

Winter 2010

PastForward

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE USC SHOAH FOUNDATION INSTITUTE



**Teacher Innovation
Network:** Empowering
Educators to Change
the World

USC
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INSTITUTE

FOR VISUAL HISTORY
AND EDUCATION

PastForward

WINTER 2010

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On the Cover: Renée Firestone (right), a survivor of the Holocaust, speaks with educators at the Teaching with Testimony workshop in August. For more about the workshop and the Institute's Teacher Innovation Network, turn to page six. (Photo by Kim Fox)

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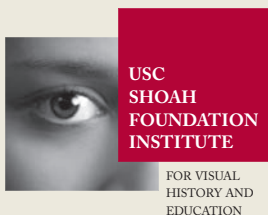
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Touchstone of Humanity

“**R**eally, why would you come to the USC Shoah Foundation Institute?” This question has been put to me almost daily since I became executive director in August. Why, after being involved in Holocaust education and genocide prevention projects in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in the world, would I move to Los Angeles to commit myself to a collection of audio-visual Holocaust testimonies?



The answer is that the Institute’s archive of testimony presents a unique, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to speak to our world about the causes and consequences of the Holocaust through the undeniable voices of those who experienced it firsthand. The 52,000 testimonies of Shoah survivors are arguably the compelling voice of our age. They make the Holocaust real for people’s lives today and focus us on our mission for tomorrow. People of many different languages from many countries will be inspired to examine their attitudes about others, to distinguish individuals from stereotypes, and to think about how to make right choices at critical moments, when history is in our hands. As part of a world-class academic and research institution, we have the chance to establish a center of excellence at USC, which will one day become the destination for understanding

how visual history can shape the future, as well as unlock the past.

It has been fifteen years since the Shoah Foundation Institute began with a vision to ensure that a record of the living voices, the memories, and the messages of Holocaust survivors and other witnesses would

testimonies have set before us?

Will our distinctive academic programs and research help set the standard of our struggle across the field? Will students and scholars who come to the Institute draw from that experience throughout their lives?

And will the archive become that touchstone of humanity,

“Now I am asking, ‘What will the next fifteen years bring?’ Will the life stories of Holocaust eyewitnesses, and their warning from history, be taught in classrooms and communities in every corner of the world?”

— *Stephen Smith*

endure for every generation. To be part of the team that is custodian to these “timeless truths” is a daunting privilege. Now I am asking, “What will the next fifteen years bring?”

Will the life stories of Holocaust eyewitnesses, and their warning from history, be taught in classrooms and communities in every corner of the world? Will we be able to meet the challenge that the

to help us face the reality of human behavior and shed some light on the ways to change it?

These demands and questions are implicit in the voices we hear in the archive. I look forward to struggling for answers with you.

STEPHEN SMITH
Executive Director

“The Courage to Tell”: Testimonies of Rwandan Genocide Survivors



Above: Consolée Uwamariya, a survivor of the Rwandan Tutsi genocide, learns how to index using the testimony of Holocaust survivor Peter Hersch (Photo by Kim Fox). Right: Emmanuel Gatali, a survivor of the Rwandan Tutsi genocide, gives his testimony.

As many as 1 million people were killed over the next three months, often by their own neighbors. “Those are pictures that are always in my soul,” Gatali said, remembering what he witnessed, including the murder of his pregnant cousin. “I will always see them.”

Gatali and two other survivors

rather than just listening emotionally. I was taking into consideration what would be useful to end-users and trying to make sure every detail is accounted for, such as names, places, and dates.”

“From a genocide survivor’s point of view,” she added, “it was very hard to listen to the



“Their testimonies made me realize that we can do so much more than just grieve alone. Just having the courage to tell our stories is making sure the world knows what happened.”
— *Consolée Uwamariya*

Emmanuel Gatali, a 34-year-old survivor of the Rwandan Tutsi genocide, remembers when he and his family heard explosions not far from their home on the early morning of April 7, 1994.

“We sent [someone] to go check out what was going on,” Gatali recalled. “He told us that they had started killing people.”

of the Rwandan Tutsi genocide gave their testimonies in 2008. Consolée Uwamariya, a survivor of the genocide who lives in Los Angeles, recently indexed these interviews (assigned keywords to specific video segments) to make them searchable once they become part of the Institute’s Visual History Archive.

“It was a very eye-opening process,” Uwamariya said. “Approaching the testimonies as an indexer made me think in-depth while listening,

testimonies again and again. But we used Holocaust survivors’ testimonies for training, and that was a wake up call for me. Their testimonies made me realize that we can do so much more than just grieve alone. Just having the courage to tell our stories is making sure the world knows what happened.”

To support the Institute’s effort to interview survivors of the Rwandan Tutsi genocide, visit college.usc.edu/vhi/donate.

ACCESSIBILITY

Online: First Testimonies on the Internet

“What prompted me to tell my story,” Holocaust survivor Nathan Offen said during his interview with the Institute in 1996, “is because I see the hate and destruction in this world, and the denial, that there never was a Holocaust... So it has to be told. People have to learn.”

Now, with an Internet connection, one can learn from Nathan’s story. His is one of more than 100 full-length testimonies that can be viewed on the Institute’s YouTube channel, a new point of access that is part of a larger effort to bring the testimonies onto the Internet in coming years.

“Nearly 52,000 individuals who experienced the Holocaust have entrusted their memories to the Institute as a legacy for all of humanity,” said Stephen Smith, Institute Executive Director. “As custodian of those memories, it is our responsibility, our solemn duty, to disseminate them responsibly throughout the world; online access is the key to fulfilling this obligation.”

Testimony on YouTube

The most popular online video community in the world, YouTube draws millions of viewers each day. Since launch-



As part of the effort to make the testimonies accessible online, the Institute has posted more than 100 full-length interviews on its YouTube channel.

ing in 2009, the Institute’s YouTube channel has steadily grown with content that now includes scholarly lectures and other informative videos in addition to short clips of testimony and full-length testimonies. To view the Institute’s YouTube channel, visit youtube.com/USCSHoahFoundation.

Reaching out through Web 2.0

YouTube exemplifies a trend toward dynamic, user-driven online environments, which are revolutionizing how people communicate, network, and share information. Collectively dubbed Web 2.0, this new generation of websites and

services holds strong potential as a platform from which to raise awareness of the testimonies and encourage their educational use. The Institute is reaching out to people on Facebook (username: USC Shoah Foundation Institute), sharing news of its activities on Twitter (twitter.com/uscshoahfdn), and has created a ning, an online environment where members of its Teacher Innovation Network (college.usc.edu/vhi/education/teachernetwork) can exchange ideas and resources to help them instruct students using Holocaust eyewitness testimony. Visit each respective webpage to join.

A new frontier: Visual History Archive on the Internet

As part of its effort to provide online access to the testimonies, the Institute is developing the Visual History Archive on the Internet (VHA-I), which will deliver 1,000 English-language testimonies over the Web. Set to pilot in April 2010, the VHA-I will use Web 2.0 and social networking technology to help teachers make educational use of testimony in and out of the classroom. Students will be able to work with testimony and other resources, individually or cooperatively, in an online environment moderated by their teachers, and acquire valuable digital literacy skills while exploring the life stories of Holocaust survivors and other witnesses.

To support online access to the testimonies, visit college.usc.edu/vhi/donate.

Follow the Institute on:

YouTube
youtube.com/USCSHoahFoundation

Twitter
twitter.com/uscshoahfdn

Teacher Innovation Network
college.usc.edu/vhi/education/teachernetwork

Ning
sfteachernetwork.ning.com

Genocide Survivor Testimony in Documentary Film: Its Afterlife and Its Legacy



Panelists take questions from the audience at "Genocide Survivor Testimony in Documentary Film: Its Afterlife and Its Legacy," at the USC School of Cinematic Arts' George Lucas Instructional Building. (Photo by Amber Mirafuentes)

While making his award-winning documentary *Darfur Now* in 2007, writer/director Ted Braun traveled to Sudan to record interviews with individuals on all sides of the conflict in Darfur—including survivors of what has been called the first genocide of the 21st century.

"Simply getting access to people who had stories to tell was a daunting challenge," Braun said. "And the responsibilities that we...faced once we'd heard and filmed those stories, which, in the case of

almost every one of the people we'd filmed, put their lives in jeopardy, [presented] a daunting...moral challenge."

As Braun discovered, recording genocide-survivor testimony for use in a documentary film raises sensitive issues. Some of these issues—e.g., the challenges involved in navigating the political landscape of a country where genocide is occurring—must be resolved

Ted Braun, who is an associate professor in the USC School of Cinematic Arts, was joined on the panel by Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Anne Aghion, whose series on Rwanda's Gacaca courts explores the prospects of transitional justice after genocide; filmmaker and Institute Founding Executive Director James Moll, whose film *Inheritance*, which profiles Monika Goeth, daughter of Nazi concentration camp commandant Amon Goeth, won an Emmy in 2009 for Outstanding Interview; and filmmaker Socheata Poeuv, whose 2006 documentary *NEW YEAR BABY* earned Amnesty International's Movies That Matter Award. Emmy-winning broadcast journalist and news producer Andi Gitow, who now works for the United Nations, moderated the panel.

"With its experience interviewing witnesses of the Holocaust, the Shoah Foundation Institute is uniquely attuned to the idea of film as visual history and is aware of the responsibilities involved in working with survivors of genocide," said Professor Michael Renov, Associate Dean of the School of Cinematic Arts. "Its participation in the Visible Evidence Conference has brought welcome perspective to the study of documentary practice."

"Finding a home for the archive at USC has allowed the Institute to encourage dialogue on many levels," said Karen Jungblut, Institute Director of Research and Documentation. "In addition to bringing focus to Holocaust eyewitness testimony, we have now had this opportunity, in conjunction with the School of Cinematic Arts, to bring

on the front end of a project. Others take precedence in retrospect, such as the question of what to do with interview footage that has value beyond the context of the film for which it was recorded.

With these issues in mind, in August, the USC Shoah Foundation Institute and the USC School of Cinematic Arts hosted a panel discussion and audience Q&A session with documentarians who have interviewed survivors for their films. The panel was part of the School of Cinematic Arts' Visible Evidence XVI conference.

about an informed examination of the implications of using genocide-survivor testimony as a means of communication through film—what it could

mean for the survivors themselves, and what it could mean for the world.”

If you were unable to attend the discussion, you can watch

the video at college.usc.edu/vhi/visibleevidence09/video.

To view photos, visit college.usc.edu/vhi/visibleevidence09/photos.

RESEARCH

International Conference Slated for March 2010

In spring 2010, the Institute will bring together university professors, researchers, and librarians from across the world for the “International Digital Access Outreach and Research Conference,” the first gathering of colleagues from the more than 20 institutions that have access to the Visual History Archive.

“These individuals have made extensive use of the archive, and they have a great deal to share with us as a result,” said Karen Jungblut, Institute Director of Research and Documentation. “By encouraging dialogue and fostering a community around the archive through events such as this one, we can work together to realize its potential as a foundation for worldwide education and scholarship.”

Made possible by a grant from the Jim Joseph Foundation, the conference is part of a program that aims to increase the archive’s impact on higher education.

“The Jim Joseph Foundation recognizes the Visual History Archive as a unique and powerful resource for educators,” said Jack Slomovic, a member of the foundation’s board of

directors. “We hope our involvement will help the Institute and its colleagues make significant advancements in knowledge related to educational use of the archive so that students at every level, as well as scholars and researchers, may experience the full impact of the life stories of Holocaust survivors and other witnesses.”

A comprehensive survey, administered in-person or by phone, is being used to help set the agenda for the conference and shed light on the various ways the archive is being used at partner institutions; the survey has been administered at Yad Vashem in Israel, Monash

University in Australia, and at sites across the United States. The Institute will follow up with a second survey after the conference to assess its effectiveness.

“When UC San Diego gained full access to the archive in 2007, we hoped that our students and faculty would recognize its unique value and flock to use it,” said Elliot Kanter, Librarian for Communication, Judaic Studies and U.S. History at the University of California, San Diego. “We began developing programs for active outreach to the campus community, and to the wider San Diego community as well, and have been pleased to see awareness and use of the testimony collection grow. I hope our future efforts will be strengthened by the chance to learn how colleagues at other institutions are handling the opportunities and challenges the archive presents.”



From left: Brendan Rosewarne, Senior Systems Programmer of Distributed Systems, Douglas Ballman, Institute Manager of External Relations for the Online Archive, and Rosalind Olsen, Subject Librarian of Australian Studies, Historical Studies, Jewish Civilisation, Religion, and Theology at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia.

USC Faculty Stipends Awarded

With funding from the Leo Rosner Foundation, the Institute has provided stipends that will enable two USC faculty members to incorporate testimony in courses in the upcoming academic year.



Professor Judith Halberstam (American Studies and Ethnicity, English, and Gender Studies) plans to integrate testimony into at least three courses on visual culture, narrative, and the Holocaust, beginning with a graduate seminar taught in conjunction with Professor Macarena Gómez-Barris for the Visual Studies Graduate Certificate Program.



Lecturer Cristina Villa (French and Italian) plans to use testimony as part of “The Shoah in Italy and the Myth of the Good Italian,” a course that aims to deepen students’ understanding of the Italian Jewish condition before, during, and after World War II, as well as examine the post-war phenomenon of transferring all blame for the Holocaust onto Nazi Germany.

Teacher Innovation Network: Empowering Educators to Change the World



In 1944, Renée Firestone was deported from Czechoslovakia to the Auschwitz-II Birkenau death camp. Fifty years later, she returned. “I learned something here, but I wonder whether the world learned anything,” Renée said as she walked the grounds of Auschwitz. “You look around the world today, you wonder, ‘What did we learn from the Holocaust? What did we learn from this place?’” Renée has dedicated her life to educating young people; in 1994, she gave her testimony to the Institute.

“When I speak to children... I tell them that I learned one very important lesson from the Holocaust, and that is that I will never judge people collectively. I also tell children that they have the power to change the world—that...each and every one of us, by our actions and how we live our lives, are changing the world for better or for worse.”

This summer, Renée spoke at “Teaching with Testimony,” a weeklong workshop at the Institute for middle school- and high school educators in Southern California. The participants—who came from public and private schools, and teach subjects ranging from history and the social sciences to language arts and literature—were drawn by a common interest in reaching students through the use of Holocaust eyewitness testimony.

“When students see testimony, their reaction is amazing on so many levels,” said Jeremy Howard, a teacher from Francis Parker School in San Diego. “You get higher-level questions, questions that are insightful.... What [the workshop] will allow us to do is to take what the archive has to offer and bring it into the classroom, take it back to our schools. And we all have colleagues who teach other subjects, we have colleagues in other schools. [The impact will] just keep blossoming.”

The workshop provided training on search and retrieval methodology and techniques for integrating testimony across a curriculum. It explored the pedagogical potential of testimony in a variety of subject

areas, including visual- and media literacy, and examined testimony as a primary source that can corroborate, enrich, and even challenge the written historical record.

“Teaching with Testimony” was the inaugural event of the Leichtag Family Foundation Master Teacher Program, which will enable the Institute to begin building a national cadre of educators who create classroom resources based on the life stories in the archive. The program is a component of the Institute’s recently launched Teacher Innovation Network, whose members will become



Facing page, from left: Educators Merri Weir, Teresa Hill, and Paige Leven at the “Teaching with Testimony” workshop. Left: Renée Firestone, a survivor of the Holocaust, speaks with educators at the “Teaching with Testimony” workshop. Above: Educator Jeremy Howard views testimony. (Photos by Kim Fox)



“What [the workshop] will allow us to do is to take what the archive has to offer and bring it into the classroom, take it back to our schools. And we all have colleagues who teach other subjects, we have colleagues in other schools. [The impact will] just keep blossoming.”

— Jeremy Howard

leaders and advocates of testimony-based classroom instruction in their school districts.

“By engaging teachers who share our commitment to testimony-based education, by supporting their efforts to bring testimony into their classrooms and encourage their colleagues to do the same, the Institute will help them positively affect an ever-growing number of students and communities,”

said Stephen Smith, Institute Executive Director. “We are grateful for the Leichtag Family Foundation’s leadership at this early stage and look forward to what the future will yield through the Teacher Innovation Network.”

“We are so impressed by the caliber of the program and the teachers who participated in this inaugural workshop,” said Leichtag Family Foundation President Jim Farley. “Besides being talented, they have

shown a passion for testimony-based education which is exciting to observe among individuals who work at the frontline of the battle for young hearts and minds. The Leichtag Family Foundation is pleased to partner with the Institute as it reaches out to this phenomenal group of teachers, and through them to their students, their colleagues, and their communities.”

To support the Teacher Innovation Network, visit college.usc.edu/vhi/donate.

For photos and video from the workshop or to join the Teacher Innovation Network, visit college.usc.edu/vhi/education/teachingwithtestimony.

Steven Spielberg Honored with Liberty Medal for Humanitarian Work



Above: Steven Spielberg speaks at the Liberty Medal award ceremony at the National Constitution Center (Photo by Carol Feely). Right, left to right: Itka Zygmuntowicz, a Holocaust survivor; Steven Spielberg, Kate Capshaw, and President Bill Clinton. (Photo by Susan Beard Design)

“**T**he Nazis did everything in their power to dehumanize and destroy. This is the reason why, when they called me Number 25673, I said I am not a number,” Holocaust survivor Itka Zygmuntowicz said in her testimony. “...My family taught me that who I am—my *mentshlekhhkeyt*, my humanness—does not depend on how others treat me but on how I treat others.”

Steven Spielberg established the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation (now the USC Shoah Foundation Institute) so that individuals like Itka would be able to share

their memories of life before, during, and after the Holocaust in perpetuity. For this and other humanitarian achievements as a filmmaker and philanthropist, the National Constitution Center honored Spielberg with its 2009 Liberty Medal in October.

Excerpts from four of the Institute’s testimonies were shown at the award ceremony in Philadelphia, along with scenes from *The Color Purple*, *Schindler’s List*, *Amistad*, and *Saving*

distinguished leaders who have shown a commitment to change through action, we have once again chosen a highly deserving champion of freedom,” Clinton said.

Accepting the award, Spielberg said, “I am thrilled to be honored by my dear friend, President Clinton, and to be recognized by an organization unprecedented in its devotion to the most relevant and significant document in our nation’s history. It’s truly humbling to be added to the distinguished list of past

“Continuing in the National Constitution Center’s rich tradition of honoring distinguished leaders who have shown a commitment to change through action, we have once again chosen a highly deserving champion of freedom.”
— President Bill Clinton



Private Ryan, four of Spielberg’s films that deal with themes of human rights and the struggle against intolerance and tyranny.

President Bill Clinton, Chairman of the National Constitution Center, presented Spielberg with the Liberty Medal. “Continuing in the National Constitution Center’s rich tradition of honoring

recipients, a group of men and women whom I admire deeply for their commitment to educating the world about the importance of freedom and the blessings of liberty.”

Past recipients of the Liberty Medal include Nelson Mandela, Shimon Peres, Kofi Annan, and Sandra Day O’Connor.

New Visual History Archive Search Interface



Students access the Visual History Archive at Freie Universität Berlin. (Photo courtesy of Freie Universität Berlin)

At institutions connected to the Visual History Archive, a redesigned user interface is making it easier to learn from the nearly 52,000 testimonies of Holocaust survivors and other witnesses.

The new interface features key improvements. These include a more streamlined structure to reduce the need to navigate through multiple webpages, the ability to bookmark search results and video segments to save them for future use, and the option to password-protect projects.

“We wanted to provide a more flexible, intuitive, and robust tool so that research in the archive will yield richer learning experiences,” said Samuel Paul, Institute Associate Director of Digital Resources. “The redesigned interface

has made it easier for people to work with the testimonies in ways that meet their needs.”

Additionally, the Leo Rosner Foundation has funded an enhancement that allows users to share projects with others—thus greatly increasing the archive’s potential as a resource for collaborative research and education.

Access Site News

Meanwhile, the testimonies of Holocaust survivors and other witnesses are enhancing programs and making new educational opportunities possible at institutions around the world.

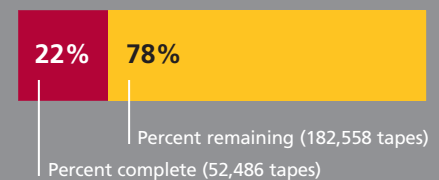
In the fall, **Charles University** (Prague, Czech Republic) became the third institution in Europe with access to the Visual History Archive. In the United States, **Clark University** (Worcester, Massachusetts) also gained access.

Between April and May, the **University of California, San Diego** (UCSD) hosted its second annual “Holocaust Living History Workshop,” which seeks to teach the history of the Holocaust through interactions with survivors and through the use of the Institute’s archive of testimony.

In February 2010, **Central European University** (CEU) in Budapest, Hungary will welcome educators of all disciplines to “New Sources and Methodologies for Jewish Studies,” a weeklong workshop to explore ways to build coursework around visual, oral, and written accounts of Holocaust eyewitnesses, with special emphasis placed on the testimonies in the Institute’s Visual History Archive. In April 2009, CEU became the second institution in Europe with access to the archive.

Preserving the Testimonies

To ensure that the life stories of Holocaust survivors and other witnesses endure in perpetuity, the Institute is copying the master recordings of the testimonies from videotape—which deteriorates over time—to an electronic format, called Motion JPEG 2000. These preservation copies of the testimonies retain the picture and sound quality of the originals and will not experience signal degradation over time.



Progress so far

- 52,486 tapes out of 235,044 transferred
- 12,005 interviews out of 51,682 preserved

To facilitate access to the testimonies by students, academics, and researchers around the world, the Institute is making additional copies of each testimony for use on personal computers and television in the following formats:

- MPEG-1
- MPEG-2
- QuickTime
- Flash
- Windows Media Player

Visit college.usc.edu/vhi/preservation to learn more about the ongoing preservation effort.

The entire archive is now available to users at 24 institutions on four continents. To find the site nearest you, visit college.usc.edu/vhi/testimonylocations.

New Funds to Pursue Mission

Donor Highlight: Vera and Paul Guerin



“As the child of a Holocaust survivor, I want every generation to learn from what they experienced,” Vera Guerin said. “Through the educational use of their testimonies, the survivors become teachers who can help students around the world to become mindful of the terrible consequences of prejudice and intolerance.”

Vera’s father, Nathan Shapell (1922-2007), lost most of his family in the Holocaust. He survived Buchenwald and Auschwitz, and after the war became a public defender for displaced persons in Germany. After immigrating to the U.S. with his wife, Lillian, and daughter, Vera, in 1953, Shapell became a successful real estate developer and philanthropist. His many contributions include the funding and establishment of the Shapell-Guerin Chair in Jewish Studies, USC College of Letters, Arts & Sciences,

which is held by Dr. Wolf Gruner. Vera has cited her father as a source of inspiration for her own legacy of giving.

The Guerins have provided support for the Institute since 2005. “Without people like Vera and Paul, the Institute would be unable to respond to the urgent need for tolerance education,” said Steven Klappholz, Institute Executive Director of Development. “Thanks to their generous commitment to our work, the testimonies are making a difference in the lives of young people around the world by encouraging them to become more tolerant and responsible individuals.”

In addition to supporting the Institute, Vera served for four years on the board of United Hostesses’ Charities at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and received the Evelyn Clayburgh Award for “extraordinary service” as president of the Women’s Guild Lung Institute. She now serves on the boards of Cedars-Sinai, the Women’s Guild Lung Institute, and the Skirball Cultural Center. Paul is a member of the board of governors at Cedars-Sinai, where he has been a member of the executive committee. The Guerins also provide scholarships for the Bob Shapell School of Social Work at Tel Aviv University (an endowment established by Vera’s father), and Paul is presi-

dent and board chairman of Friends of Israeli Defense Forces, a support organization for Israeli soldiers and their families.

ACE Charitable Foundation to Support Local Rwandan Testimony Project

The ACE Charitable Foundation has made a contribution that will enable the Institute to collect testimony from Rwandan Tutsi genocide survivors living in California.

“This donation from the ACE Charitable Foundation is especially significant,” said Karen Jungblut, Institute Director of Research and Documentation. “Not only will it allow us to begin preserving memories of survivors of the Rwandan Tutsi genocide living in and around Los Angeles; it will also help us continue to build capacity for the larger Rwandan testimony project we are undertaking with IBUKA, the umbrella organization representing Rwandan genocide survivors.”

The ACE Charitable Foundation is committed to the health and well-being of less-fortunate individuals and communities in geographic regions where ACE employees live and work. Priority focus is given to projects that address problems in the areas of education, the environment, poverty, and health. In addition to supporting the USC Shoah Foundation Institute, the ACE



Charitable Foundation is associated with the International Rescue Committee, Refugees International, CARE, the World Food Program, the National September 11 Memorial and Museum, and the Conservation Fund.

“Like the testimonies of survivors of the Holocaust, the testimonies of Rwandan genocide survivors also have world-changing potential,” explained Eden Kratchman, Executive Director of the ACE Charitable Foundation. “We are very proud to be partnering with the USC Shoah Foundation Institute on such an important project.”

Making a Difference: Harvey Chaplin



“The life story of a single witness of the Holocaust can make all the difference in helping young people choose acceptance over intolerance and action over indifference,” said Harvey Chaplin. “That is why it is so important to support the USC Shoah Foundation Institute as it strives to introduce the testimonies to students around the world.”

Chaplin’s generous support of the Institute has helped create opportunities for Holocaust survivors and other witnesses to teach young people through the educational use of their testimonies. “We are so thankful to Harvey for his commitment to our mission,” said

Steven Klappholz, Institute Executive Director of Development. “He understands that the testimonies do have the power to change the world, one life at a time.” Chaplin is Chairman and

CEO of Southern Wine and Spirits of America. In addition to supporting the Institute, he has contributed to a number of national and international non-profit organizations over the years. He and Mel Dick, Sr.

Vice President and Vice President of the company’s Wine Division, have helped Southern Wine and Spirits of America raise millions of dollars for the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel.

Extraordinary Leadership: Bruce Ramer

“If we turn our backs on the memories of Holocaust survivors and other witnesses, humanity will face a future in which the pitfalls of hatred and indifference remain obscured by our ignorance of the past,” said Bruce Ramer. “But if we each heed the lessons the survivor generation has to teach us, we can learn to make individual choices which will bring us all closer to a better tomorrow.”

A founding member of the Board of Directors of the Shoah Foundation, Bruce Ramer provided early leadership when the Foundation undertook the monumental project of collecting testimony from nearly 52,000 Holocaust survivors and other witnesses. And as a member of the USC Board of Trustees, he was instrumental in finding a permanent home for the Foundation—and more importantly, for the testimonies—as part of the University of Southern California. “Integration into USC has guaranteed the lasting preservation of the testimonies, and it has brought them within reach of more people than ever before,” said Stephen Smith, Institute Executive Director.



Now a member of the USC Shoah Foundation Institute’s Board of Councilors, Ramer played a key role on the search committee for a new executive director in 2008-2009, helping to usher in a new era of leadership with the appointments of Smith and Managing Director Kim Simon. For his tireless work and leadership on behalf of the Institute, which also includes major fundraising achievements and contributions as a donor, Ramer has been recognized with the Ambassadors for Humanity Award.

“Many people have devoted time and resources to our mission over the years. Bruce Ramer has been part of the founding team that made this possible,” said Smith. “For fifteen years, he has provided

leadership at pivotal moments in our history; Bruce has helped guide the Institute through its birth and growth, and he is unwavering in his commitment to its maturation.”

Born and raised in New Jersey, Ramer is the senior partner at the law firm Gang, Tyre, Ramer & Brown. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, a member of the Board of the Pacific Council on

“If we each heed the lessons the survivor generation has to teach us, we can learn to make individual choices which will bring us all closer to a better tomorrow.”

— Bruce Ramer

International Policy, and a former national president of the American Jewish Committee. In addition to sitting on the Institute’s Board of Councilors and the USC Board of Trustees, Ramer is chair of the USC Institute on Entertainment Law and Business, co-chair of the USC Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism’s Executive Committee, and founding chair of the Geffen Playhouse. He is also a board member of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

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Winter 2010



Renée Semik, a teacher at Santa Monica High School, and a member of the Institute's Teacher Innovation Network, uses the Visual History Archive (Photo by Kim Fox). Turn to page six for the full story.

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*To overcome prejudice,
intolerance, and bigotry
— and the suffering they cause —
through the educational
use of the Institute's
visual history testimonies*

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