

INSIDE THE MUSEUM

Vol. VIII, Summer/Fall 2009

Clinton, Wiesel, Over 12,000 Guests Celebrate Grand Opening



Museum Executive Director Rick Hirschhaut welcomes Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel.

The Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center opened to the public on April 19, 2009. More than 12,000 guests from across the country attended the ceremony held in a tent on the grounds of the new facility. President Bill Clinton and Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel, among others, spoke at the event.

More than just a celebration of completing the new museum, the day marked the fulfillment of a promise held by the hundreds of leadership, staff, volunteers and dedicated community members who pledged to uphold the museum's mission to remember the past and transform the future.

Rainy weather did not keep the crowds away. Ninety buses shuttled guests to the site where they were first treated to a

performance by Israeli hip-hop violinist Miri Ben Ari.

In addition to keynote speakers Wiesel and President Clinton, the program featured Governor Pat Quinn; Sara J. Bloomfield, Director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; Dr. Steven B. Nasatir, President of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago; Museum Board President Sam Harris; Museum Executive Director Rick Hirschhaut; Museum Campaign Chair J.B. Pritzker; Skokie Mayor George Van Dusen; German Ambassador Klaus Scharioth and hate crime survivor Sherialyn Byrdson. Rabbi Herman Schaalman led an invocation and Father John Pawlikowski closed the afternoon with a special benediction.

The ceremony was enhanced by moving messages from world leaders. President Barack Obama, Israeli President Shimon Peres, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and Steven Spielberg sent congratulations via video. The Soul Children of Chicago, an inner-city youth choir, performed several numbers and Cantor Steven Stoehr led a memorial hymn.

Remarks focused on the significance of creating the museum. Though a true celebration, the event was tempered by the seriousness of the museum's mission and the ongoing need to provide education about the Holocaust, modern genocides, and their implications for our world today.



Museum Campaign Chair J. B. Pritzker greets President Bill Clinton.

Following the two-hour ceremony, the museum opened its doors to welcome the first public guests. The day marked the culmination of years of planning and hard work for many involved, but is just the beginning of a long future dedicated to educating and transforming the lives of the thousands of visitors who will pass through the museum doors each year. ■

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Dear Friends:

I have been waiting for a long time to share these words with you. Whenever I had the opportunity to report to you, I would mention which

milestone we had reached in our marathon undertaking. After nearly a decade of planning and effort, we have arrived at the finish line. The Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center is a reality.

For us, the Holocaust survivors, the opening of the museum marked a resounding victory, one in which we take great pride and which, at the same time, humbles us. That so many others

were willing to do so much to create this wonderful museum means more than we can express.

April 19 was just the beginning of an amazing new journey. Each day the museum doors open to admit visitors and students of all ages and backgrounds, and it is exciting. The exhibit spaces and galleries, passages and stairways, classrooms and event halls are filled with people.

For the Holocaust survivors this is living proof that we have helped create a vibrant facility through which education can be carried out successfully. We fully intend to continue to play an active role in conveying the universal lessons of the Holocaust for as long as we can. But we are secure in the

knowledge that the museum will continue to share our experiences and teach what became of our families, our communities, and our world to future generations, long after we can no longer do so. We have entrusted this legacy, which the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center embodies and perpetuates: Remember the Past, Transform the Future.

My heartfelt thanks go out to each and every one of you, too many to mention here, who have supported us and enabled us to reach this day.

Thank you,

Samuel R. Harris
Board President



Board President Sam Harris with Susan Van Dusen and Skokie Mayor George Van Dusen.



Elie Wiesel delivers his remarks to a crowd of more than 12,000.



A diverse and enthusiastic audience of all ages celebrated the museum opening.



President Clinton tours the museum with Barbara Berger and Evette Simon.



Dozens of volunteers worked tirelessly to ensure that the Public Grand Opening was a success.



Among the notables addressing the huge crowd was Governor Pat Quinn.



Dear Friends:

Just a few short months ago, we joined together to celebrate the momentous opening of the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center.

Since then, it has been remarkable to watch this institution come to life. Over 30,000 people of all ages and backgrounds, faiths, and nationalities have streamed through our doors already. Through our dynamic exhibitions and innovative programs, our visitors have benefited from a

multitude of powerfully transformative experiences. We are giving voice to our mission to teach the universal lessons of the Holocaust to combat hatred, intolerance and genocide.

The following pages illustrate the joy and exultation of these opening weeks. Immediately after the grand opening, we launched an ambitious programming schedule, and in the weeks ahead, our programs and community briefings will continue to advance our commitment to being a thought leader and real-time voice on issues of intolerance and extremism affecting our world today.

My sincere gratitude goes out to the

entire community for embracing our institution in these opening weeks. Our docents and volunteers have been outstanding, welcoming each visitor with a smile and helping navigate the intricacies of this incredible building. To those who have contributed to our capital campaign, thank you again for your support. If you have not done so already, please visit the museum to experience the first-rate institution that you have helped create.

Thank you,

Richard S. Hirschhaut
Executive Director



Israeli violinist Miri Ben Ari performs before the start of the Grand Opening ceremony.



The Soul Children of Chicago perform during the program.



Danny, Laurence, Florence and Debbi Spungen at the Inaugural Gala.



Board Vice President Aaron Elster with Marty and Cipora Katz.



Dear Friends:

Spring storms and cold temperatures notwithstanding, this has been quite a season. The gala dinner was our largest ever,

the opening was an enormous success and, most important, the museum is open for business and attracting thousands of adult and student visitors. I walk through the museum and I am filled with pride and gratitude. I watch survivors and their families stroll the Karkomi Permanent Exhibition galleries,

sharing stories and a few tears. They point out artifacts that they have contributed and video testimony that will enable their stories to be remembered forever. I watch children exploring the fascinating and imaginative Miller Family Youth Exhibition, learning that being an “upstander” is far better than being a “bystander” in this challenging world. I watch staff members who eat, sleep and breathe this museum, so dedicated are they to our mission. I see donors simply overwhelmed with the knowledge that they have helped make this museum happen.

My pride and my gratitude are unending. Thanks to all who have given of themselves to build this museum and education center. May we go from strength to strength, and may this museum serve always as a beacon of light and inspiration to the world. Stay with us...this is only the beginning.

Thank you,

J. B. Pritzker
Capital Campaign Chair



Survivor Fritzie Fritzshall and former Secretary of State Colin Powell light a candle in memory of Holocaust victims.



Nancy Keppta, Don Keppta, Wynona Redmond and Bobby Wright at the Gala.



Ann and Jim Goodman greet architects Stanley Tigerman and Margaret McCurry.



The Inaugural Gala is celebrated by 2,700 guests under an enormous tent.



General Colin Powell addresses the Inaugural Gala.



Museum Board Vice President Howard Swibel receives special acknowledgment for his years of service from President Sam Harris.

Record Attendance Marks Inaugural Gala

The Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center Grand Opening events kicked off on April 2 with a Gala Fundraising Dinner held in a huge tent on the museum grounds. Keynote speaker former Secretary of State Colin Powell addressed a record-breaking 2,700 guests, who together raised nearly \$2 million to support museum operations.

Secretary Powell delivered a moving speech dotted with humor discussing his youth in a culturally mixed neighborhood. That diverse background was his ideal preparation for

a life of service to the United States, from his time leading troops in the military to working as Secretary of State throughout the world, to his current work providing a better future for inner-city youth.

In a break with previous dinners, this Inaugural Gala did not honor any select individuals. Rather, the gala celebrated and honored all those who worked together to create the new museum and education center. Museum Board Vice President Howard Swibel received a special award for his years of service and

devotion to the organization.

Legendary Chicago newsman Bill Kurtis emceed the evening. As storms rattled the tent, guests viewed a video tour featuring architect Stanley Tigerman. Speakers included Illinois Governor Pat Quinn, Board President Sam Harris, Board Vice Presidents Fritzie Fritzshall and Aaron Elster, Campaign Chair J. B. Pritzker, Executive Director Rick Hirschhaut, Rabbi Vernon Kurtz and Francis Cardinal George. ■



Legendary Chicago newsman Bill Kurtis moderates the first symposium panel.



Ambassador Stuart Eizenstat addresses the audience during the luncheon.

Symposium Focuses on Genocide, Media, International Justice

The museum's Inaugural Symposium, "Media and Legal Perspectives on Genocide Awareness and Prevention" was held on April 20, 2009 in the museum's Lillian & Larry Goodman Auditorium. The first formal event following the museum's public grand opening, the seminar attracted a wide array of students, scholars and members of the public.

During the first session, moderated by Bill Kurtis, panelists reviewed how the

media has covered genocide in the context of their generation, discussed current challenges to reporting, and explored opportunities to have an impact on one of the greatest moral and humanitarian issues in today's world.

The second session focused on the role of the courts in prosecuting genocide. Moderator David Scheffer, United States Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues during the Clinton Administration, led the participants in

a wide-ranging discussion exploring recent developments in tribunals occurring worldwide.

Following the panel discussion, guests moved to a luncheon in Museum Hall featuring keynote speaker Ambassador Stuart E. Eizenstat. Over more than three decades of public service in three United States administrations, Eizenstat has become an expert on international law and issues affecting Holocaust era restitution. ■



A group of students from Great Lakes Naval Base at the post-symposium lunch.



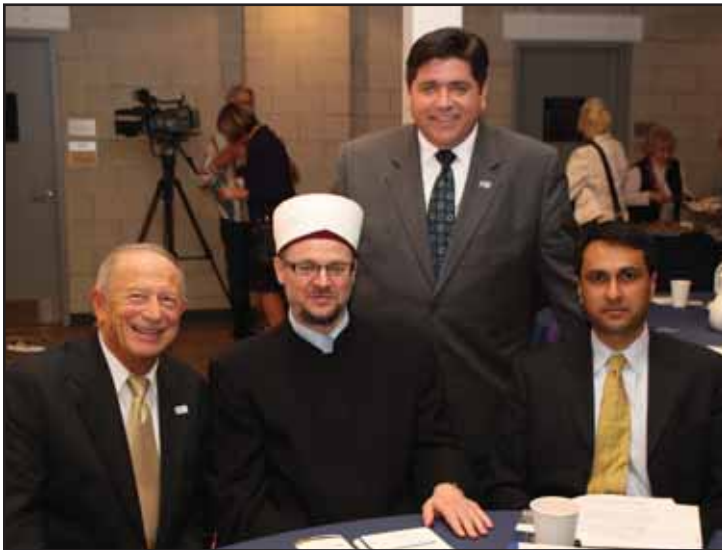
Ambassador David Scheffer moderates the day's second panel.

Interfaith Breakfast Brings Together Chicago Leaders

Leaders of all faiths and denominations gathered at the museum on April 17 for an Interfaith Leadership Breakfast hosted by the museum as part of the grand opening events. More than 100 guests attended the catered breakfast in Museum Hall. Leaders of several

different faiths guided the assembly in prayer. Eboo Patel, founder and Executive Director of Chicago's Interfaith Youth Corps, was the featured speaker. Patel was recently appointed by President Obama to the Advisory Council of the White House Office of

Faith-Based and Neighborhood Initiatives, where he is working to realize the President's priority of interfaith cooperation, and is the author of the book, "Acts of Faith." ■



Board President Sam Harris, Imam Senad Agic, Museum Campaign Chair J. B. Pritzker, and guest speaker Eboo Patel.



Msgr. Ken Velo of DePaul University, Executive Director Rick Hirschhaut, and Rabbi Stephen Hart of Temple Chai addressed the gathering.



Clergy members from throughout Chicago attended the breakfast.



The capacity crowd was intent on the message of interfaith understanding.



Gerda Weisman Klein, Maggie Daley and Mayor Richard Daley.



Executive Director Rick Hirschhaut, Board Vice President Howard Swibel, Mayor Daley, Board President Sam Harris, Skokie Mayor George Van Dusen, and Board member Rick Salomon.



Director of Corporate Relations Patty White, Maggie Daley, Youth Educator Alexis Storch, Campaign Chair J. B. Pritzker, Mayor Daley & Board member Fritzie Fritzshall explore the Miller Family Youth Exhibition.



Students participate with Gerda Weissman Klein in a candle lighting ceremony.

Mayor Daley Brings Remembrance Day to the Museum

Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley held his annual Holocaust Remembrance Day at the newly opened museum on May 5. Featuring activist Survivor Gerda Weisman Klein, the event was attended by more than 300 guests, completely filling Museum Hall. Mayor Daley hosted more than 100 high school students from throughout

the city. Following a moving presentation by Mrs. Klein, several students joined with survivors and rescuers in a candle lighting ceremony.

The eventful morning also included tours and a special luncheon for the students involved. Although this was the first time Mayor Daley has taken the event outside the city limits, he

announced during his remarks that he intends to continue the partnership with the museum in years to come. Mayor Daley's Holocaust Remembrance Day proved to be an extraordinary addition to the museum's opening events. ■



Members of the Women's Leadership Committee.



Lonia Mosak and Doris Lazarus with filmmaker Roberta Grossman.

"Blessed is the Match" Attracts 400

Nearly 400 local women gathered at the museum on April 28, 2009, for a special screening of the documentary "Blessed is the Match." Hosted by the museum's Women's Leadership Committee, the evening featured museum tours, hors d'oeuvres and wine, and a question-and-answer session with filmmaker Roberta Grossman.

The film tells the story of Hannah Senesh, a young Hungarian Jew who

escaped to Palestine at the start of World War II. Trained by the British government to run parachute missions into Yugoslavia to help save the Jews of Hungary, Senesh was arrested at the border, imprisoned, and tortured for refusing to divulge details of her missions. She was eventually executed by firing squad. Today, Hannah Senesh remains an Israeli national hero and her poetry is known worldwide. ■



Enid Rehbock and Judi Mack greeting guests.



The sold-out crowd was completely captivated by Hannah Senesh's story of bravery and selflessness.



Committee Members Eileen Kugman, Rochelle Rosenblum, Jacquie Salomon, Betty Schwartz and Susie Karkomi.



Museum Board President Sam Harris and Skokie Mayor George Van Dusen congratulate Kathleen Renée Chester, recipient of the Gershanov Prize.



Award winners Emily Jean Roberts, Rosary High School, Aurora; Sarah Owens, Viking Middle School, Gurnee; Zach Beyer, Viking Middle School, Gurnee; Alexandra Lozano, Buffalo Grove High School.

Annual Gershanov Awards Honor Local Students

The 2009 Leo & Antonia Gershanov Memorial Student Arts & Writing Contest Awards were presented on Sunday, May 17. More than 600 entries were submitted to this year's contest from Illinois students in grades 7 through 12, addressing the theme "Memory Keepers—Transform the Future."

Approximately 170 students, their friends and family, and community members, including contest sponsors Peter and Ann Gershanov and Skokie Mayor George Van Dusen, attended the awards event. Two dozen students received U.S. Savings Bonds for their poetry, short stories, artwork and musical compositions at the ceremony.

Top honors went to Kathleen Renée Chester, sophomore at Indian Creek High School in Shabbona, Illinois. Her poem, "War Is Not Only an External Conflict," was recognized with the Gershanov Prize for best exemplifying the contest theme. ■

Young Donors Bake for Museum

A group of industrious, philanthropic 10-year olds gathered recently to present a check for \$678 to the new Illinois Holocaust Museum &

Education Center. Entering sixth grade at Elm Place School, the 13 girls did their own baking, packaging and selling. Following presentation of the

check, the young donors, parents and grandparents spent time in the museum's Miller Family Youth Exhibition. ■



Elm Place School 6th Graders and families in the Miller Family Youth Exhibition.



The state-of-the-art technology fascinated the young visitors.



Retail Manager Frank Weissman with volunteers Sheryl Weissman and Ann Hoenig



Volunteers Stan Stein and Terri Argentar review a copy of the museum book, *Memory and Legacy*.

When you visit the museum, make sure to stop by the **Legacy Shop** for:

- A diverse collection of books for adults and children
- Unique Judaica from around the world
- Beads for Life jewelry, created by the women of Uganda
- Fair Earth products
- A large selection of museum merchandise including the museum book, *Memory and Legacy*
- One-of-a-kind jewelry selections

The Legacy Shop is located as you exit the building and is open during regular museum hours.

The Miller Family Youth Exhibition

The Miller Family Youth Exhibition was dedicated in a ceremony on June 6, 2009. The dedication and celebration of this special space for children to

learn and explore the ways that they interact with the world around them featured a performance by storyteller Nancy Shapiro-Pikelnny. Donor Harvey

Miller also spoke to the importance of educating young people. Guests enjoyed the many interactive exhibits in this wonderful space, as well as refreshments. ■



Executive Director Rick Hirschhaut, Campaign Chair J.B. Pritzker, and Harvey L. Miller, center, with his son Steve, daughter Lori, son-in-law Tony, and grandson Jacob.



Storyteller Nancy Shapiro-Pikelnny and guests at the dedication.

Sir Winton Honored

On May 21, nearly 300 community members gathered at the museum to honor the heroism of Sir Nicholas Winton, who saved the lives of 669 Jewish Czech children on the eve of World War II by sending them to safety in Great Britain. Among those present were Dr. Renata Laxova and Mrs. Marietta Ryba, two of the Winton Children. They were joined by members of the Chicago Consular Corps, led by Consul General Marek Skolil of the Czech Republic and Consul General James Clark of Great Britain, American Friends of the Czech Republic, Prague Committee of the Chicago Sister Cities, and American Jewish Committee members. A reception, remarks by Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic Peter Rafaeli, and a screening of the documentary film “The Power of Good” combined to celebrate Sir Nicholas, who had observed his 100th birthday in London just days before. ■



Alexander Peytchev, Consul of Bulgaria; Zygmunt Matynia, Consul General of Poland; Marek Skolil, Consul General of the Czech Republic; Rick Hirschhaut, James Clark, Consul General of Great Britain; Willem Schiff, Consul General of the Netherlands; Eric Harkna, Honorary Consul of Estonia, Peter Rafaeli, Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic.



George Drost, Rick Hirschhaut, Marietta Ryba, Duke Dellin, Peter Rafaeli.



Galit Greenfield, HRC Education Chair Jesse Greenberg, HRC Secretary Susie Brown, and Micha Siegel.

Holocaust Remembrance Committee Celebrates Opening

The Holocaust Remembrance Committee, the museum’s young leadership, held a special opening event for members on April 29. The group hosts social and educational events throughout the year and works with survivors through the Generation to Generation project. For more information or to join, please contact Julie Avchen at 847.967.4867. ■



HRC President Beth Kibort leads a group through the museum’s Karkomi Permanent Exhibition.



Volunteer docents.



A Note from a Docent...

I have felt so honored to be part of all of this—the true meaning, importance, and impact of this amazing museum can only be dreamed. Getting off the bus at the Gala dinner, I felt like I was walking on hallowed ground.

After just these few short weeks, each of us has amazing stories to tell of those we have met. I am so honored to be a small cog in this huge wheel. All of the docents feel a huge sense of ownership and pride in the museum, which is of course due to all of the work of the staff, the administrators, donors, organizers, and most importantly the amazing survivors who made this all happen!

To have a renewed passion to learn, to be involved, to share, to discuss, to study, to reflect, and to do it again and again has been sparked by my involvement in the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center. What better reward can there be in life?

With enormous sincerity,

Rita Mathias

Become a Member Today!

As an annual member, you will take part in a powerful movement teaching lessons of hope and compassion that will create a generation that will transform the future.

Help share the dream of the new Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center by becoming an Annual Member. Your membership entitles you to:

- Free museum admission
- Special access to scholarly lectures and workshops
- 10% off all items in the Legacy Shop
- Unlimited access to the Brill Family Resource Center, with thousands of books, extensive multi-media collections, and a computer lab with direct access to the Midwestern archives of the USC-Shoah Foundation Institute
- For survivors, a special lounge for meeting and visiting in the museum

Prices and Levels:

Annual Membership:

Individual \$40
 Family \$75
 (Includes up to 4 family members)
 Survivor \$25

Sustaining Membership:

Supporter \$250
 Sponsor \$500
 Patron \$1000

For more information about joining or to sign up today, please visit our website at www.ilholocaustmuseum.org, or call the development office at 847.967.4507.

Museum staff would like to sincerely thank the many docents and volunteers who have helped the museum thrive during its opening months. Docents, who committed to an intensive 22-week training, have already led more than 70 school groups through the museum. More than 350 volunteers give directions, answer questions, and offer a welcoming presence. Volunteers have logged nearly 2,500 hours of work since the museum opened in April. We are grateful for their help. ■

Around the Museum



Museum Staff

Richard S. Hirschhaut
Executive Director

Nancy Libman Luck
Executive Assistant

David Kurzmann
Program Assistant

Evette L. Simon
Director of Operations

Julie Avchen
Assistant Director of Operations

David Smart
Director of Security

Ilan Levine
Assistant Director of Security

Hallie Rosen
Director of Visitor and Volunteer Services

John Klimek
IT Manager

Keith Kijek
Accounting Manager

Frank Weissman
Retail Manager

Tony Scheurich
Building Operations Manager

Omar Ortiz
Building Custodian

Susana Meza
Administrative Assistant, Operations

Barbara Carter Berger
Director of Development and Marketing

Patricia White
Director of Corporate Relations

Sarah Beth Warshauer
Development Coordinator

Jessica Bialorucki Lindholm
Development Coordinator

Laura Iwanenko
Donor Relations Coordinator

Bethany L. Fleming
Curator of Collections

Susan Lerner
Registrar

Renny Bergeron
Collections Manager

Noreen Brand
Director of Education

Kelley H. Szany
Associate Director of Education

Lillian Polus Gerstner
Director of Special Projects

Matthew Sackel
Librarian

Alexis Storch
Youth Educator

Laura Krain
Education Coordinator

Bettina Auge
ARSP Intern

Capital Campaign Gifts*

\$1,000,000+

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The Brill Family Foundation
Lawrence Ellison
Lawrence and Lillian Goodman Family Foundation
State of Illinois
Zev and Shifra Karkomi
The Harvey L. Miller Family Foundation
J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation

\$500,000 to \$999,999

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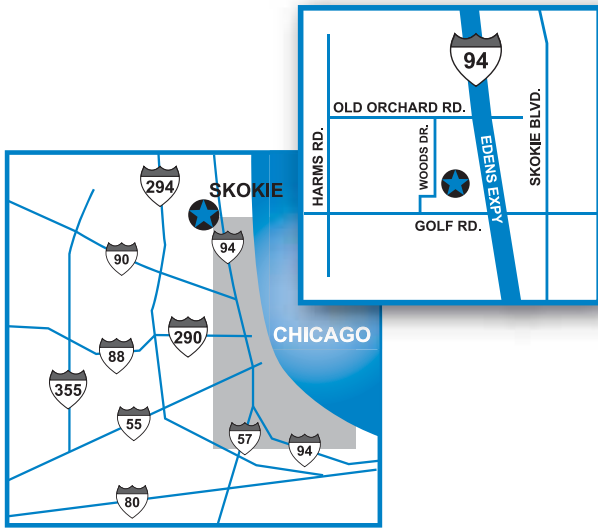
\$10,000 to \$24,999

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Marshall and Arlene Atlas & Family
Marshall and Abbe Bauer
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Judge Gerald C. Bender & Judge Michael Ian Bender

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Baker Robbins & Co.
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Avi and Nancy Bernstein
The Family of Felicia Galas Munn Brenner
Gershon Brenner
Jeff and Helene Brodsky
Donald Chanan
The Chicago Bulls
Kraft Foods
Barbara and Roe Conn
David R. Crawford
Earl and Marilyn Dann
Phyllis, Ted, Paul and Rachel Davis
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*As of July 15, 2009



www.ilholocaustmuseum.org

847-967-4800

[INSIDE THE MUSEUM]



“I think it’s important that this place of remembrance and learning is here. Not only because of what happened in Skokie three decades ago, but because it is in the heartland of the country. We don’t want the only people remembering to be in Washington and New York and Los Angeles. The heartland of America needs to know the same thing. I was astonished by the beauty of the building, the power of the artifacts, the oral histories, and the wonderful historical record. Even though I’ve been to Yad Vashem three or four times and the museum in Washington twice, and I was there when we opened one in New York City, and have toured the offices of the Shoah Foundation, I still learned something in your place today. There is always more to learn. It struck me as particularly significant that this will be one of the last, if not the last museums to be built in the United States with the direct participation of Survivors. Still, as long as this museum stands every person who enters its doors will be enlightened and empowered by those direct memories.” ■

– President Bill Clinton, April 19, 2009