

THE Zekelman HOLOCAUST CENTER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Glenn Oswald
Marx Layne & Company
248-855-6777 office
313-418-1635 cell

The Zekelman Holocaust Center Announces New Exhibit “The Book Smugglers: Partisans, Poets and the Race to Save Jewish Treasures from the Nazis” January 17 – May 31, 2022

Author Dr. David E. Fishman to Host Virtual Discussion on International Holocaust Remembrance Day, January 27, at 7:00 p.m.

Farmington Hills, Mich., Jan. 5, 2022 – Would you risk your life to save a book? That is the underlying question of *The Book Smugglers: Partisans, Poets, and the Race to Save Jewish Treasures from the Nazis*, on view at The Zekelman Holocaust Center (The HC) from January 17 through May 31, 2022. The exhibition was curated by Holocaust Museum Houston and based on the book of the same name by Dr. David E. Fishman.

In honor of International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27, Dr. Fishman will discuss the incredible story of his book and the exhibit. This program will be presented virtually at 7:00 p.m. E.S.T. To register to attend the virtual lecture via Zoom, visit tinyurl.com/mtynzzj8

To order a copy of Dr. David E. Fishman’s book, visit <https://tinyurl.com/yckwyz2c>

Additionally, on January 27, The HC will feature a second-generation Holocaust survivor speaking at noon. Space is limited and reservations are required. At 1:00 p.m. there will be a docent-led public tour of the museum. Reservations are required.

The Book Smugglers is the nearly unbelievable true story of ghetto residents who rescued thousands of rare books and manuscripts by hiding them on their persons, burying them in bunkers and smuggling them across borders. Set in Vilna, Lithuania, also known as the “Jerusalem of Lithuania” for their robust Jewish culture rich with art, music, literature, poetry, theater and opera, a small group of partisans and poets risked everything to save Jewish cultural treasures.

Prior to WWII, literature and art enabled Vilna residents to rise above their everyday persecution and enjoy a world of beauty in sound and color. Cultural activity compensated for the Jews’ difficult political and economic situation. Once Vilna’s Jews were forced to live in a ghetto, the “Paper Brigade” was formed by a group of 40 intellectuals, writers, educators and activists to save Judaica for the next generation.

Together, they rescued Jewish artifacts, books, scrolls, photographs, works of art, diaries and literature from the hands of the Nazis by either smuggling them into the ghetto or hiding them in plain sight.

“This is truly an incredible tale of heroism, resistance, and friendship and of unwavering devotion-including the readiness to risk one's life to save literature and art,” said Rabbi Eli Mayerfeld, CEO, The Zekelman Holocaust Center. “Dr. Fishman thoroughly researched this astonishing account by reviewing Jewish, German, and Soviet documents, including diaries, letters, memoirs, and by interviewing several of the story's participants. We are honored to have Dr. Fishman lead this virtual discussion on International Holocaust Remembrance Day to share this inspiring story about saving important literary history.”

The exhibition consists of approximately 100 artifacts and reproductions on display, including panels with paintings and drawings, photographs, poetry, diaries, testimonies and music representing the Jewish heritage of Vilna. Featuring themes of resistance and persistence of cultural identity, the exhibition focuses on the complicated history of Vilna, life before WWII, contributions of five members of the Paper Brigade and the results of their heroic mission.

The Book Smugglers exhibition is a partnership between Holocaust Museum Houston, David E. Fishman, Moreshet Archive, Anielevich Memorial Holocaust Study and Research Center, The Archives of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York, The Judaica Collection of the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania and the Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum, Vilnius, Lithuania.

The Program sponsor is PNC Foundation and Community partners are [The Farmington Community Library](#) and the [West Bloomfield Township Public Library](#).

For more information visit www.holocaustcenter.org or call 248-553-2400.

About The Zekelman Holocaust Center

The Zekelman Holocaust Center (The HC) is a 55,000 square foot museum and Library Archive in Farmington Hills that teaches about the senseless murder of millions and why each of us must respect and stand up for the rights of others if we are to prevent future genocide and hate crimes.

The lessons of history are used to create a call to action, teaching visitors through the examples of those who risked their lives to save others, and asking our guests to react to contemporary challenges such as racism and prejudice.

Exhibits include artifacts such as an authentic WWII-era boxcar, video testimonies, films, paintings, and a sapling from the tree located outside Anne Frank's hiding place window that is described in her diary.

Located on the second floor above the museum, the Library Archive is an important resource for academics, the media and families researching their heritage. A national leader in innovative genocide education, The HC serves over 100,000 Michiganders each year.

Hours: Sunday through Thursday 9:30 am to 5:00 pm and Friday 9:30 am to 3:00 pm. The last admission is one hour before closing. Wheelchair accessible. Free parking. Face masks are required. For additional information, visit www.holocaustcenter.org or call 248-553-2400.