



## HUMAN RIGHTS IN ACTION

MCHR student assistant Becky Shane '19 (left) poses with 'Zev Weiss, keynote Lecturer, Doris Bergen, (center) and research fellows, Anoush Baghdassarian, '17 (right) and Will Culen '19 (right)



### Lessons and Legacies XIV, November 3-6, 2016

The Mgrublian Center for Human Rights (MCHR) welcomed the world's largest gathering of experts on the Holocaust to Claremont McKenna College Nov. 3-6. The conference was attended by 275 Holocaust scholars, experts and survivors from around the world for the biennial *Lessons and Legacies* conference, co-sponsored by the MCHR and the Holo-

caust Educational Foundation. Organized around the theme *The Holocaust in the 21st Century: Relevance and Challenges in the Digital Age*, conference participants, consisting of several leading Holocaust studies experts and scholars gave keynote addresses, hosted a variety of panels and plenary sessions, and met with MCHR affiliated students. CMC students were given the unique and profound opportunity to attend the various panels presentations and plenaries, in addition to witnessing academic debates about Holocaust education in the 21st century, and participate in lively discussions with esteemed authors, scholars, activists, and survivors. The opening dinner discussion was led by Auschwitz survivor Theodore Zev Weiss, the co-founder of the Holocaust Educational Foundation and the Lessons and Legacies conference, who explained the importance of continued Holocaust education and research.

The mission of the Mgrublian Center for Human Rights at CMC is to instill in students an understanding of human rights as central to moral conduct and ethical decisions in their personal lives, in their careers, and in the public arena. Through conferences like Lessons and Legacies, the MCHR seeks to provide students the opportunities to interact closely with esteemed scholars from around the world.



Holocaust scholar, Matthew Boswell, University of Leeds, presents on "Holocaust Testimony in the Digital Age" in McKenna Auditorium, Friday November 4.

# About the Founder

## Theodore 'Zev' Weiss

**Theodore 'Zev' Weiss** founded the Holocaust Educational Foundation, (HEF) in 1976, as the first organization of its kind dedicated to supporting teaching and research about the Holocaust at the collegiate level. HEF has facilitated the establishment of Holocaust courses and seminars in over 400 colleges around the world. The HEF is currently housed within the graduate program of Northwestern University and continues to live out its mission of supporting teaching and research and the expansion of Holocaust studies by creating educational opportunities for students and faculty. Weiss' personal story is one of courage and unrelenting commitment to human rights. Born in 1931 in Debrecen, Hungary, Weiss lived in a predominantly Jewish community until German occupation in 1944. The 13 year old Weiss, his family, and most of his neighbors were rounded up and deported to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. He was subjected to a series of horrors, witnessing the calculated genocide of his family, his people, and his religion. He served as a slave laborer in the Birkenau extermination camp before being liberated in Austria by the American army. Since immigrating to the United States in 1956, where he became an educator and school principal and the founder of HEF, Weiss has been committed to the education of human rights and genocide prevention: "Memory is the most important thing we possess as humans, memory of both good and evil. By passing on the torch to Northwestern [University] this ensures that the foundation's work will be secure in perpetuity." The MCHR is inspired by the plight of Weiss and other genocide and Holocaust survivors. The Holocaust Educational Foundation and commitment from Holocaust scholars will ensure that the torch will always be passed on to future generations, that the flame will never be extinguished and the lessons and legacies of *never again* will live on.



**Image 1 (Left), Image 2 (Right):** Professor Jonathan Petropoulos, PhD and John V. Croul Professor of European History; Professor Wendy Lower, PhD, John K. Roth Professor of History and George R. Roberts Fellow and Director of Mgrublian Center for Human Rights; Auschwitz survivor and HEF founder, Theodore "Zev" Weiss.

## Conference Highlights:



The conference continued with a cocktail reception courtesy of Bon Appetite, organized by Kirsti Zitar and Dorothy Buchanan.

"Peace does not just mean putting an end to violence or war, but to all other factors that threaten peace, such as discrimination, such as inequality, poverty."

-Aung San Suu Kyi

**Conference participants, students, and professors** experienced a jam-packed weekend of roundtable discussions, panels, plenaries, and other events, centered around new Holocaust research in the digital age. Students, in particular, were enthralled in discussions and debates

for which they held front-row seats. MCHR Research Fellow, Will Cullen ('19) stated: "It was an incredible opportunity as an undergraduate student studying human rights to meet and hear from the scholars we study in class. It was especially helpful to attend various panels and hear cutting edge scholarship as a resource for my final research paper in Professor Lower's 'Researching the Holocaust' seminar. I gained so much valuable knowledge and information!" Freshman MCHR student assistant Sophie Boerboom explained: "The Lessons and Legacies Conference provided me with a unique opportunity to interact with world-renowned scholars and witness academic collaboration on a very personal level. I enjoyed attending panels on a wide variety of topics and was able to gain a deeper understanding of the scholarly work that is done to make advances in the field of Human Rights." **Conference highlights include:** "Antisemitism and Catholicism during the Holocaust," "Memory after the Holocaust," "Jewish Hiding Networks and Survival Strategies in Comparative Perspective," in addition to a variety of plenary sessions which tackled the role of Holocaust education in the digital age. The weekend was rounded out by a dinner and awards ceremony in which David Cesarani from Royal Holloway, University of London, Peter Hayes, Northwestern University, Marion Kaplan, New York University, Lawrence L. Langer from Simmons College and Holocaust survivor Gerhard L. Weinberg were presented with Distinguished Achievement Awards for their lifelong commitments to Holocaust research and scholarship.



Professor and Lessons and Legacies co-host Jonathan Petropoulos, entertains guests during a cocktail reception.

# How to get Involved:



**"I want to learn about the expanding perspectives of Holocaust education when I grow up too!"**

**The MCHR believes it is never too early to learn the importance of genocide prevention and education!**

Here are the ways to get involved with and learn more about resources available for Holocaust education and scholarship:

- Learn about the courses offered in human rights and the Holocaust taught by Professor Lower, Professor Petropoulos, and other 5C faculty.
- Visit the [Holocaust Educational Foundation](#) to learn more about grants, summer institutes, and other educational opportunities available to students and educators.
- Join the MCHR mailing list for more information about events, conferences, and other human rights related news.

## A Special Thank You

Lessons and Legacies could not have been made possible without the dedication, help, and tremendous support from the Holocaust Educational Foundation, Theodore 'Zev' Weiss, Sarah Cushman, Alex Israel, Benjamin Frommer, Wolf Gruner, Hillary Earl; MCHR Director Professor Wendy Lower, Professor Jonathon Petropoulos, MCHR Assistant Director, Kirsti Zitar, Desiree Gibson, Dorothy Buchanan, Mitch Brown, Aurelio Puente, and the wonderful student assistants and fellows.

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