

## HISTORY OF THE INTERFAITH HOLOCAUST COMMENORATION 1991 TO PRESENT

The Holocaust was Germany's systematic state sponsored murder of 11,000,000 people of which 6,000,000 were Jews together with the persecution and abuse of millions more. It took Place in camps and ghettos stretching from Nazi controlled France to Russia from 1933 to 1945.

However, we in Eastchester-in the Village of Bronxville- in 1990 were shaken by the rise of Nazi type anti-Semitic graffiti on the walls of the underpass leading to the Bronxville train station. Sheila Stein stated the history very well in her letter to Fred Moses on January 30, 2002. She stated: "During my tenure as Mayor of Bronxville, sometime in 1990, I received a phone call From the Chief Police in Bronxville informing me that anti-Semitic graffiti had been scrawled on the wall of the underpass leading to the train station in Bronxville. He said that it specifically named Jewish teachers at the Bronxville School. He had contacted the Public Works department and asked them to remove it immediately. I did not see the graffiti before it was removed, so I do not know first- hand what it portrayed.

I contacted Bill Greenbaum, Superintendent of the Bronxville Schools, and reported the incident to him. He responded quickly and organized a special assembly and discussion groups within the homerooms. The students responded by organizing a marsh down Pondfield Road against the horrific act.

In the weeks that followed, Bill Greenbaum, members of the Bronxville clergy, Superintendents from Tuckahoe and Eastchester, members of B'nai B'rith, Rabbi Susan Grossman and I met to discuss the incident with the hope that we might bring about a better and closer relationship with the Jewish community as well as encourage a strong Holocaust Curriculum in our schools. We all agreed that education was the most important weapon against such an act.

In 1992, at the invitation and instigation of the Rev. Dr. P.C. Enniss, Senior Minister at the Reformed Church in Bronxville, the first Interfaith Holocaust Commemorative Service was held. It place in Bronxville at the Reformed Church and included students from the Bronxville School, Clergy from local Churches and Synagogues, elected officials and others. B'nai B'rith sponsored an art logo contest and an essay contest in the local schools as well as the reception that followed. This service has been ongoing annually for the last twelve with the location alternating between churches and synagogues." Please note the Commemorations have continued to date.

The people, that is, Town and Village officials, clergy from the various Churches and Synagogues, officials from the Eastchester, Bronxville and Tuckahoe School Districts and private citizens, who were part of the Committee over the years that followed the first Interfaith Holocaust Commemoration are listed below:

Supervisors of Town of Eastchester—James Cavanaugh, Anthony Colavita

Mayors of Bronxville – Sheila Stein, Nancy Hand, Mary Marvin

Mayors of Tuckahoe – Philip White, Michael Martino

The Reformed Church of Bronxville – Rev. Dr. P.C. Enniss, Rev. Dr. William L. Steele, Rev. Dr. Richard J. Lichti, Rev. Dr. Kenneth Ruge, Rev. Cari Patterson, Rev. Keith Dragt, Rev. Minister Cari Pattison, Rodney

Schuller, Barbara Wentgel .

Christ Church of Bronxville – Rev. Charles J. Minifie, Rev. Dr. William Rich, Rev. Jennifer Brown Langley

First Baptist Church Of Bronxville – Rev. Dr. Russell E. Gundlach, Rev. Rev. Dr. Richard Burke Village

Lutheran Church of Bronxville – Rev. Dr. Roy Minnix, Rev. Dr. Robert Hartwell

Sinai Free Synagogue of Mount Vernon – Rabbi Morris Barzilai

Genesis-Agudas Achim Synagogue of Tuckahoe – Rabbi Susan Grossman. The Synagogue is now

Shaarei Tikvah Synagogue of Scarsdale – Rabbi Bernard Barsky, Rabbi David J. Fine, Rabbi Daniel

Schweber

Church of Saint Joseph of Bronxville – Msgr. James Connolly, Msgr. James F. Doyle

Church of the Immaculate Conception and Church of the Assumption of Tuckahoe – Msgr. Anthony

Maltese, Msgr. Francis E. Oliverio, Msgr. Vincent R. Case, Rev. Eric P. Raaser, Deacon Anthony Viola

Shiloh Baptist Church of Tuckahoe – Rev. Clifford Johnson, Rev. Frank R. Coleman

Asbury Crestwood United Methodist Church of Tuckahoe – Rev. George Floyd

Saint Luke’s Episcopal Church of Eastchester – Rev. Scott P. Albergate

Superintendent of Schools, Bronxville –William Greenham, John Chambers, Dr. Warren Gemmill, David Quatrone

Superintendent of Schools, Tuckahoe – Dr. Richard Maurer, Dr. Michael Yazurlo, Dr. Barbara Nuzzi

Superintendent of Schools, Eastchester – Dr. Robert Pellicone, Dr. Robert Siebert, Dr. Marilyn Terranova, Dr. Walter Moran

High School Principal, Bronxville – Dr. John Kehoe, Peter Clarke, Terrance Barton

High School Principal, Tuckahoe – Dr. Lawrence Aronstein, Joanne Russo-Dornfeld, Paul Siragusa, Dr. Bart Lineham

High School Principal, Eastchester – John Sullivan, Dr. Richard Dellinger, Dr. Jeffery Capuano

Westchester Jewish Conference – Dr. Howard Rubin, Sheila Friedland, Jan Fisher

B’nai B’rith, Eastchester – Gregory Goldstein, President, Manfred Moses past President

Westchester Holocaust Commission – Donna Cohen, President, Dr. Jack and Ina Polak, Leslie and Sybil Rosenberg, Andrew Cahn

Concordia College, Bronxville – Dr. Meslin Rehm, Dr. Viji George

Sarah Lawrence College, Yonkers –, Michelle Messinger, President, Prof. Dr. Deborah Hertz

Lawrence Hospital Center, Bronxville – Rev. Sarah Fogg, Chaplain

Town of Eastchester Councilwoman, Vicki Ford

County of Westchester Legislator -- Vito Pinto, Sheila Marcotte

Private Citizens – Selma and Manfred Moses, James and Catherine Doody, Andrew and Jane Cahn, Ercole and Dr. Joyce Rosa, Irwin Greene, Carmine and Carmela Masucci, Burt and Sylvia Kaufman,

Daniele Listrange, John Finegan, Allan and Maxine Lazarus, Myron Bush, Donald Fleishaker, Salvatore Rossi, Jane and Andy Cahn, Louis and Susan Bauman, Michael Citron, Sanford and Roberta Levene

The Churches and Synagogues sponsoring the Commemoration on a rotating basis were and are:

- \_The Reformed Church , Bronxville
- \_Christ Episcopal Church, Bronxville
- \_First Baptist Church, Bronxville
- \_Church of ST. Joseph , Bronxville
- \_Shaarei Tikvah Synagogue, Scarsdale (formerly Genesis-Agudas Achim Synagogue of Tuckahoe)
- \_Sinai Free Synagogue, Mount Vernon
- \_Church of the Immaculate Conception, Tuckahoe
- \_Village Lutheran Church and Concordia College, Bronxville

The chronology of the Churches and Synagogues for the Commemoration follows:

1990-1991 The Bronxville Train Station Underpass Anti-Semitic Incident with the Community gathering around the Bronxville High School Flag Pole.

1992 The Reformed Church, The First Commemoration

1993 Sinai Free Synagogue

1994 Christ Episcopal Church

1995 Church of the Immaculate Conception

1996 The Reformed Church

1997 Genesis-Agudas Achim Synagogue, Tuckahoe now Shaarei Tikvah Synagogue

1998 Church of St. Joseph

1999 First Baptist Church

2000 Church of the Immaculate Conception

2001 Shaarei Tikvah Synagogue --- The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Commemoration

2002 Christ Episcopal Church

2003 The Reformed Church

2004 Sinai Free Synagogue

2005 Church of the Immaculate Conception

2006 Christ Episcopal Church

2007 Village Lutheran Church,, The Chapel School, Concordia College

2008 Church of St. Joseph

2009 Shaarei Tikvah Synagogue

2010 The Reformed Church

2011 Concordia College/Village Lutheran Church --- The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Commemoration

2012 Sinai Free Synagogue

2013 Christ Episcopal Church

For each of the Commemorations the Committee selected a theme and expanded it in Committee (from 2002 to 2010 Andy Cahn, a former Bronxville High School teacher, took the task of expanding the theme). The expanded theme was submitted to the Eastchester, Bronxville and Tuckahoe High School Principals for inclusion in the Spring Semester curriculum for the High School Students participation in

an Art Logo Contest and an Essay Contest based on the theme. The contests were sponsored by B'nai B'rith with 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> prizes for each contest. In addition, the first prize Art Logo Contest winner became the cover for the Commemoration Program. In recent years, the second prize winner took the Program's back cover. Theme for each Commemoration is listed below:

- 1990-1991 The anti-Semitic act that started the Commemoration
- 1992 Days of Remembrance
- 1993
- 1994 Righteous Gentiles
- 1995 The Next Generation Listens and Learns--- Also, Honoring the Survivors and Liberators on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Liberation of the Concentration Camps
- 1996 Unity in the Community – What it Means to Me
- 1997 Standing Firm Against Intolerance
- 1998 Turning Darkness Into Light
- 1999 Remembering The Children
- 2000 The Sanctity of Life – That Small Voice
- 2001 Where Are We- Hineni- Here I Am
- 2002 The Holocaust and 911 – Hope and Courage Born Out of Ashes
- 2003 Remembrance with Unity Through Wisdom
- 2004 Doing the Right Thing
- 2005 When Right can be Wrong
- 2006 Becoming an Upstander
- 2007 It Starts With One
- 2008 The Power to Inspire
- 2009 In the Midst of Adversity, One Person can Make a Difference
- 2010 Remembering the Past --- To make a Difference Today
- 2011 Building a Community of Promise
- 2012 Shapers of Destiny
- 2013 Swords into Plowshares

The Commemoration Contests produced many very thoughtful works of Art and close to two thousand meaningful Essays from the High School Students of Eastchester, Bronxville and Tuckahoe. Each Commemoration started at 6:30pm with the award of the prizes for each contests followed by the Commemoration Service in the Church or Synagogue at 7:30pm. The music for each Commemoration was supplied by the Students of one of the High Schools on a rotating basis. The funds raised at each Commemoration with other donations were used to cover expenses and support Human Rights Organizations. Each Commemoration ended with a sponsored (many by B'nai B'rith) refreshments at 9pm. Each Commemoration had a Keynote Speaker and they are listed below:

- 1990-1991 The anti-Semitic act that started the Commemorations
- 1992 Rev. Dr. James a. Forbes
- 1993
- 1994 Cornelius Suijk

- 1995
- 1996 Guest Sermon by John Cardinal O'Connor
- 1997 Lawrence OtisGraham
- 1998 Dr. Tina Strobos
- 1999 Judith Goldstein
- 2000 Dr. Richard L. Rubenstein
- 2001 Donna Cohen
- 2002 Rev. Samuel Johnson Howard
- 2003 Rabbi Jerome M. Epstein
- 2004 Sel Hubert
- 2005 Sheila Stein
- 2006 Ruth Messinger
- 2007 Yvette Rugssasaguhunga
- 2008 Jack and Ina Polak
- 2009 Vicki Ford
- 2010 Delores Scott Brathwaite
- 2011 Rev. Dr. P. C. Enniss
- 2012 Miriam Friedman Morris
- 2013 Dr. James A. Lee

The Commemoration, we believe, was and is successful in alerting the students and the community to the need to remember that we are all part of the human race and that we must respect each other no matter what our race, color, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, financial status and anything in between.

This historical presentation is dedicated to Sheila Stein, the initial driving force for the Commemorations who died of cancer on August 10, 2013 and the Eastchester and other Holocaust Survivors. We list, in no particular order, the names of those who participated in the Commemorations.

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|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Ina and Jack Polak | Gary Joseph     | Ruth Bachner     |
| Ruth Storch        | Alan Moskim     | Betty Knoop      |
| Jay Sommer         | Stefan Weinberg | Anna Weinberg    |
| Lola Margulies     | Bettina Graf    | Leon Geiler      |
| Sel Hubert         | Moshe Avital    | Abe Pollach      |
| Bill Donat         | Elsa Federbush  | Melvin Federbush |
| Susan Rothchild    | Clara Knopfler  | Edward Lessing   |
| Lilly Singer       | Erno Muller     | Aramka Siegel    |
| Robert Rothchild   |                 |                  |

*Manfred Moses & Carmine Masucci*

By Manfred Moses and Carmine Masucci

Note: A set of the Commemoration Programs is provided for historical safekeeping.