Chicago Remembers the Holocaust

The City of Chicago’s annual Holocaust Remembrance Day public ceremony will be held at noon, Thursday, April 17, 2008, in the Feinberg Theater at the Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies, 610 S. Michigan Avenue.

"We are proud to be hosting this important remembrance for the entire Chicago community," said Spertus President Dr. Howard A. Sulkin. "Spertus aims to foster dialogue and learning about the Jewish experience both past and present, and this dark moment in our history is one that needs to be shared so as not to be repeated."

Special guests include approximately 200 high school students. This year’s keynote speaker is Marguerite Mishkin, a hidden child of the Holocaust.

“We must share this terrible time in history with our children, so that they will never forget to be compassionate, caring, and good people. We need to care for everyone equally no matter what their background, race, religion or skin color is; and we must be vigilant to never let this happen again," says Mayor Richard M. Daley.

Mishkin was born to Jewish parents in Belgium in 1941. Her father was taken to Auschwitz concentration camp where he perished in 1942. Knowing that Marguerite and her sister Annette were in great danger, their mother approached the Belgian Resistance movement for help. Through the Resistance, both Marguerite and her sister went into hiding with a Belgian Catholic family in 1943. The children remained with that family until 1946. Meanwhile, in 1944, Marguerite’s mother was captured and sent to Auschwitz where she too perished. After the war, Marguerite and her sister were sent to a Jewish orphanage in Brussels. They were both adopted by a Chicago rabbi and his wife, Leah and Leonard Miskin, in 1950. Marguerite grew up in Chicago, graduated from Roosevelt University, and became a teacher at Austin High School and later Marshall High School.

Special invited guests and participants include Jill Weinberg, Regional Director of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum; Lois Berger, Community Liaison; Rabbi Steven Mason, President of the Chicago Board of Rabbis; Megan McDonald, Executive Director of the Mayor’s Office of Special Events; Dr. Howard A. Sulkin, President and CEO of the Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies; Barukh Binah, the Consul General of Israel; Mayor Richard M. Daley and Richard Hirschhaut, Executive Director of the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Educational Center.

The Holocaust was the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators.