

Second Annual Holocaust Writing Contest

Creating Legacy: Voices Across Time From the Children of the Holocaust to Us

We invite you to participate in the Second Annual Holocaust Writing Contest, sponsored by Chapman University and The "1939" Club, based in Los Angeles and one of the largest and most active survivor organizations in the United States.

Each school is invited to submit a total of two entries, consisting of essay(s) and/or poem(s) for the first prize in the middle school and high school competitions. Each student finalist will be eligible to win the first prize of \$500 and the second prize of \$250, in each category in the middle and high school competitions.

Student finalists in attendance at the awards ceremony will receive a certificate and two books: *The Holocaust Chronicle: A History in Words and Pictures*, a unique one-volume history of the Holocaust; and Gerda Weissmann Klein's memoir, *All But My Life*, the basis for the Academy Award winning documentary, *One Survivor Remembers*.

Each school in attendance at the awards ceremony will receive the CD-ROM, *Survivors: Testimonies of the Holocaust*, produced by Steven Spielberg and the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, and the accompanying study guide, *Testimonies of the Holocaust: A Guide to the Interactive Software*, published by Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation, Inc.

The two finalists from each school, with their teacher and/or principal (depending on seat availability), are invited to the awards ceremony on **Thursday, March 15, at 1 p.m. in Memorial Auditorium at Chapman University, One University Drive, Orange, CA 92866.** The highlights of the event will include:

- A talk by author and Holocaust survivor, Gerda Weissmann Klein
- the reading of the two winning essays (one middle school and one high school)
- the reading of the two winning poems (one middle school and one high school)
- a reception to honor our guests

Background for Writing Prompt:

Gerda Weissmann Klein survived slave labor and a brutal death march during the bitter winter months of 1945. Of the 2000 women who began that march only 120 survived to be liberated. Barely alive and weighing only 68 pounds, Gerda Weissmann demonstrated an indomitable spirit and faith in the goodness of humanity that stunned the young American Army lieutenant, Kurt Klein, who liberated her. From that first encounter developed a love that would lead to a marriage of 54 years and a partnership to fight for human rights. Mrs. Klein has been featured on *60 Minutes* and has appeared with her husband on *Nightline*. Her book *All But My Life* was the basis for the Emmy and Academy Award winning documentary *One Survivor Remembers*. The Gerda and Kurt Klein Foundation creates the opportunity for young people to understand the world and translate that understanding into positive action, especially community action to end hunger.

Founded in 1952 by fourteen Holocaust survivors, The "1939" Club now includes hundreds of survivors, their children, and grand-

children. Through the furthering of Holocaust education and documentation, these brave survivors of the Shoah continue a legacy of remembrance and justice in the name of the millions who perished.

In the Holocaust, 1.5 million children died before they had the chance to leave a legacy. Some children—including Gerda Weissmann Klein and members of The "1939" Club—survived those terrible days. They have given us a legacy of Holocaust testimony and remembrance, and of commitment to furthering human rights and alleviating suffering.

Each of us leaves behind a legacy. This can be a positive legacy of accomplishment and service or a negative one of pain and suffering as in the Holocaust or in the violence that occurred at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado on April 20, 1999, the anniversary of Adolf Hitler's birth.

In *All But My Life*, Gerda Weissmann Klein writes about her last night at home with her parents before they were deported to their deaths. Her memory of their love was the legacy they left to her.

"And so they talked through the night, animated and happy. They faced what the morning would bring with the only weapon they had—their love for each other. Love is great, love is the foundation of nobility, it conquers obstacles and is a deep well of truth and strength. After hearing my parents talk that night I began to understand the greatness of their love. Their courage ignited within me a spark that continued to glow through the years of misery and defeat. The memory of their love—my only legacy—sustained me in happy and unhappy times in Poland, Germany, Czechoslovakia, France, Switzerland, England. It is still part of me, here in America" (p. 86).



Gerda Weissmann Klein, her parents and brother, Arthur.

Mrs. Klein offers these thoughts on the connection between the Holocaust and contemporary acts of violence and intolerance:

"The sounds of hatred and manifestations of barbarism I experienced during the Holocaust reverberated in my mind and soul in recent times when news of atrocities committed in

Rwanda, Bosnia and Kosovo came to the world's attention. Most immediate and painful was the news that right here, in the heart of our nation, amid the beauty of Colorado, our own youth should also have become the target of the type of blind hatred that purported to follow the dictates of Adolf Hitler. Since then, I have had the privilege of sharing my life's experiences with many at Columbine High School, ranging from students to faculty and parents.

"Caring and kindness are the antidotes to intolerance and prejudice that so often lead to mindless savagery. As a survivor, it is my firm belief that pain should not be wasted. Sharing it with others so afflicted, and coupled with love, it can in fact lead to healing and the rebuilding of lives."

Writing Prompt:

Write an essay or poem in which you explore how you can create through your life a positive legacy that honors the survivors of the Holocaust and the memory of other innocent victims of violence, such as those who perished at Columbine High School.

Writing Contest Criteria:

Essay or poem may be hand-written in ink or word processed and must be clearly identified with student name, grade, and school. Essays must include word count; poems must include line count.

Essay must be no more than 500 words in length.

Essay may be persuasive, narrative, informative, or a combination thereof, but it must communicate a clear idea.

Poem must be no more than 25 lines.

All entries become the property of Chapman University.

Your school's winning essay(s) and/or poem(s) must be **postmarked by February 21, 2001** and mailed to:

Dr. Marilyn Harran
The Rodgers Center for Holocaust Education
Chapman University
One University Drive
Orange, CA 92866

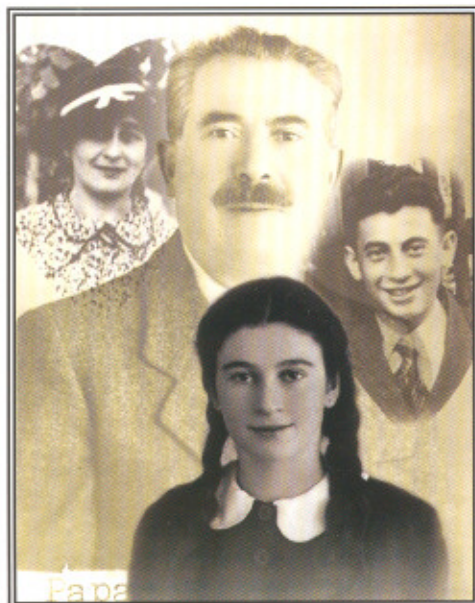
Each participating school will receive:

- 4 seats (availability permitting) at the awards ceremony and talk by Gerda Weissmann Klein on Thursday, March 15, 2001 at Chapman University
- an opportunity for each entry in essay and poetry contests to win the first prize of \$500 and the second prize of \$250
- a copy of *The Holocaust Chronicle: A History in Words and Pictures* for every student finalist in attendance
- a copy of Gerda Weissmann Klein's memoir, *All But My Life* for every student finalist in attendance
- certificates for the two finalists from each school
- for each school in attendance, a copy of the CD-ROM, *Survivors: Testimonies of the Shoah*, produced by Steven Spielberg and Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, and a copy of the study guide prepared by Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation, Inc., *Survivors: Testimonies of the Holocaust, A Guide to the Interactive Software*
- the opportunity to meet and talk with Holocaust survivors, including members of The "1939" Club

Please visit our web site:

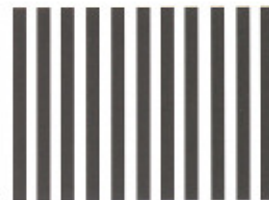
<http://www.chapman.edu/holocaust>

You may also contact: Dr. Marilyn Harran at (714) 628-7377
harran@chapman.edu or Professor Jan Osborn at (714) 628-7221
josborn@chapman.edu



Gerda Weissmann Klein,
her parents and brother, Arthur.

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