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Holocaust Memorial Center hosts Anne Frank presentation and exhibit



The Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus in Farmington Hills is hosting a New York University Professor Dr. Rolf Wolfswinkel presentation “A Girl that Never Was” on Jan. 19, which asks the question, “Was Anne Frank a typical Holocaust victim?” Photo from the Anne Frank House

Ever since Anne Frank’s diary was published 70 years ago, she has been the face of the Holocaust – but was she a typical Holocaust victim?

That’s the question that Dr. Rolf Wolfswinkel, New York University Professor of Modern History, asks at a special event at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 19 at the Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus in Farmington Hills.

In Wolfswinkel’s presentation “A Girl that Never Was,” he makes the case that Anne Frank’s popularity itself is the reason proper knowledge about her and the circumstances in which she lived is lacking. For many people her diary is the first - and sometimes only - introduction into the Holocaust. He intends to argue that she nor her diary should be asked to play that role.

On NYU’s website, Wolfswinkel writes, “I am a historian whose field of specialization is the period of both World Wars, in particular the history of Nazi Germany. I believe that teaching these subjects is as risky as it is necessary: the terrain is fraught with lies and half-truths.”

The program, which is supported by the PNC Foundation, will include a dessert reception. The cost to attend is \$10 admission, or free for members, and RSVPs

are requested by Jan. 15 to 248-553-2400 ext. 112 or hannah.iwrey@holocaustcenter.org.

This presentation kicks off the Holocaust Memorial Center's "Anne Frank: A History for Today" exhibit, which opens the next day and runs through June 4. Told in a timeline format, it includes split panels showing Holocaust history on one side and what was happening with the Frank's on the other.

Robin Axelrod, director of education at the Holocaust Memorial Center, said, "What is so special about this exhibit is that it helps visitors truly grapple with what was happening in Europe through the lens of a young girl."

"At a time when acceptance of others is at such a low point, the lessons that 'Anne Frank: A History for Today' teaches are more important now than ever."

The Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus is located at 28123 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills. For more information, visit www.holocaustcenter.org.