

# HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE

Wednesday, April 18, 2001

12:00 Noon

## **Musical Prelude**

The United States Army Band, "Pershing's Own"  
Capt. Daniel Stanger, USA, Conductor

## **Master of Ceremonies**

Bob Levey  
Columnist, *The Washington Post*

## **Welcome**

Norman Y. Mineta  
Secretary of Transportation

## **Featured Speakers**

Robert K. Wagemann  
Rudolf Graichen

## **Musical Selection**

"Es Brent (It Burns)"  
The United States Army Band, featuring Sergeant First Class Beverly Benda

## **Keynote Speaker**

Preben Munch-Nielsen  
Introduced by Gustav Goldberger, U.S. Department of Energy

## **Candle Lighting**

Gustav Goldberger, Survivor

## **Kaddish Prayer**

Jacob Tenenbaum, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services  
Werner Michel, U.S. Army, Retired/Department of Defense, Retired

## **Closing**

Bob Levey

## **Musical Postlude**

The United States Army Band

## Robert K. Wagemann

In 1937, while pregnant with Robert, his mother Lotte Wagemann was arrested and briefly incarcerated due to her activities as a Jehovah's Witness. She gave birth shortly after being released. Due to the stress and limited prenatal care, the delivery was a breech birth, and Robert's right hip was permanently damaged; his right leg is six inches shorter than the left.

Under the T4 Program, he was classified as handicapped, and twice targeted for extermination. The first time they escaped to Berlin, and lived with relatives. The second time was in 1943, when his mother was required to bring him to the hospital to be examined by doctors to confirm the status of his handicapped condition. During the examination, she overheard a conversation by the doctors that he was to be classified as permanently handicapped, and would be given a lethal injection after lunch. When the doctors left for lunch, she got Robert's clothes, picked him up, and fled. They spent most of the remainder of the war with Robert's grandparents.

The family survived the war, and in 1963, Robert emigrated to the United States. He has been married for 41 years, has three sons and four grandchildren. His mother is 87; his father, who was also blacklisted as a Jehovah's Witness, died in 1984. He lives in Fairfield, New Jersey.

## Rudolf Graichen

Born in Germany, Rudolf was 12 years old in 1937 when the Gestapo arrested all the male members of the local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. His father was sentenced to five years in prison. At school, Rudolf withstood intense pressure to join the Hitler Youth, and in 1938 was taken by the police, along with his sister, to a reform school. Later they were sent to live with a Nazi family.

In 1943, now 18 years old, Rudolf was briefly reunited with his mother after a four year separation. They sat together on a bench in a German courtroom where they were both sentenced to Nazi prisons. Rudolf would never see his mother again; she died in Ravensbrück concentration camp shortly before the war ended. He was sentenced to four years in prison, more than a year of which was spent in solitary confinement in Stollberg.

Rudolf Graichen was imprisoned by the East Germans in 1950; he was finally released in 1954. In 1962, he married Patsy Beutnagel. A widower, he now lives in Brady, Texas.

## Preben Munch-Nielsen

Preben Munch-Nielsen was born in 1926 to a Protestant family in Snekkersten, Denmark, a small Danish fishing village about 25 miles north of Copenhagen. He attended school in Copenhagen, the capital. He says that he had a few Jewish classmates, but that in Denmark they did not distinguish between Jews and non-Jews, they were all just Danes.

When Germany first invaded Denmark in 1940, Preben joined the resistance as a courier. At first there was not much change in daily life, since the Danish government and Danish laws remained in effect. However, in August 1943, the Germans imposed martial law. In October of that year, the Gestapo began hunting down Danish Jews. The resistance began to assist Jewish refugees. They hid them in houses near the shore, and under cover of darkness took them to waiting boats, transporting 12 at a time across the straits to Sweden, a four mile trip that took about 50 minutes.

Preben assisted with the transport of approximately 1,400 refugees to Sweden, where he fled himself in November 1943 when the Danish government was seized by the Germans. He returned home in May 1945.

## Gustav Goldberger

Preben Munch-Nielsen will be introduced by Gus Goldberger, who was born in Tropau, Czechoslovakia in 1934, but grew up in Copenhagen, Denmark, where his father was a cantor at the Great Synagogue. In 1943, when the Nazis were preparing to arrest all of Denmark's Jews, Gus and his family were among the majority of the Jews in the country who were saved by the intervention of ordinary Danish citizens and one courageous German diplomat. On the night of October 2, 1943, Gus, his three brothers, and their parents were taken by boat to Sweden where they spent the rest of the war. When they returned to Denmark after the war, nothing had been touched in their apartment, and the housekeeper had kept it clean.

In 1947, the family settled in Montreal. Gus eventually went to Yeshiva University in New York; he subsequently married and moved permanently to the United States in 1957. He is also a graduate of Rutgers University Law School in Newark, New Jersey. He is an employee of the Department of Energy.

## Bob Levey

Since 1981, Bob Levey has written a column about the humane side of this city. He sponsors contests and fund-raisers, lists high school reunions and recounts his phone conversations with faithful readers. Each year "Bob Levey's Washington" is home to two major fund-raising campaigns: the Send a Kid to Camp Campaign and the Children's Hospital Campaign. In addition, Levey's love of language inspired the monthly neologism contest.

## Norman Y. Mineta

Prior to joining President Bush's administration as Secretary of Transportation, Mineta served as Secretary of Commerce under President Clinton, becoming the first Asian-American to serve in the Cabinet. From 1995 to 1997, Mineta chaired the National Civil Aviation Review Commission. From 1975 to 1995 he served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, representing the heart of California's Silicon Valley.

Mineta and his family were among the 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry forced from their homes and into internment camps during World War II. After graduating from the University of California at Berkeley, Mineta joined the Army in 1953 and served as an intelligence officer in Japan and Korea. He joined his father at the Mineta Insurance Agency before entering politics in San Jose, serving as a member of its City Council from 1967 to 1971 and mayor from 1971 to 1974, becoming the first Asian-American mayor of a major U.S. city.

## "Es Brent (It Burns)"

"Es Brent" was written in 1938 by Mordecai Gebirtig, one of the most popular Yiddish folk poets. Set to music, it was sung by Jews in ghettos and camps.

## Kaddish Prayer

The Kaddish, a prayer in the ancient Aramaic language, has been recited by Jews in memory of the departed for thousands of years. The version used here is punctuated with the names of the concentration camps.

Jacob Tenenbaum was born in a displaced persons camp in occupied Germany's American zone shortly after World War II. His parents survived 6 years of Nazi persecution. His mother survived the Warsaw Ghetto and Aushwitz, and his father survived Scarzick and Buchenwald. Almost every other member of his family was murdered by the Nazis.

Werner Michel was born in Landau, Germany. He arrived in the United States in December 1936, at age 12, as part of a program placing Jewish refugee children with American families. His mother was able to obtain a visa and came to this country in 1938. His father, unable to find a sponsor, ultimately perished in Auschwitz in 1943. Michel served in U.S. Army intelligence in Europe during World War II. His tours of duty overseas included Germany, Japan, Korea, and Viet Nam. He retired as a Colonel in 1974. In 1976, he returned to the Defense Department as a civilian official and assisted in establishing the function of Inspector General for Defense Intelligence (IGDI) in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). He was named Inspector General in April 1980, and served as IG and Assistant for Intelligence Oversight to the Secretary of Defense until April 1993.

# Holocaust Remembrance 2001 Organizing Committee

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**Small Business Administration**

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**United States Customs Service**

Esther Mandelay, *Interagency Education Chairperson*  
Ira S. Reese  
Linda A. Walfish  
Janet Thomas (Northwestern High School Teacher  
and Customs Liaison)

Student Dialogue with Guest Speakers  
Time: 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM Place: Lincoln Theatre Stage  
Moderators: Linda Walfish and Esther Mandelay

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Thanks to the Lincoln Theatre for their assistance in making today's event possible.