

## Local Holocaust Survivors to Recount Personal Experiences in Fall 2010 Holocaust Living History Workshop Series

*Survivor stories to be presented at Oct. 6 and Nov. 3 workshops at UCSD's Geisel Library*

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The Holocaust Living History Workshop, sponsored by the UC San Diego Libraries and the Judaic Studies Program, will host three presentations during fall quarter by San Diego Holocaust survivors, who will share their stories of struggle and survival. The *Holocaust Living History Workshop* is an educational outreach program designed to preserve the memory of victims and survivors of the Holocaust. This year's series is called "Living With History," and is intended to broaden understanding of the past and to foster tolerance.

Three San Diego-based survivors will present their stories, including Gussie Zaks on Oct. 6, and Professor Kurt Shuler and Robert Frimtzis on Nov. 3. At these presentations, members of the campus community and the public will have the opportunity to meet the survivors and hear their stories, as well as learn about other survivors' testimony from the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, which includes the personal stories of more than 50,000 survivors of the Holocaust. All presentations are free and open to the public, and will take place at 5 p.m. in the Seuss Room on the main floor of the Geisel Library building.

At the Oct. 6. presentation, Gussie Zaks will discuss her experiences as a survivor of Bergen-Belsen, Flossenburg, Blechhammer, Saybusch, and Neusalz concentration camps. Mrs. Zaks was thirteen years old when her family was taken from their home in Poland. She lost both of her parents and six siblings at the Treblinka death camp. The current president of the *New Life Club* of local Holocaust survivors, Mrs. Zaks has lectured widely in the San Diego community and has been an active part of the UCSD Holocaust Living History Workshop since its inception in 2007.

On November 3, the Workshop will host an event titled "Contrasting Survival in East and West: European Jews Tell Their Stories of Persecution and Perseverance." Professor Kurt Shuler will talk about growing up in Nuremberg, one of Germany's most prominent Nazi strongholds. At the age of fifteen he was forced to escape on his own to the United States, where he rose in stature to become a founding member of the Department of Chemistry at UC San Diego. In addition to Shuler, attendees will hear the recollections of Robert Frimtzis, born in Beltz, Bessarabia (known today as Moldova). Frimtzis was ten years old when German forces invaded the Soviet Union. He fled, with his family, to Tajikistan and later ended up in a Displaced Persons camp in Italy.

After the war, he emigrated to the United States and eventually joined NASA's Apollo program. Frimtzis is the author of a memoir called "From Tajikistan to the Moon."

The UC San Diego Libraries are one of only three university libraries on the West Coast to have access to the USC Shoah Foundation Institute Visual History Archive, founded by film maker Steven Spielberg to document the stories of Holocaust survivors for his movie, "Schindler's List." In 1994, Spielberg established the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, a non-profit organization, to collect and preserve more than 50,000 firsthand accounts of survivors and other witnesses of the Holocaust. The foundation became the USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education in 2006.

The *Holocaust Living History Workshop*, launched in 2007, aims to teach the history of the Holocaust through two methods of face-to-face contact, both with Holocaust survivors and their children and through the Visual History Archive. Student volunteers have received special training on how to search through the testimonies in the massive Archive, and then teach survivors and their families-from multiple generations-how to use the database. These families can then use the archive to conduct their own searches in order to learn about other people, and in some cases relatives, who had similar Holocaust experiences. Since its inception in 2007, more than 1000 people have attended *Workshop* presentations and events at UCSD.

The archive of 52,000 digital oral histories recorded by Holocaust survivors and other witnesses is the foundation for the *Holocaust Living History Workshop*, a program that has brought together UC San Diego students, San Diego holocaust survivors, and their children. The Workshop, which was established to expand the usefulness and the impact of the Archive, has proven to be a powerful tool for discovering family history and preserving memories for survivors, their families, and members of the community.

The Visual History Archive, which includes the testimonies of Holocaust survivors from 40,000 specific geographic locations in languages ranging from Bulgarian and Greek to Japanese and Spanish, can be accessed by members of the campus community and the public from any computer on the UC San Diego campus.

For more information about UC San Diego's *Holocaust Living History Workshop*, contact Susanne Hillman at [suhillma@ucsd.edu](mailto:suhillma@ucsd.edu) or go to:

Training in the use of the Visual History Archive is available for individuals and groups upon appointment.

The UC San Diego Libraries, ranked among the top 20 public academic research libraries in the nation, play an integral role in advancing and supporting the university's research, teaching, patient care, and public service missions. The nine libraries that make up the UCSD Library system provide access to more than 7 million digital and print volumes, journals, and multimedia materials to meet the knowledge demands of scholars, students, and members of the public. Each day, more than 7,300 people stream through one of the university's nine libraries. The Libraries' vast resources and services are accessed more than 87,500 times each day via the UCSD Libraries' Web site.

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