

# MEMORY & ACTION

UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM MAGAZINE | SPRING 2013



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HOLOCAUST  
MEMORIAL  
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20  
YEARS  
2013

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## from the Director

**IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT IT WAS 20 YEARS AGO THIS APRIL** when on a bitterly cold, rainy day, the Museum was dedicated by President Bill Clinton, Founding Chairman Elie Wiesel, and Chairman Harvey Meyerhoff. President Clinton described the Museum as “an ally of education against ignorance, of humility against arrogance, an investment in a secure future against whatever insanity lurks ahead.”

Elie told the story of how his mother and millions of other Jews were abandoned by an apathetic world. “What have we learned? We have learned...that we are all responsible, and indifference is a sin... And, Mr. President, I cannot not tell you something. I have been in the former Yugoslavia.... As a Jew I am saying that we must do something.”

In calling on the president to do for others what should have been done for the Jews of Europe, Elie fulfilled his vision of an American institution that helps shape our national discourse. In 1979, he wrote: “The memorial should be built in Washington, DC.... By reminding us of the potential for violence in human society, the Museum can contribute to a strengthening of the democratic process.” In this issue, you will read about the many ways the Museum influences American society.

In the presence of those who lived this history—the Holocaust survivors, World War II veterans, and rescuers gathering at the Museum this month to mark our anniversary—we are announcing the launch of a comprehensive campaign that will allow the Museum to ensure the permanence of Holocaust memory as a relevant, transformative force in the 21st century.

Twenty years ago, putting Holocaust memory on the National Mall was bold, but we need to be even bolder. We need to put it on the world map. We are fortunate to have supporters who share this vision—and who know that the lessons of the Holocaust inspire understanding and action, and also that those lessons are more urgent than ever.

**Cover:** Marcelle Faust and Eric Hamberg were featured in the Museum's tribute to Holocaust survivors and World War II veterans at the New York tour stop on March 3. Faust (left) was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1927. Her family fled to Paris, Marseilles, and finally Switzerland. They immigrated to the United States in 1946. Hamberg (right) was born in Mannheim, Germany, in 1921. He escaped to England on a *Kindertransport* in 1938 and eventually immigrated to the United States. He was drafted into the US Army in 1942 and received a bronze star and a purple heart for his service. *US Holocaust Memorial Museum Above:* Museum Director Sara J. Bloomfield speaks at the New York tribute to Holocaust survivors and World War II veterans on March 3, 2013. *US Holocaust Memorial Museum*

# The Museum on Tour

**TO MARK ITS 20th ANNIVERSARY**, the Museum is on a national tour to engage the public and demonstrate the continuing relevance of the Holocaust. Visit [neveragain.ushmm.org](http://neveragain.ushmm.org) to see additional photos, stories, and videos from the events.



## BOCA RATON, FLORIDA 12/9/12

**THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT:** Sydney and Alexandria Cohen color puzzle pieces for the Building Blocks of Hope art project. Carol Ann Kingsley Artes holds a passport that is part of the collection she donated to the Museum. The passport belonged to her aunt Marie Österreicher. Historian Peter Hayes discusses “the unanswerable question”: why the Holocaust happened. Miriam Borenstein discovers her birth certificate thanks to the Museum’s family research staff. George Sherman and Zvi Glaser pose with the honor guard. *US Holocaust Memorial Museum*



## LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 2/17/13

**THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT:** Esme Zalon colors a puzzle piece for the Building Blocks of Hope art project with her mother, Hilary Zalon. Hilary Zalon. Tony Acevedo points out a location on a map where survivors and veterans placed pins to mark their locations at the end of World War II. Acevedo, a US Army medic, was a prisoner of war in the Berga forced labor camp who was liberated while on a death march. Clothing donated by Edie Ostern, who brought it to the United States when her family emigrated from Austria in 1939. Steven Vitto performs family research for Miriam Fisher (right). Her friend Katharine Gorsuch looks on. Actor Marc Spiegel performs the play *Time Capsule in a Milk Can: Emanuel Ringelblum and the Secret Archives of the Warsaw Ghetto*. Holocaust survivor Max Stodel holds one of the photographs he donated to the Museum. *Photos of Acevedo, Spiegel: Todd Bigelow/US Holocaust Memorial Museum; all others: US Holocaust Memorial Museum*

**NEVER  
AGAIN  
WHAT YOU DO MATTERS**





# Introducing Holocaust History to Undergrads

**ON AUGUST 5, 2012, WHILE DR. RICHARD KING** was completing his term as a research scholar at the Museum, an avowed white supremacist opened fire at a Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, killing six.

As a professor of comparative ethnic studies at Washington State University in Pullman, King felt that his efforts to teach the dangers of hate had become even more urgent. He immediately sat down to record his thoughts. In an article published online by *Ebony*, he wrote, “[When] the media uses words like ‘deranged’ to describe [the shooter], they divert attention away from how much he embodies white power today—its racism, its anger, its subculture, its networks.”

As chair of the Department of Critical Culture, Gender, and Race Studies, King has found that most students view race hatred in terms of “black and white,” with less understanding of the historic roots of discrimination. They are more aware of neo-Nazis than of Hitler’s National Socialist Party.

Providing his students with historical context to understand contemporary antisemitism enables them to grapple with hate speech as a serious issue with potentially dire consequences, not just

as rhetoric spewed by a radical few. “Understanding historic ideas about antisemitism enhances understandings of current formulations,” King said. He hopes to compel his students to ask difficult questions: How do white supremacists exploit popular culture? Why is antisemitism at the heart of the white power movement? Why does it persist in American culture?

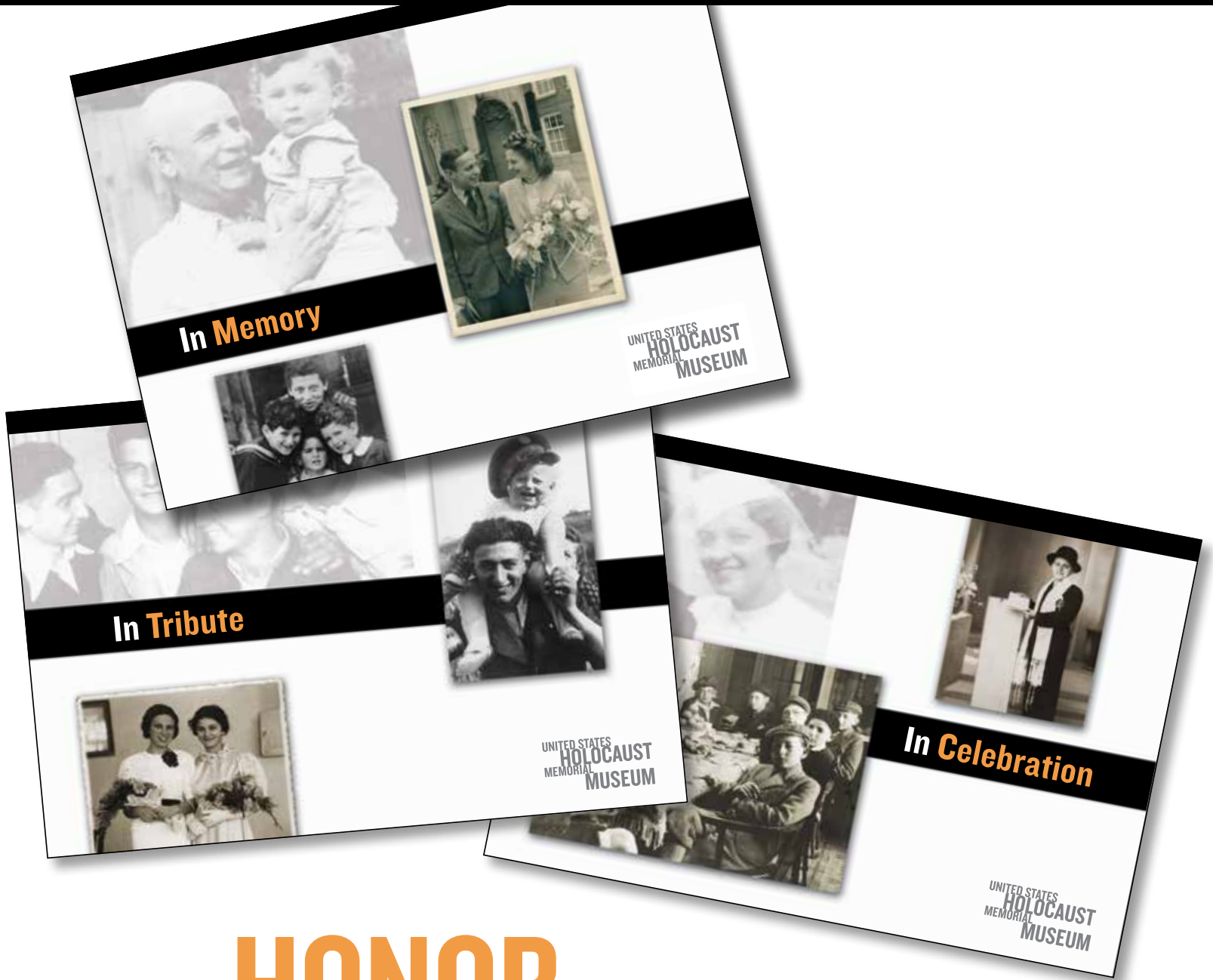
King has long used Museum resources to help him develop courses that address those topics. In 2005, he attended a Curt C. and Else Silberman seminar at the Museum’s Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies. Those annual seminars promote the study and teaching of the Holocaust, particularly in locations with scant offerings on the topic. Before King arrived at Pullman, only one course on Holocaust history was offered, and no courses dealt explicitly with antisemitism. King notes that he was drawn to the Pacific Northwest because of the white power movement’s prominence there.

Last year, King received a Silberman “follow-up” grant for higher education faculty to return to the Center. He used his time in residence to work on

the syllabus for his new course, “Race Science and Society.” The Museum provided King with what he describes as the intellectual space to finalize both the course content and the manuscript for his book, *White Power and Popular Culture*.

In addition to supporting the work of scholars whose research and teaching influence students at campuses around the world, the Museum has a number of public education initiatives that focus on antisemitism, including an exhibition on the antisemitic work *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the translation of the online Holocaust Encyclopedia into 13 languages, and a monthly series of interviews about contemporary antisemitism with thinkers from diverse backgrounds. Visit [ushmm.org/antisemitismpodcast](http://ushmm.org/antisemitismpodcast) to listen to “Voices on Antisemitism.” A CD set of select interviews can also be purchased online in the Museum Shop. ■

Dr. Richard King (above) is a professor of comparative ethnic studies at Washington State University in Pullman and the recipient of a Curt C. and Else Silberman “follow-up” grant. *US Holocaust Memorial Museum*



# HONOR SOMEONE SPECIAL

Make a tax-deductible gift to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by honoring someone or celebrating a special occasion. The honoree will receive a card with images from the Museum's collections personalized with your message. Your gift helps us sustain our living memorial.

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## rescuing the evidence

A LETTER FROM AUSCHWITZ



# A Final Love Letter

**Top:** Vilma and Kurt Grunwald enjoy a meal in the countryside before the start of World War II. **Above:** Miša (Frank) Grunwald poses a couple of months after his liberation from Gunskirchen and shortly after his return to Czechoslovakia in 1945. *US Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Frank Grunwald*

### IT TESTIFIES TO THE LOVE OF A MOTHER and the dignity of a victim.

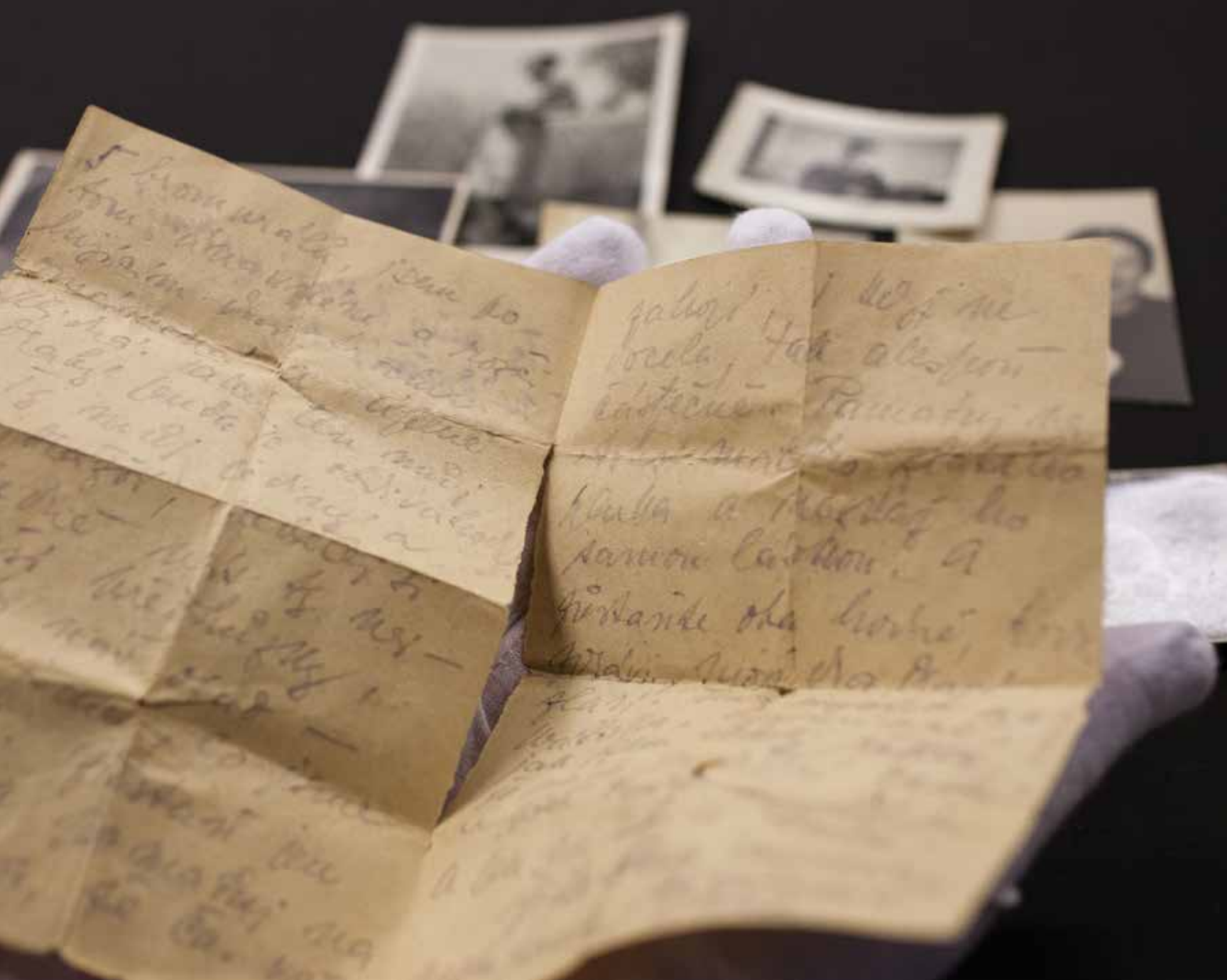
Vilma Grunwald wrote the brief letter to her husband, Kurt, the day she was killed at Auschwitz-Birkenau: “The famous cars are already here, and we are waiting for it to begin. I took five bromides; they made me tired but I am not excited. I am completely calm.”

Vilma Grunwald was in the rare position of having a pencil and a piece of paper because she was in the so-called Theresienstadt family camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau. The SS camp authorities held deportees from the Theresienstadt camp-ghetto in this separate compound because alive they might be useful to maintain the fiction that deportation from Theresienstadt

did not mean death. While in the family camp, inmates remained with their relatives and were able to keep some personal items.

In summer 1944, five weeks after the International Red Cross visited Theresienstadt, the SS liquidated the family camp, after transferring able-bodied men, including Kurt, into the general camp population and sending most to the gas chambers. During this process, a friend grabbed the Grunwalds’ younger son, Frank, by the shoulder and pushed him into a group of older children, saving his life. Their older son, John, who walked with a limp, was among those to be killed. Vilma voluntarily decided to accompany John to the gas chambers. She wrote to Kurt,





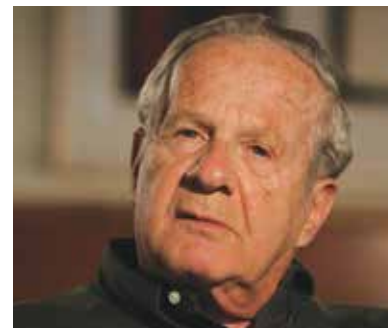
“You—my only and dearest one—do not blame yourself for what happened. It was our destiny.... Take care of the little golden boy and don’t spoil him too much with your love.”

Judith Cohen, director of the Museum’s photographic reference collection, said the letter is the only artifact she knows of that shows someone’s state of mind as she was about to be killed. Moreover, “she had the presence of mind to write to her husband and to worry about her younger child. I think that is what is really so incredible.”

The Museum learned of the letter through a documentary, *Miša’s Fugue*, which tells Frank Grunwald’s story. (He was known as Miša during his

childhood.) Two high school teachers who are alumni of the Museum’s Arthur and Rochelle Belfer conferences for educators, Sean Gaston and Jennifer Goss, created the documentary with their students. In the film, Grunwald reads his mother’s letter and tells about discovering it after his father’s death in 1967.

When Cohen watched the film and saw Frank Grunwald unfold the small, yellowed letter from his mother, she knew the Museum needed to preserve it. Grunwald had already asked the filmmakers about donating the letter, so when Cohen flew to Indiana to meet him, she returned with the letter in hand. It is slated to appear in the Museum’s Permanent Exhibition. ■



Top: A Museum conservator holds the letter Vilma Grunwald sent to her husband the day she was killed. US Holocaust Memorial Museum  
Above: Frank Grunwald during filming of the documentary *Miša’s Fugue*. Of donating the letter to the Museum, he said, “I wanted other people, students and children, to see it, as a document to what happened.”  
Matthew Goss/*Miša’s Fugue*

“Democracy works when people know law enforcement is on their side.”

—Sarah Campbell,  
National Institute for  
Holocaust Education



# Educating America's Leaders



A police officer (left) and his muzzled attack dog walk the streets of Berlin with an SS officer in 1933. *Bundesarchiv*

## THE POLICE RECRUITS HUDDLE CLOSE

to tour guide Lauri Zell in front of “The Terror Begins,” a panel featuring a life-size photograph of a policeman walking beside a member of the SS and holding the leash of a muzzled dog.

“What about 9/12, the day after 9/11, what did we want?” Zell asks. “We wanted the country to take care of us. We wanted to feel safe.”

The Permanent Exhibition tour is the first part of a daylong Museum program in which members of law enforcement probe the role police officers played in the Holocaust. The program started after then District of Columbia Police Chief Charles Ramsey visited the Museum in 1998 and was struck by how deeply police were involved in the lead-up to and implementation of the Holocaust. He worked with the Museum and the Anti-Defamation League to create the

program, which has trained more than 80,000 members of law enforcement.

After the tour, the recruits gather in a classroom and Sarah Campbell, of the Museum’s National Institute for Holocaust Education, leads them in a photo analysis exercise. The photos document a progression of police involvement in realizing the Nazi agenda, from patrolling, to investigating, and finally to overseeing deportations—all while enforcing the law. Campbell presses the recruits to think about why the police made the choices they did, which enabled the Nazis to enact their agenda. Her colleague from the Anti-Defamation League then connects that history to the present, leading the recruits in a discussion about how their professional values reinforce the official policies that prohibit police from abusing their power.



Left: Lauri Zell, a Museum volunteer, leads police recruits from Fairfax County, Virginia, on a tour of the Permanent Exhibition. Below: Sarah Campbell, of the Museum's National Institute for Holocaust Education, leads a law enforcement training exercise. *US Holocaust Memorial Museum*

After the program ends, recruit John Dreskler pauses to reflect. "It's a reminder of the values that law enforcement should hold," he says, "and that they can be denigrated and the consequences—so we can make sure that never happens again."

The Museum also offers training programs that serve judges and the military, in each case focusing on how those professions reacted to the rise of the Nazis. These programs have been in such demand that the Museum has piloted a train-the-trainer strategy, most recently with professors at the US military academies. Now, the Museum has a new opportunity to shape trainings for officials from all the US government agencies that play a role in preventing genocide and mass atrocities.

Like Ramsey, President Barack Obama has recognized the role of the Museum in connecting the lessons of the Holocaust to challenges today. He chose the Museum as his venue last April for announcing the creation of the Atrocities Prevention Board, an inter-



agency body responsible for coordinating the American response to threats of genocide and mass atrocities. The president also approved a recommendation that all government officials involved in preventing genocide and mass atrocities receive specific training, prompting the Museum to seek ways to support those agencies. In October, the Museum held a workshop for policy makers and trainers from government departments and agencies now tasked with educating employees about their role in atrocity prevention. The participating organizations—including State, Defense,

USAID, and Justice—learned about the Holocaust and genocide prevention as well as pedagogical approaches for instructing key government personnel on how to understand, prevent, and respond to threats of genocide today.

"The Museum has the unique ability to bring together scholars, government leaders, and practitioners of genocide prevention to contribute to innovative new training models," said Gretchen Skidmore, director of the Museum's civic and defense initiatives. "Emphasizing the lessons history holds for leaders today is a key part of our mission." ■



**LOOTING**

Figures and beneficiaries of post-September 11 looting of property



# NO SIMPLE ANSWERS

## How the Collaboration and Complicity initiative will challenge our understanding of the Holocaust

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The Museum's latest special exhibition, **Some Were Neighbors: Collaboration and Complicity in the Holocaust**, opens this April after five years of planning, research, and design. Visitors familiar with the Permanent Exhibition will see a marked contrast.

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"It won't be the Holocaust exhibit you might expect," said Susan Bachrach, the exhibition's curator. "To help bridge the past and present, it will use color and even contemporary photography in a few places."

But the different aesthetics don't signal a departure from core Holocaust history. *Some Were Neighbors* will address the common misperception that Adolf Hitler and a small group of Nazi leaders were alone responsible for the Holocaust. It will focus on the actions of the tens of thousands of ordinary people who were active participants or complicit in the destruction of European Jewry. "The documentation of widespread collaboration and complicity of individuals like ourselves in the events of the Holocaust should disturb everyone," Bachrach said.

Staff designing the exhibition focused on engaging the broadest possible audience by examining the behavior of people who were in close proximity to victims, said Sarah Ogilvie, director

of the Museum's National Institute for Holocaust Education. "Why is it that people willingly and sometimes enthusiastically participate in the suffering of people they know?"

The story told by Museum volunteer Steven Fenves exemplifies the complexity staff hope to introduce into the public's understanding of the Holocaust. In his oral history, a portion of which will be shown in the exhibition and online, Fenves recalls the moment his family was removed from its apartment in Subotica, Serbia: "People were lined up, up the stairs, up to the door of the apartment, waiting to ransack whatever we left behind, cursing at us, yelling at us, spitting at us as we left."

Did you know any of them, the interviewer asks? "Among them was our cook," Fenves replies. "She went in, she grabbed the cookbook and she grabbed...this binder, and shoved into it all the artwork that she could shove into it... And she gave it back to us when we came back."



Above: Holocaust survivor Steven Fenves's story will be included in *Some Were Neighbors*. In this June 2012 photo, he speaks before a Museum audience. Facing: Curator Susan Bachrach presents plans for *Some Were Neighbors* to a group of scholarly advisors in June 2010. US Holocaust Memorial Museum



### A WIDER INITIATIVE

What might not be apparent to Museum visitors is that the exhibition is part of a wider initiative extending beyond the Museum's walls. A special website, training programs, and educational resources will draw on the questions raised by *Some Were Neighbors*, which will guide the work of the National Institute for Holocaust Education over the next five years.

"Whether visitors walk into the exhibition or visit online, we have designed the experience to have the same outcomes," said Tim Kaiser, the Museum's director of educational initiatives. Those outcomes include increasing understanding of how the Holocaust was possible, complicating beliefs about how individuals can respond to hatred and genocide, and inspiring visitors and viewers to apply this new understanding to their own lives.

New primary source material used in the exhibition presents the perspec-

were interested in it as a balance and complement to the large volume of survivor testimony that was being collected at the time. "We needed to know what was in perpetrators' heads and hearts in order to prevent it from happening again," Toby Herr said.

"This collection is truly incredible," Kaiser said. "These eyewitnesses offer a different and oftentimes unique perspective on the events of the Holocaust that has seldom been heard. The educational potential of these interviews is immense."

Testimonies from the Herr Collection and other sources will be shown in a theater within the exhibition. On the website, testimonies will be available in the original language with English subtitles.

### COMPLICATING UNDERSTANDING

Kaiser, who is developing resources for use by secondary-school teachers, recently presented several testimonies to some of the Museum's key teacher partners. In the testimonies, a Polish railroad worker recalls shunting railcars full of people into Treblinka, then removing them later, empty; women describe how as girls they watched from the window of their home as Jews were executed; and a Lithuanian describes how under German authority he participated in the shooting of Belarusian Jews in pits.

"So what do we, as educators, do with those?" Kaiser asked the teachers.

The answers came slowly. Some teachers worried the testimonies would be as difficult to use as they are to watch. For example, would the attempts by those complicit to justify their actions feed into students' tendency to simplify the history? Others said the testimonies are a goldmine, raising fundamental questions about human behavior—as long as the teachers give their students the building blocks to understand that there are no simple explanations and that understanding is not the same thing as condoning individuals' actions. Educators will grapple with these issues at an international symposium the Museum plans to convene in 2014

"If you're interested in human beings, how they treat each other, and why, this will interest you."

—Edna Friedberg, curator of the *Collaboration and Complicity* website

tive of eyewitnesses to the Holocaust and their actions, good and bad. Since the late 1990s, Museum contractor Nathan Beyrak has compiled rare video testimony from eyewitnesses, funded by the Jeff and Toby Herr Testimony initiative. The collection now encompasses more than 1,600 interviews with witnesses, perpetrators, and victims in Poland, Lithuania, Moldova, Bosnia, Ukraine, and other countries. For the first time, these interviews will appear in an exhibition.

Explaining their foresight in funding the collection of testimony from witnesses and perpetrators, Jeff and Toby Herr said recently that they



# THE EXHIBITION EXPERIENCE

The special exhibition **SOME WERE NEIGHBORS: COLLABORATION AND COMPLICITY IN THE HOLOCAUST** will use a new technique to complicate visitors' understanding of the Holocaust. First, they will be shown part of a photograph. Then, the full photograph will be revealed. When looking at the image at left, for example, visitors will first see the smiling onlookers. Then they will see the full image (below) of the German soldiers forcing one Jewish man to cut the beard of another in a humiliating violation of Jewish custom.



TOMASZÓW MAZOWIECKI, POLAND, SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1939/INSTITUT PAMIĘCI NARODOWEJ

The exhibition will conclude with a space that encourages visitors to "reflect and share" their thoughts. Using touch screens, visitors will choose a photo or quotation (such as those to the right) that reflects the exhibition theme and be invited to share their sentiments with their social networks.

SOME WERE NEIGHBORS: COLLABORATION AND COMPLICITY IN THE HOLOCAUST has been made possible in part by support from The David Berg Foundation; The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation; the Benjamin and Seema Pulier Charitable Foundation; the Lester Robbins and Sheila Johnson Robbins Traveling and Special Exhibitions Fund established in 1990; and Sy and Laurie Sternberg.

**"A person may cause evil to others not only by his actions but by his inaction."**

—John Stuart Mill, political philosopher

**"From a moral point of view there may be no such thing as a bystander. If one is present, one is taking part."**

—David Gushee, theologian

**"Long before we are called to help our neighbors, we have usually determined who our neighbors are."**

—Victoria Barnett, Museum historian



During the Holocaust, some people chose to resist. In June 1942, Jews in Paris were ordered by the occupying German authorities to wear yellow Star of David patches. Some youths in Paris made their own yellow stars out of paper and wore them to protest the treatment of Jews. Student Maurice Lombart (right) was arrested for wearing a yellow star marked “Swing,” the name of an anti-authoritarian youth group. (*Swing*) Archives de la Préfecture de Police–Paris, (Lombart) *Mémorial de la Shoab/CDJC/coll. Lombart*

to explore the model Collaboration and Complicity offers for Holocaust education.

The work on this theme upends the traditional victim-perpetrator-bystander paradigm of Holocaust education. Collaboration and Complicity blurs those categories by focusing on the majority of Europeans, whose motivations during the Holocaust were not always clear, defined, or simple. “Sometimes it’s the little acts that are most disturbing,” Kaiser said. “The ordinariness is what captures you.”

To ensure visitors understand alternatives existed to acting in ways that harmed the victims, the exhibition also highlights individuals who chose to help. One section focuses on how people chose to act in ways good and bad. It shows that the behavior of people who witnessed the Holocaust could be inconsistent. In other words, it shows visitors the possibility of making better choices.

“It looks at how relationships hold up or fray in times of intense pressure,” said Edna Friedberg, curator of the Collaboration and Complicity website. “If you’re interested in human beings, how they treat each other, and why, this will interest you.”

With the exhibition and website about to launch, the question is how will people relate to the theme? Their responses will inform the initiative, providing direction for the creation of additional Museum programming and resources. In a year we’ll know more, Kaiser said, about the audiences this topic resonates with.

For example, Kaiser said, “should we focus our efforts on creating a curriculum developed around community dialogue” to be used by churches, synagogues, and civic groups? Rather than choosing in advance all the audiences programs will target, staff will see how visitors react after the exhibition’s public opening. In addition to observing how visitors respond to the content and hiring professional evaluators, Museum educators will learn from what visitors share in a reflection space at the end of the exhibition. The space will be important in helping visitors process the “disequilibrium” introduced by the exhibition and its relevance to their own lives.

“We hope it will inspire,” Friedberg said. “We show that there were choices even in a time of war and genocide.” ■



# JOIN A UNIQUE GROUP FOR AN EXCLUSIVE JOURNEY



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**Rwanda: 2014**

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For more information, contact Nadia Ficara at [nficara@ushmm.org](mailto:nficara@ushmm.org).

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*Photo, large:* In July 2008, Museum supporters visit Poland with the International Travel Program. *Marcin Olesinski/US Holocaust Memorial Museum*  
*Photos, small, top to bottom:* Meeting with the Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister Sok An (far right) in Phnom Penh. *US Holocaust Memorial Museum*  
Attending the opening of the National Holocaust Museum in Bucharest with an official delegation including Romanian President Traian Băsescu (second from left). *US Holocaust Memorial Museum* Examining documents in the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, Poland. *Marcin Olesinski/US Holocaust Memorial Museum*



# A MONUMENT TO FREEDOM





MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL;...  
ARE ENDOWED BY THEIR CREATOR  
WITH CERTAIN INALIENABLE RIGHTS;  
AMONG THESE ARE LIFE, LIBERTY,  
THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS.





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## SHORTLY AFTER THE MUSEUM OPENED IN 1993,

a US Senator remarked, “The Washington Monument has never looked so beautiful as it does now that it sits next to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum.”



*Previous page:* A group of Museum volunteers wait beneath a quotation from the Declaration of Independence for a school group to arrive in March 2012. *US Holocaust Memorial Museum*  
*This page:* The roof of the Museum with the Washington Monument in the background. *Timothy Hursley*

That the Museum became another kind of monument to freedom was no accident. The founders of the Museum envisioned a unique kind of memorial to the victims of the Holocaust. Many were themselves Holocaust survivors, who had seen firsthand the horrific consequences of unchecked hatred and abuse of power. They knew that the institutions of democracy did not prevent the Nazis’ crimes. And they understood that the Museum could serve not only as a lesson about the past but also as a warning about the future, reminding all Americans about the need for constant vigilance in a free society. Elie Wiesel, the Museum’s founding chairman, called the Museum a living memorial.

On the Museum’s 20th anniversary, America reaps the benefit of the founders’ foresight. As a national institution, the Museum has woven the lessons of the Holocaust through the fabric of American society, from school curricula, to traveling exhibitions, to training programs for the military and government. Rooted in its physical structure on the National Mall, the Museum has taught this history beyond its walls and beyond the nation’s borders, where the lessons of the Holocaust are more urgent than ever.

### PLANNING THE MUSEUM

The 1978–79 President’s Commission on the Holocaust, chaired by Wiesel, recognized that the new museum had to include American history in its focus:

Special emphasis would also be placed on the American aspect of the Holocaust—the absence of American response (exclusion of refugees, denials of the Holocaust, etc.), the American liberation of the camps, the reception of survivors after 1945, the lives rebuilt in this country and their contribution to American society and civilization....

The members of the President’s Commission believed that the Museum should speak to both American history and American values. They emphasized the importance of situating the Museum in Washington, DC, because studying the Holocaust raises “fundamental questions about government, the abuses of unbridled power, the fragility of social institutions, the need for national unity, and the functioning of government.” What better place to ask these questions about the role of national government than in its shadow?

“The Museum stands as both part of monumental Washington and in contrast to it,” said Museum Director Sara J. Bloomfield. Located between the Jefferson and Washington memorials and within sight of the Smithsonian museums—between monuments to human freedom and achievement—“the Museum is a counterpoint, showing what can happen when freedom is destroyed and when human achievement is in the service of evil rather than good.”

A Museum visit is anchored in the American perspective. At one entrance, visitors encounter a prophetic quotation from General Dwight D. Eisenhower



Left: Military academy instructors tour the Permanent Exhibition with volunteer Benjamin Cohen on May 30, 2012. Below: High-ranking US Army officers inspect the recently liberated Ohrdruf concentration camp. General Dwight D. Eisenhower is second from right. *US Holocaust Memorial Museum*

etched into the building. He anticipated the denial and distortion of the Holocaust, a crime so vast in scope and scale that he knew some would doubt its truth. He said:

The things I saw beggar description .... The visual evidence and the verbal testimony of starvation, cruelty and bestiality were...overpowering.... I made this visit deliberately, in order to be in position to give first-hand evidence of these things if ever, in the future, there develops a tendency to charge these allegations merely to 'propaganda.'

At another entrance, visitors see a display of flags from the US Army divisions that liberated concentration camps. And a visitor's first experience of the Permanent Exhibition is the voice of an American colonel recalling his patrol leader's shock at seeing a camp and asking how something like that could happen—the overriding question that guides the Museum's work.

### EXPLORING HARD QUESTIONS

The American experience of the Holocaust is a consistent theme throughout the Permanent Exhibition as well as numerous special and traveling exhibitions (*see sidebar on page 20*).

But another important aspect of the Museum's role as a national institution is unseen by many visitors—that is the leadership development programs created in tandem with the US military, law enforcement, and the judiciary (*see article on page 8*).

Although they serve a variety of audiences, these programs all explore the question of why a democracy, albeit a struggling one, gave rise to the Holocaust. What happens when the institutions that are intended to safeguard democratic principles fail? What causes that failure? And what are the responsibilities of the individuals—judges, attorneys, police officers, and members of our armed forces—charged with upholding those principles?

Interest in these programs has increased significantly since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, noted Sarah Ogilvie, director of the National Institute for Holocaust Education, due in part to the ongoing national debate about the proper balance between ensuring our collective security and protecting individual freedom.

But it is not only of leaders and professionals that the Museum asks tough questions. Displays throughout



the Permanent Exhibition prompt visitors to ask themselves: What did Americans at the time know about what was happening in Nazi-dominated Europe? How did the US government respond? How did American citizens respond?

One artifact that invites this reflection is the *New York Times* political cartoon on the outcome of the Evian conference, held in 1938 to address the growing refugee crisis in Europe. Of the 32 nations represented at Evian, including the United States, which called for the meeting, only one—the Dominican



**“We don’t tell people what to think, but we do provoke them to consider what the history means for them and their role in society.”**

—Sarah Ogilvie, Director, National Institute for Holocaust Education



Above: This political cartoon by Sidney “George” Strube, titled “Will the Evian Conference guide him to freedom?,” was published in the Sunday, July 3, 1938, edition of the *New York Times*.  
Below: Varian Fry (right) in Marseilles. US Holocaust Memorial Museum

Republic—agreed to significantly increase its immigration quotas to include more Jews. The cartoon depicts a man labeled “non-Aryan” sitting in the middle of a swastika-shaped crossroads, each branch of which leads to a stop sign. The refusal to help the Jews of Europe happened at a time when there were warning signs of the Holocaust and action could have been taken. The cartoon’s publication in a major American newspaper provokes contemplation about the role of the US government and its citizens in preventing genocide.

“This museum raises tough questions without answering them,” said Ogilvie. “The point is to put them to the public to consider. We don’t tell people what

to think, but we do provoke them to consider what the history of the Holocaust means for them and their role in society.”

On the occasion of its 20th anniversary, the Museum has put some of those challenging questions to the public through an awareness campaign and a national tour: Why did the Holocaust happen? Who was responsible for the Holocaust? Can we make “never again” more than a promise? Does memory have the power to change the world? The vigorous discussion these questions have prompted—at tour stops and on social media—is a testament to the enduring relevance of the Holocaust in contemporary America. ■

## RECOGNIZING AN **AMERICAN RESCUER**



**WHEN FRANCE FELL TO THE** Nazis in 1940, four million refugees (both French and foreign) were trapped in its unoccupied southern provinces—locales where the Vichy government captured and imprisoned individuals at the behest of the Gestapo. Among those caught in Hitler’s growing

realm were Marc Chagall, Hannah Arendt, Max Ernst, Marcel Duchamp, and Andre Breton—among Europe’s intellectual and artistic luminaries.

If not for the heroic and clandestine efforts of one American, these individuals—and many others—may have been attacked, imprisoned, or murdered as enemies of the Nazi state. Yet Varian Fry’s story has long been overshadowed by the accomplishments of those he saved.

It was not until 1994, nearly three decades after his death in 1967, that he became the first American to be recognized as “Righteous Among the Nations” by Yad Vashem. Because of Fry’s relative anonymity, the Museum chose to tell his story in its first special exhibition, launched in 1993: *ASSIGNMENT: RESCUE, The Story of Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee*.

The Emergency Rescue Committee, a private relief organization, sent Fry to Marseilles. There the young editor used his facility for languages—he studied classics at Harvard—and his appreciation of European culture to establish an underground network that forged travel documents, exchanged money on the black market, and developed escape routes. Fry’s network smuggled victims to Portugal or Spain, where they were hidden on ships bound for America.

By the time he was forced out of France by Vichy authorities in September 1941, Fry was responsible for saving nearly 4,000 Jews and others. Efforts like the Museum’s special exhibition honoring Fry, which later traveled around the United States, have helped prevent his name from being lost to history. ■



## events & exhibitions

PLEASE JOIN US IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Left: Attendees pay tribute to local Holocaust survivors and World War II veterans at the Boca Raton tour event. *David Y. Lee/US Holocaust Memorial Museum*

## 20th Anniversary National Tour

Join us in **CHICAGO** on **June 9** at the Chicago Cultural Center for the final stop of the Museum's national tour. At this free public event, participate in interactive discussions, view rarely seen archival films, conduct family research, meet with Museum curators, and pay tribute to local Holocaust survivors and World War II veterans. Visit [ushmm.org/neveragain](http://ushmm.org/neveragain) or call **866.998.7466** to register and learn more.

### TRAVELING EXHIBITIONS

#### FIGHTING THE FIRES OF HATE: AMERICA AND THE NAZI BOOK BURNINGS

A thought-provoking exhibition exploring the front lines in the "war of ideas" between democracy and fascism

##### FAYETTEVILLE, NC

March 31–May 22, 2013  
Cumberland County Public Library

##### RENO, NV

August 4–August 27, 2013  
Holocaust Resource Center in partnership with the Nevada Holocaust Education Task Force

##### LAS VEGAS, NV

August 31–September 25, 2013  
Northwest Branch Library in partnership with the Nevada Holocaust Education Task Force

#### NAZI PERSECUTION OF HOMOSEXUALS 1933–1945

An exhibition tracing the sinister path from prejudice to persecution of homosexuals in Nazi Germany

##### NEW ROCHELLE, NY

April 20–June 12, 2013  
Temple Israel of New Rochelle in partnership with The LOFT: LGBT Community Services Center

##### KINGSTON, NY

June 20–August 14, 2013  
Hudson Valley LGBTQ Community Center

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum exhibitions program is supported in part by the Lester Robbins and Sheila Johnson Robbins Traveling and Special Exhibitions Fund established in 1990.

For a complete schedule of traveling exhibitions, please visit [ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/traveling](http://ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/traveling).

### FIRST PERSON: CONVERSATIONS WITH HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS



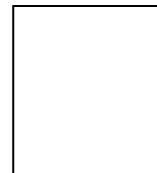
#### WASHINGTON, DC

Hear Holocaust survivors tell their life stories in their own words. Each hour-long program features a live interview between journalist Bill Benson and a survivor, followed by a question-and-answer session. The conversations take place in the Museum Wednesdays and Thursdays at 1 p.m. through August 15 (with the exception of the week of July 4, when they will be held Tuesday and Wednesday). The First Person series is also available as a podcast. Visit [ushmm.org/learnfromsurvivors](http://ushmm.org/learnfromsurvivors).

The Louis Franklin Smith Foundation has provided ongoing support for the First Person program.

Left: Holocaust survivor Fanny Aizenberg tells her story to Bill Benson during the 2012 First Person series. *US Holocaust Memorial Museum*





What have **53,000 people**  
done to commemorate the  
Museum's 20th anniversary?

## TAKEN ACTION

From sharing your story to donating artifacts,  
we have identified **20 ACTIONS** to engage with the  
Museum in its 20th year. Visit [neveragain.ushmm.org/  
action](http://neveragain.ushmm.org/action) to browse the actions and choose one—or  
many—that you can do.

what **you** do matters