its students. For me, it is the product of a personal and intellectual journey.

A native of Chrzanów, Poland, my maternal grandfather Samuel Najman spent most of his childhood and youth in Berlin. He was 23 when he arrived in Brussels, Belgium, on February 21, 1941, and found refuge in my grandmother's inn near the main train station. Belgium had been under German occupation since May 10, and he and his three brothers were trying to make the dangerous journey west in order to flee Europe. He fell in love, married my grandmother, and decided to stay in Belgium.

Since I was born in Bastogne and raised in La Roche en Ardenne, the Battle of the Bulge's impact on my paternal family dominated my family narrative. I had heard numerous times how my father's father and uncles spent the war in captivity in Germany, forced to contribute to the enemy's war effort. The romantic and heroic story of my Aunt Angèle had almost become a legend: engaged to dashing Désiré, she had hitched a ride on an American jeep to go retrieve her fiancé in Germany, bring him back, and marry him. Little was left of La Roche at the end of the Battle of the Bulge, but despite the many stories of destruction and hardship, my community felt joy and experienced closure knowing we had won the war. The symbol of this victory was the American tank proudly displayed in the town center, along the Ourthe River banks.

In contrast, when I inquired about my maternal grandfather and his fate during the war, the answers were always vague and a sense of shame seemed to replace the pride, heroism, and relief that infused the paternal narratives. I eventually found out my *opa* was Jewish—a word usually whispered—his parents and extended family had “died” and little was known of their fate. In high school, the history curriculum did not include the Holocaust, and there were very few Jews remaining in Belgium after the war, hence very few traces of pre-war Jewish life. Not until I became an adult did I learn that my great grandparents, Fanny Grubner and David Najman, had been buried alive somewhere in Poland. Unlike most of my deceased relatives gathered in the cemetery overlooking my picturesque hometown, Fanny and David had been murdered and had perished without leaving a trace.

My maternal grandmother, Laure Grandmaison, was in her 30s when the war erupted. She had been living in Brussels on her own and, as I mentioned, was the owner of a small inn in the city center. As Nazi laws made daily life more and more unbearable for Jews in Germany and its occupied regions, Belgium experienced an influx of stateless Jewish refugees, my grandfather among them. When Germany occupied Belgium, Laure joined the Belgian resistance. She sheltered many of the refugees in transit in Brussels, and she started helping them obtain the papers necessary to emigrate. She also cared for an orphaned Jewish girl, pretending she was one of her own children.

By the time I was born, my grandmother had retired and spent most of her time with her family. She was a generous, kind, hard-working, and unassuming woman who never talked about the risks she had taken and the consequences her brave actions had cost her. Pregnant with her first child, she was so badly beaten by the Gestapo she miscarried. She lived in constant fear for her life as well as her husband's and their two young daughters, both born during the war and racially suspect under Nazi laws.

My family background and my career path naturally led me to integrating the Holocaust into my teaching. The void I and many descendants of Holocaust victims experience is one that also affects humanity in general: humanity was altered forever when Hitler opened the gates leading to the systematic, planned destruction of millions. The Holocaust did not happen in a vacuum. One can blame Hitler, and one can suggest the economic conditions in Germany and the long history of antisemitism created a perfect storm for the catastrophe ahead. At the heart of the problem, however, lay our very own humanity. As humans, we constantly face the challenge to define ourselves with our actions. Teaching the Holocaust inevitably leads to showing how we are burdened with choices and how every choice defines us as individuals and as members of the human race.

As mentioned in one of the presentations at the Belfer Conference, most high school students demonstrate a high level of interest in studying this history precisely because the subject raises questions of fairness, justice, individual identity, peer pressure, conformity, indifference, and obedience—issues adolescents confront in their daily lives. Students are also affected by and challenged to comprehend the magnitude of the Holocaust; they are often particularly struck by the fact so many people allowed this genocide to occur by failing either to resist or to protest.

ASFA, a tuition-free school in the heart of Birmingham, is a privileged place for a course on the Holocaust. Every day, ASFA students face the challenges to integrate a diversity of ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, socio-economic backgrounds, as well as academic and artistic interests, into their community. Issues of prejudice and exclusion are close to the heart of these students who thrive to build a community, open and tolerant to all of its members.

In addition to adding this course to its curriculum, ASFA hosted the traveling exhibition *Darkness into Light* in January, which incidentally was International Holocaust Remembrance Month.

I am very excited for these new opportunities offered to ASFA students and most grateful for the experience I gained at the Belfer Conference.

BHEC Speaker Series / Birmingham Public Library

Wednesday, March 2, 12:00 Noon—*Remember Their Voices*

BAO Director Karen Musgrove, BHEC Executive Director Rebecca Dobrinski, and artsBHAM Director Daniel Seigal will present a primer on Pink Triangle stories as a prelude to our event at the Lyric Theatre. Hear about the persecution suffered by gay men at the hands of the Nazis, a discussion of works on this topic in the Holocaust Studies Library, and a description of the upcoming production.

Wednesday, March 9, 12:00 Noon—*A Survivor Speaks*

Monday, March 14, 6:00 pm—*My Father, A Partisan from Vilna*

Dr. James Sedlis will present the story of his father Gabriel Sedlis, a Jewish Partisan during the Holocaust.

Tuesday, March 22, 6:00 pm—*The Story of Holocaust Survivor Dora Nesselroth*

Esther Levy and Bari Katz will present the story of local resident and Holocaust survivor Dora Nesselroth.

Alabama Holocaust Commission Update

Dr. Dan Puckett, Chair



This year looks to be a busy year for Holocaust education in Alabama. For the second year in a row, the Alabama Holocaust Commission has received funding from the state. For 2014-2015, the AHC received \$25,000 from Governor Robert Bentley's discretionary funds. This past year (2015-2016), the Alabama Legislature allocated \$25,000 to the AHC, the first time in many years that the legislature has included the Commission in their annual budget. This puts the AHC in the position to support educational programs and activities throughout Alabama.

To date, we have contributed to teacher workshops in Livingston, Troy, Huntsville, and Birmingham, sponsored by the BHEC and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and a workshop in Mobile, sponsored by the Gulf Coast Center for Holocaust and Human Rights Education. We look forward to working closely with and supporting the BHEC and the Gulf Coast Center as they continue their important mission of furthering Holocaust education throughout the state.

The AHC will also sponsor the Alabama Yom HaShoah Commemoration, to be held on Tuesday, May 3, at the Capitol in Montgomery. We will remember those who perished in the Holocaust and honor those who survived. Our keynote speaker will be Dr. Steve Jacobs of the University of Alabama. Dr. Jacobs is a rabbi, professor of Religious Studies, author of numerous books on the Holocaust and Genocide, and second generation survivor. The Commemoration will begin at 11:00 am and is open to the public.

Office Happenings

The BHEC's *Darkness Into Life* exhibit—the original artwork—continues to be on display at Vulcan Park and Museum in Birmingham. We are thrilled this exhibition will be seen by so many visitors to Birmingham and school groups throughout the 2015-16 school year! Vulcan Park's Birmingham Revealed series will feature the BHEC's original program *A Slippery Slope: The Consequences of Hate* on Thursday, April 21. Tickets are available at www.visitvulcan.com.

While *Darkness Into Life* is "on the road," the BHEC office renovations continue. The walls have been painted and the archives moved to an interior room previously used for storage. Thank you to everyone who donated in honor of BHEC President Phyllis Weinstein's 95th Birthday—these donations will be used to re-install the exhibit.

Scheduling the traveling version of *Darkness Into Life* (TDIL) for the school year continues! In January, the exhibition was on display at the Alabama School of Fine Arts in Birmingham. TDIL will go to Riverchase Middle School, Homewood Middle School, Anniston High School, Albertville High School, Thompson Sixth Grade Center, and the Social Security Administration over the next few months.

Holocaust Studies Library Reopens!

Rebecca Dobrinski, Executive Director

We were excited to welcome over 50 people for the grand re-opening of the BHEC's Holocaust Studies Library! In October, we celebrated the culmination of over nine months of work cataloguing, sorting, and shelving over 2,000 books. Each volume has been barcoded for easy check out. The catalogue can be searched online through Library World. That link is available on our website or you can visit the Apple or Android App Stores to download Library World's App and have our collection at your fingertips.

One exciting addition to our Library are key-tag library cards! Just like your local public library, you can apply for a library card at the BHEC, and you will receive a convenient key tag. Books can be checked out for three weeks, with one 2-week renewal.

Have some Holocaust-related books in your collection? We welcome donations of books on the Holocaust, World War II, and the history of anti-Semitism. We are also collecting artifacts for our growing collection. Stop by the BHEC Office and we'll process your tax-deductible donations.

The 2015 Holocaust Studies Library Renovation Project was made possible by: Bayer Properties, Birmingham Jewish Foundation, Chase Childs, Ashley Dowben, Kelly Kahn, Katherine Lafonte, MyOfficeProducts, Boris Shilkrot, April Skinner, the Temple Beth-El 2014-15 9th Grade Class, Clifford Young, and Melissa Young.



Education Update

Ann Mollengarden

Immediately after World War II there were almost no Holocaust testimonies. Many survivors preferred not to speak, to move on, even within family units. Society at-large did not encourage them to speak, perhaps out of guilt or an inability to confront the truth. People spoke about the Holocaust through impersonal and "objective" figures (like 6 million). Even in Israel, where many survivors had found refuge, the only ones who had the legitimacy to talk were the ghetto fighters and the partisans, as they had done something to stop the killing. The other survivors were looked down upon as "going like sheep to slaughter". Their stories were not part of the message of this emerging country.

With the Eichmann Trial in the early 1960s, an interest in the testimonies of survivors emerged, basically as a need to learn the historical truth. Yad Vashem initiated interviews with survivors all over the world to find out details about what had happened. But even these efforts were seen as providing only partial truths, as it was assumed that people in general, and survivors specifically, distort the historical truth through their "biased" memories.

During the 1970s a basic change took place. This was an era when "subjective" testimonies became equally important to the "objective" facts. For example, on Holocaust Memorial Day in Israel, survivor testimonies have only been broadcast on television since the 1973 War. Perhaps the war caused a shift in the Israeli thinking about heroism. Now just to remain alive became a legitimate way of coping with war and was retrospectively attributed to Holocaust survivors.

In the 1980s, it was recognized that the initial silencing of survivors' stories has affected their children's lives. Survivors did not talk, and their children did not ask, but knew in some hidden way that terrible stories were behind the silence. The grandchildren of survivors were often the first ones, as late as the 1990s, to open up the communication concerning their grandparents' experiences during the Holocaust.

Upon the formation of the BHEC in 2002, the importance of survivor testimony was validated. Few survivors in Birmingham had re-visited the emotional burdens of their past: Why did I survive while my loved ones did not? Did I do what I could to help out others? Was what I did human or legitimate? Are others really interested in what happened to me? Reflecting on their ultimate mortality, they realized that the world must know.

When survivors come to a classroom and tell their personal experiences during the Holocaust, students feel what the survivors were going through. They ask questions and are willing to read more and thereby enrich their knowledge about an era that to them lies far back in history. Suddenly, the figures and dates become alive in front of them.

We all ask ourselves, what will happen after all the survivors die and there are no first-hand testimonies? Will their videotaped testimonies still have a similar effect on their listeners? I am afraid that answer is no. Something will be lost which will not be possible to recover. How can we possibly capture the personalities, the intimate family stories, and the never-to-be mentioned difficult stories? Young people will have to use their imaginations to fill in this void. But as with every gradual change of generations, the stories will be told and retold from one generation to the next, and they will be adopted to fit the current social and political climate.

The BHEC is working diligently to address all of these issues.

Adapted from ADL "Dimensions" article by Dan Bar-On, Volume 17, No. 1/ Spring 2003

BHEC Internship Program

Rebecca Dobrinski

We had another successful semester for our internship program at the BHEC Office. Ashley Dowben, an undergraduate in History at UAB, spent her fall semester working in the Holocaust Studies Library to ready the collection for our grand re-opening in October. Ashley graduated in December and has since returned to continue her work in our library and archives while making plans for graduate school.

In January, the BHEC welcomed Samantha Doucet, another History undergraduate from UAB. Samantha will be the first intern to work on a project in conjunction with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum has a public project collecting newspapers from different cities. Through this project, they will be able to learn "what we knew" at different times and about different events in history. They are looking at 10 separate topics and will eventually expand the project to 30. We are also working with Justin Marden, a UAB Communications student who approached us about being the topic of his marketing and PR project this semester. It has been exciting to have students in the office and interested in Holocaust-related research.

Our internship program runs year-round. Contact the BHEC at 205.795.4176 or info@bhamholocausteducation.org for more information.

Oral History Transcription Initiative

Maggie Blow, Programs Administrator



Are you interested in transcribing recordings of Holocaust survivor testimony?

We are looking for volunteers interested in listening to survivor testimonies and providing a written transcription of the recordings for our Archives and Holocaust Studies Library. Not only are these important historical documents, but these transcriptions will allow us to expand our reach to researchers throughout the world. The transcriptions can be digitized and added to the BHEC website, providing open access to the stories of our local survivors.

If you are interested in joining our Transcriber Initiative, please contact the BHEC Office.

Travis Ray Carter, A Tribute

Amy McDonald , Teacher , Shades Valley High School

Nothing made Travis Ray Carter prouder than talking about his service to our country during World War II.

I met Mr. Carter in 2010 when he participated in one of Honor Flight Birmingham's trips to the WWII Memorial in Washington, D.C. I was in awe of the experiences he shared with me that day. I asked if he would speak to my students, and he willingly drove the hour and a half from Winfield, Alabama, to Shades Valley High School on two separate occasions. In 2012, Ann Mollengarden and I drove to his home in Winfield to film and interviewed him for the BHEC Archives. Over the past five years, Mr. Carter and I saw each other a handful of times, but mostly stayed in touch by phone. So many phone calls started off something like this: "Hi, Mr. Carter, it's Amy." "Hey there, girl! How are you doing?" he always exclaimed. When asked about himself, he might say, "I'm still above ground and kicking!" Even as his health declined over the past year, 9 days out of 10, he was probably making blackberry and strawberry jam, or his famous rum cakes to give away to friends and family who crossed his path that day.

Travis Ray Carter was born in Gravel Springs, near Hamilton, a small, rural Alabama town where the main occupations were farming and sawmilling. He graduated from high school in 1943, and received his draft notice, or "Greetings from President Roosevelt," the day after his 18th birthday. Carter, along with 46 other young men from his graduating class, soon reported for duty. "Most of us didn't even know what combat was at that time," he explained. "But we learned." Little did he know then how his military service would lead him across Scotland, England, France, Belgium, Germany, and Czechoslovakia.

As part of the 512 Military Police, Carter and his unit were attached to General Patton's Third Army, which meant combat in major European campaigns such as St. Lo, Bastogne, and the Battle of the Bulge. "We were just clearing the way," Carter remembered. "We were moving rapidly; fighting and knocking out German troops as we went. We were going through ice and snow; leading convoys. I can't believe how furious the fighting was. We went like madfire across Germany and crossed the Rhine on a pontoon bridge built by Allied forces. We were on our way to Berlin. That's what we were wanting. But after we crossed the Rhine, we went into a place called Buchenwald. We didn't have any idea of what we were going to be seeing." On April 11, 1945, Carter and his unit were among the first U.S. forces to reach and liberate Buchenwald concentration camp outside Weimar, Germany.

Before moving out of St. Lo, France, Carter had purchased a small camera which made it through the rest of the war and back home to the U.S. In addition to his verbal account, 48 photographs taken by Carter inside Buchenwald document barbarism and cruelty beyond belief. For battle-hardened troops who had already faced heavy combat and exposure to killing and death on a daily basis, they were still unprepared for the unimaginable atrocities they were about to witness. "You can't imagine the odor and the death," Carter said. "They still had men hanging on hooks on the walls. They still had eight furnaces burning when we first got there ... burning them just as fast as they could. The people were just so starved. We were giving them all kinds of food and supplies. We probably didn't sleep for 36 straight hours. We were just trying to tend to the needs of the thousands of people who were sick and afflicted. Our job was to be as good to them as we could."

After returning home from the war, Carter put the pictures he took in a scrapbook. The scrapbook was put away in a closet as life attempted to get back to normal. "I didn't share stories with my family when I got back. I was just glad to be home. For the next 30 years, I didn't want to mention it. I just couldn't," he said. As so many of his generation often do, Carter minimized his role in these monumental events. He credited it to doing his duty and serving his country.

Travis Ray Carter passed away on November 13, 2015. When thinking about how to pay tribute to his life, the same words kept passing through my mind ... kindness, generosity, selflessness, patriot. The same words he used to describe his role as a liberator of Buchenwald could be used to describe his life: "Our job was to be as good to them as we could." He was one of those very few people in this world who was always thinking of others before himself. Not only did he serve his country during a time of tremendous need, he continued to serve his family, community, church, and neighbors. He was president of the Chamber of Commerce and a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Lions Club, and Kiwanis Club. He served as a deacon at First Baptist Church of Winfield and taught a Sunday school class for teenage boys for 10 years. His passion for supporting and helping veterans was unparalleled. On countless occasions, he patiently and quietly helped veterans and their widows write letters and complete complicated paperwork for Social Security and veterans' benefits.

For those of you who attended or read about the BHEC *L'Chaim* event last August, you were introduced to Travis Ray Carter through Deborah Layman's beautiful and poignant dramatic readings. He was so excited and proud to be there that day and attended with his son and daughter-in-law.

During one of our last conversations, Mr. Carter said, "I have loved everybody; some harder than others. I just love to help people." He also said, "Even with its problems, I am ever grateful for living in the greatest nation on earth." In a fast-paced and demanding world that is fraught with conflict at every turn, I am humbled and inspired when I think back on the life of Travis Ray Carter. His actions matched his words. In the age of instant gratification and the "selfie," Mr. Carter's life reminds and challenges me to think of others, to listen more and talk less, to be grateful and stand ready to serve ... always to serve.

I am so thankful to have had the honor and privilege of calling Travis Ray Carter a friend. May his memory be for a blessing.



Travis Ray Carter and Sam Chalker, who portrayed him at *L'Chaim* 2015.

In Memory Of

(received January - December 2015)

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Alabama Holocaust Commission	Birmingham Public Library	Jewish Foundation for the Righteous	Social Security Administration
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	Hillel of UAB	Shades Valley High School	

Thank you to our 2015 supporters and partners! We appreciate everything you do to help us carry out our mission to honor those who perished and those who survived, and to keep the history and lessons of the Holocaust alive for future generations.

***All donations listed were received in 2015. This list does not include non-tribute, personal gifts to L'Chaim. We regret any error or omission that may have occurred.*

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The mission of the Birmingham Holocaust Education Center (BHEC) is to educate the people of Alabama about the history of the Holocaust so that new generations will apply the lessons of the Holocaust to the construction of a more just, humane, and tolerant future. By preserving and sharing the stories of local Holocaust survivors and commemorating the events of the Holocaust and the lives of those who perished, the BHEC seeks to promote a moral and ethical response to prejudice, hatred, and indifference for the benefit of all humanity.

Remember Their Voices: I Never Saw Another Butterfly & For a Look or a Touch

We are excited to let you know about an upcoming opportunity for us to partner with BAO (formerly known as Birmingham AIDS Outreach) and tell stories of the Holocaust from a different perspective.

The BHEC is presenting a double bill on Saturday, March 5, 7:30 pm at the newly-renovated Lyric Theatre, *Remember Their Voices: I Never Saw Another Butterfly and For a Look or a Touch*. You may already be familiar with *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, which is based on children's drawings and poems from the Terezin Concentration Camp. Sopranos Kristin Kenning and Erin Saway Moore will perform these moving pieces of history, accompanied by Lester Seigel and Daniel Szasz, and directed by Jane Seigel.

Jake Heggie's *For a Look or a Touch* may be new to you. Heggie accepted a commission from Music of Remembrance to create a work that could speak for the German homosexual population's experiences. This moving piece was completed in 2007 and was based on the journal of Manfred Lewin, a gay Jew murdered at Auschwitz with his entire family, and the memories of his lover Gad Beck. Dane Peterson will direct, and we are excited about our first collaboration with his Theatre Series. Seasoned Performer Drew Tombrello will portray Gad, and Daniel Seigel will perform as Manfred. Lester Seigel brings together a group of Alabama Symphony musicians to the Lyric stage.

In addition to our current sponsors, we are very fortunate that Jake Heggie waived his fees for this one-time performance. If you are interested in helping sponsor this production, please contact the BHEC Office.

Saturday, March 5, 7:30 pm, Lyric Theatre
 Tickets are available at www.LyricBham.com.

Seating is reserved and tickets are \$25 plus surcharges and tax.

A limited number of student tickets will be available in the balcony for \$15.

remember their voices

**two
Holocaust
stories**

**Saturday, March 5
7:30 P.M.
Lyric Theatre**

**I Never Saw
Another Butterfly**

*Poems from the Terezin
children's concentration camp*
Kristin Kenning & Erin Moore,
sopranos
Daniel Szasz, violin
Lester Seigel, piano
Directed by Jane Seigel

**For a Look
or a Touch**

*The Pink Triangle: homosexual
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with Drew Tombrello
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Tickets \$25 — on sale February 2
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