



Gratz Insider, December 2011 - Story Continuation

[To return to the newsletter, close this page.]

Gratz College: Preserving and Sharing the Stories of the Holocaust

“We promised each other that if we survived, we would tell the story.” Against overwhelming odds, Judy Meisel did survive. And she has told her story of the Holocaust through her documentary, *Tak for Alt*, and her numerous speaking engagements. This month, she told her story again at Gratz College to a captivated crowd of community members; Holocaust survivors; and mainly, educators - from public, private and parochial schools.

Meisel’s presentation at Gratz marked the first public event organized by the Consortium of Holocaust Educators of Greater Philadelphia. Now in its third year, the Consortium unites sixteen organizations committed to Holocaust education and awareness, and provides them with a forum for communication, cooperation and resource sharing. The Consortium partners constitute a diverse group, from Gratz College and various Jewish organizations to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations of Saint Joseph’s University. Their shared goal is to assure “a legacy of thoughtful Holocaust-related programming” in order to promote “a world free from bigotry, racism and genocide.” (www.holocaust-ed-phila.org)

It was for this purpose that the Consortium partners invited Judy Meisel to their program at Gratz to share her story. Ironically, her arrival was preceded by a historic event that will ensure the preservation of the stories of hundreds of other Holocaust survivors.

The Gratz College Holocaust Oral History Archive has been compiling the personal stories of Holocaust survivors for over 30 years since its establishment in 1979 by the late Professor Nora Levin and the current archive director Josey G. Fisher. As one of the first collections of original testimony on the Holocaust in the U.S., the archive includes over 900 audiotaped interviews with survivors, liberators and other eyewitnesses.

Gratz’s commitment to “telling the story” also extends to its curriculum through its graduate and undergraduate certificate programs in Holocaust and Genocide Studies. In addition, a master’s program in this area is currently in development.

In *Tak for Alt*, Judy Meisel describes the fear among victims of the Holocaust that no one would survive to tell the world what had happened. The Consortium of Holocaust Educators, the archive and the Gratz department in Holocaust and Genocide Studies are working to assure that the lessons and legacy of the Holocaust will continue to endure.

Written by Jodi Benjamin

[To return to the newsletter, close this page.]