

# Martin-Springer Institute

## Global Engagement Through Holocaust Awareness

MSI Review

Fall 2013

### *A Good Year: Director's Note*

Dear friends,

This has been a good year. After I arrived from Maryland and settled into my new office in August of 2012, I quickly realized the immense value of the educational resource that the Martin-Springer Institute brings to Arizona. Located in a magnificent natural environment and on the campus of Northern Arizona University (NAU) with its vibrant student body, the Institute raises awareness of the Holocaust and addresses contemporary social issues.

Of the many things I learned in my decades-long study of the devastating impact of the Holocaust in Europe, and especially on the Jewish communities, I want to point to two issues:

- events that are destructive and harmful to communities do not happen in isolation but are implemented on levels that are simultaneous local and global
- the long-lasting effects of such events are felt on personal and social levels, and they need to be attended to with caring responsibility and through dialogical and reconciliatory processes.

For this reason, the spirit of the Institute's work is summarized in the line "Global Engagement through Holocaust Awareness," indicating our commitment to an education that values moral courage, empathy, reconciliation, and social justice.

Our diverse programs reflect these insights and values. On the one hand, we offer public lectures and forums in which speakers address themes related to the Institute's goals. For example, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor discussed the virtues of civic engagement and civil discourse; scholar-activist Dr. Zilka Siljak from Sarajevo alerted her



audience to the situation of women in Bosnia-Herzegovina and talked about her efforts of interreligious dialogue from a Muslim perspective; Dr. Joseph Toltz from Sydney, Australia, presented his original research on musical testimony of the Holocaust.



On the other hand, we work with students in environments that are deliberately challenging and interpersonal. For example, we sponsored projects that took university and high school students to the Arizona-Mexico border to learn first-hand about the reality and policy of immigration; we invited students from Maryland to meet with NAU students for a five-day

retreat on racial diversity; and we are working with 12 students on a year-long applied research project on the Jewish ghetto of Będzin, Poland, with the goal to create an exhibit that will travel through Arizona and beyond.

In the last year, these programs were attended by a total of about 4,500 people.

As we are reaching out to various academic departments on NAU's campus, we have also partnered with other institutions to develop joint programs. They currently include the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C., St. Mary's College of Maryland, and Facing History and Ourselves (Denver).



As new director, I am exploring international opportunities for our students. We are currently in conversation with universities in South Africa and Israel with the intent to develop summer programs in which our students study and travel together with their peers of other countries, focusing on questions of social identity, post-conflict, and restorative justice. We are especially interested in involving underrepresented and minority students in these seminars.

(continued on page 2)



Paisley Green, Zoe Fry and Dr. Kalb, of the Będzin project consulting with Betsy Anthony at U. S. Holocaust Memorial Museum: courtesy of Mel Hecker (USHMM)

(continued from page 1)

Melissa Cohen, program coordinator of our Institute, continues to spearhead teacher trainings for K-12 educators from the State of Arizona. In the fall, we offer a one-day Bullying Prevention Seminar. In the summer, teachers gather at NAU for a two-day Advanced Holocaust Educator's conference, made possible through a generous grant by the Abeshaus family.

As we look at the history and legacy of the Holocaust, we observe that hateful ideologies, discrimination, and violence continue to this day. At the Martin-Springer Institute, we do not want to be discouraged by these events. Rather, we create environments that provide safety and we open up spaces for dialogical engagement and intercultural understanding.

My dream is to see the Martin-Springer Institute grow as a leading institution in Arizona that is committed to learning from the past and acting in the present. I hope that we can count on your help.

With your support, we can provide students valuable and unique opportunities of learning that engage them locally and globally while being attentive to the past.



Respectfully,  
Björn Krondorfer,

Director, Martin-Springer Institute  
Endowed Professor of Religious Studies

## *Internship at USHMM*

For two weeks this summer, I, along with three other undergraduate students and history professor Dr. Martin Kalb, researched at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, DC. We represented a larger group at NAU that is in the process of designing a traveling exhibit about the Będzin ghetto in Poland as seen by the youth of the town. Primarily, our visit centered on utilizing the sources at USHMM, like the International Tracing Services, the photo archive, and the Shoah Foundation oral testimonies. I was able to view several of these testimonies, which not only serve to communicate the survivors' stories but also create a relatable human link between the speaker and the viewer. This connection is something we hope to capture in our exhibit, to resonate with our audience and hopefully make a lasting impact.

Mikayla Cutlip,  
Senior in Interior Design, NAU



**For updates, photos, and announcements, visit us at [facebook.com/MSIatNAU](https://www.facebook.com/MSIatNAU)**

## *Words from a Donor:*



When I read about the Będzin ghetto research project, which also sends students to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, I was moved to donate to the Martin-Springer Institute. In my job at NAU I meet with students every day: involving them in research at the museum in Washington seems especially important to me. As the generations that lived through the Holocaust reach the final stages of their lives, it becomes more urgent to educate young people about the horrors that can happen when good people look the other way.

This project affords students the opportunity to do research from primary as well as secondary sources. They will in turn be able to pass on to others the lessons of the Holocaust, to generate sensitivity to injustices taking place to any groups of people anywhere in the world and at any time, and to act with moral courage and altruism. The Martin-Springer Institute represents a mission I believe in.

Dorlee Ettinger Henderson,  
Career and Academic Advisor, NAU

## *A Conversation with Justice Sandra Day O'Connor*

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor received three standing ovations in a capacity-filled Ardrey Memorial Auditorium on February 11, 2013, when she spoke on Civil Discourse and Civic Engagement. The MSI invited her as speaker in honor of International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The conversation was live telecast to audiences in Sedona's Mary D. Fisher Theater and NAU's Cline Library.



Justice O'Connor joins Björn Krondorfer and Julie Piering on stage at Ardrey Memorial Auditorium

## *Commemorating the Holocaust: Reflections*

The Yom HaShoah Commemoration at the Jewish Community Center in Sedona was a wonderful mix of history, horror, humor and humility. For me, the day was especially meaningful because of the privilege of singing in the Arizona Mountain Chorale in commemoration of this event. While music is a great cathartic for us all, the work we performed by Michal Horvit of children's words and thoughts while in the concentration camps ("A Child's Journey") was almost more than I could bear. Jacob Barzilai, Hungarian poet, was himself incarcerated in Bergen-Belsen but survived and settled in Israel. The first time our choir rehearsed the music, I just bawled, unable to even imagine what would have been in those children's minds and hearts to enable them to write such unbearably painful words. But the ability to share the music with an empathic audience made the music not only bearable but perhaps ethereal, as we all paused to think of those children who perished and the suffering they experienced at such a tender age.

Liz Grobsmith,  
Senior Advisor to the President for Strategic & International Initiatives, NAU



Doris Martin meets with Flagstaff Arts and Leadership dance students at the Yom HaShoah commemoration, Sedona

## *A Teacher's Viewpoint*

The Justice O'Connor event served as a unique opportunity for students to engage directly with a high official of the federal government regarding issues of domestic and international significance. The preparation for the event at our school fostered the facilitation of in-depth discussions on constitutional issues with a wide scope of human impact.

Students appreciated the occasion to grapple on a deeply intellectual level with topics that often are merely surveyed in high school curriculum. To have their inquiries and analysis assessed by Justice O'Connor added a further level of engagement that is unmatched in most day-to-day lessons. We are grateful to the Martin-Springer Institute for being able to participate in the event and are eager for more thought-provoking prospects in the future.

Jennifer Spensieri,  
Teacher, Social Studies, FALA



A Flagstaff high school student follows up with a question for Justice O'Connor at a breakfast meeting

## *Why to Remember*

What captivates me most in the Yom HaShoah programs are the stories of survivors, either told directly by them or by their children. Generally, people survived through a remarkable combination of their resourcefulness, resilience, and luck. It is a privilege for me to participate in the programs by helping to set the mood through music.

Howard Grodman,  
Justice of the Peace, Flagstaff

## Our Founders

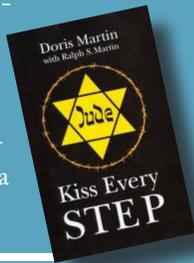


Doris Martin speaks at MSI

### Ralph and Doris Martin

(née Szpringer of Będzin, Poland) founded The Martin-Springer Institute in 2000 to raise awareness of human rights through Holocaust remembrance and education.

Doris survived the Holocaust. She is available for speaking engagements for students and community groups. *Kiss Every Step* is Doris' memoir of her family's survival. Visit Amazon.com to purchase a copy of the book.



## Thank you!

Long time MSI supporters Merrill and Rhoda Abeshaus have recently created an endowment that helps ensure the continuation of our very successful annual Holocaust education conference for teachers. Thirty teachers from all over Arizona joined us for this year's conference.

Dr. and Mrs. Abeshaus were also kind enough to sponsor a student trip to the U. S. Holocaust Memorial Museum for our Będzin Project.



Arizona teachers at the Merrill and Rhoda Abeshaus Advanced Holocaust Educator's Institute, June 2013

## Będzin Project: A Student Perspective

The Będzin Ghetto Project is currently producing a traveling exhibit. It intends to foster remembrance and stimulate critical thinking about the Holocaust and the state of peace and tolerance in the world today.



Michael Combrink and Jane Lipski in Tucson

I am one of twelve students selected to work on the project, and our experiences have been illuminating. The interdisciplinary nature of the project meant that many of us had only a perfunctory knowledge of the Holocaust. However, through research and interviews, our eyes have been opened to the complex and harsh reality that Jews endured in Poland. We now feel passionate about sharing that knowledge with the public through the exhibit.

This project has been transformative for those who have never had the opportunity to meet with Holocaust survivors and hear their stories. Meeting face-to-face with them and seeing the joy and appreciation in their eyes for what our group is doing has strengthened our belief that Holocaust remembrance as well as efforts in building peaceful relations in the world are important.

Gerald Lamb,  
Senior in History, NAU

## Meeting with Survivor Jane Lipski

On a Saturday in March, our group working on the Będzin project was able to meet Jane Lipski, a Holocaust survivor, and to ask her about her life in the town and ghetto of Będzin. Our journey to her home in Tucson was fantastic. After a long drive, we were welcomed with extreme hospitality and kindness by her and her extended family. Though we had already done extensive research on Będzin, hearing Jane speak about her teenage years under Nazi occupation added new emotional layers and complexities to our background knowledge. It gave history a face.



Bjorn Krondorfer and Bedzin Project students study maps at their first working meeting

For us, Jane was not an impersonal mouthpiece who gave us merely historical information. Instead, she allowed us access to her memories of the horrible times she experienced in the ghetto. However hard the testimony was for us to hear, it was even more difficult for Jane and her family, including her daughter and granddaughter. We learned that the trauma of the Holocaust has not dissipated with time and is still present in later generations.

Paisley Green,  
Junior in Secondary English Education  
and History, NAU

# Racial Reconciliation Retreat

Often unrecognized, kept silent, and swept under a thin veneer of toleration, racial divisions continue to define the American social and educational landscape. From May 12-17, we offered a retreat for 16 students from Maryland and Arizona to explore lived experiences of racial, ethnic, national and cultural differences through dialogue and creative interactions. The retreat was facilitated by Prof. Sybol Anderson and Björn Krondorfer.

When we created two human sculptures – the “persons of color experience” and “the white experience” - we did not divide completely on racial lines. It created tensions. One white student was questioned about his choice of joining the “persons of color sculpture.” Should he have joined it when his white skin automatically granted him privilege, whether he wanted it or not? Can a white person truly embrace his skin with the knowledge of what white people had done to oppress others throughout history? In discussion, I became frustrated because I truly believe that no one should apologize for who they are – but I still felt I had hundreds of years of oppression to apologize for. Guilt and shame, however, are not productive emotions that lead to action. Passion and righteous anger that comes from recognizing unequal privilege are more productive.

Emily Burdeshaw,  
recent graduate in English  
(St. Mary’s College of Maryland)

Very few other events measure to the intensity of my Racial Reconciliation experience. Not only were the sessions important to me but also the one-on-one time with other people, who quickly became friends. Even after a whole day of intense sessions, two friends and I spent the night really opening up to our past experiences and their effects. To me, this was one of the most important nights during the retreat because I started to really understand what we were doing here and what it all meant. The seminar caused a consciousness-raising like no other.

Abiola Akanni,  
Junior in Computer Science  
(St. Mary’s College of Maryland)

As a participant, I was excited about traveling to Arizona but also anxious about the workshop itself. Those few days were so rich in conversations and emotions. As a Hispanic person, the truly life-changing moment happened when the four Hispanics in the group were put in a circle surrounded by all other students. We were asked to converse amongst ourselves about tensions within our community that we had been ignoring. The conversation made me realize things I was oblivious about. At one point we were all speaking in Spanish, and although we share many commonalities, tensions rose, we laughed, we cried, we got frustrated, we felt closer. The words I use to describe what I felt on that day do not fully convey how it affected and changed me. I am amazed at what we accomplished during the seminar. But there is still so much that needs to be done. I know that I am now one step ahead, and I am thankful.

Heber Diaz,  
Junior in Economics, and Film/Media  
Studies Minor  
(St. Mary’s College of Maryland)

I witnessed personal and collective change in the manner that we relate to race and diversity. In one particular exercise, students identified as “experiencing conflict” were given the opportunity to engage within the confines of our seated circle. As I watched one student of color explain his struggles to a white student, I again experienced frustration, humiliation, and anger—emotions I have so often felt when attempting to explain the effects of racism and discrimination I have personally suffered in the United States. I simultaneously felt pride. I was proud that people of color continue to confront the injustices that we face daily. I was proud that, although injured, we still stand strong. Most of all, I was proud that my friend, while obviously angry, sat in front of the white student as a pillar of resiliency, unafraid and unashamed.

Dawn Rebeccah Bohanon,  
Graduate Assistant (Inclusion and  
Multicultural Services), and graduate  
student in School Psychology (NAU)

For short video, go to  
<http://youtu.be/UOTE9FzU2Og>



Racial Reconciliation participants at the Grand Canyon

# Programs and Events at the Martin-Springer Institute, 2012-2013

*(if not otherwise indicated, all events took place at Northern Arizona University)*

## Fall 2012

- “Beyond the Border” exhibit sponsorship of opening reception at Coconino Center for the Arts, Flagstaff
- Bullying Prevention Teachers’ Conference with Dr. Barbara Coloroso
- “Beyond the Border” co-sponsorship for First Year Seminar, field trip to AZ-MX border
- “Living Compassion Conference” co-sponsorship and participation
- “Beyond the Border” co-sponsorship of 5-day student trip to AZ-MX border, led by Dr. Robert Neustadt
- Testimony, presentation by Holocaust survivor Harold Minuskin (Night of Broken Glass Lecture Series)
- “Musical Testimony of the Holocaust” lecture by Dr. Joseph Toltz, Sydney, Australia (Night of Broken Glass Lecture Series)
- “Engaging the Other: Breaking Intergenerational Cycles” presentation by Dr. Krondorfer at International Conference, University of the Free State, Bloemfontain, South Africa
- “The Work of the Martin-Springer Institute” mini-lecture by Dr. Krondorfer at Sarah Lawrence College, Yonkers, NY

## Spring 2013

- “Będzin Ghetto” Student Applied Research & Traveling Exhibit Project, supervised by Dr. Krondorfer and Dr. Kalb (HIS)
- “Beyond the Border” co-sponsorship for Flagstaff Arts and Leadership Academy (FALA) field trip to AZ-MX border
- “Law, Civility, Social Change” faculty development seminar in preparation for Justice O’Connor visit, led by Dr. Krondorfer and Dr. Julie Piering (PHI)
- “Women and the Islamic Concept of Compassion in Bosnia and Herzegovina” lecture by Dr. Zilka Siljak, Sarajevo, Bosnia (Spring Lecture Series)
- “Conversation with Justice O’Connor & Mary Fisher” tea reception
- “Civic Engagement and Civil Discourse: A conversation with Justice Sandra Day O’Connor” with Dr. Krondorfer and Dr. Piering
- “Civic Engagement” a conversation with Justice O’Connor and local high school students
- “Carolyn & Dr. Herb Nathan Educators’ Conference on the Holocaust” Scottsdale, AZ, MSI presence, and talk by Dr. Krondorfer
- “The 1936 Nazi Olympics” exhibit, Martin-Springer Institute “Gallery”
- Hosting Pete Fredlake, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
- “Human Rights in an Age of Genocide” presentation by Dr. Krondorfer at Jewish American University, Los Angeles
- Meeting with Holocaust survivor Jane Lipski, field trip to Tucson with students from Będzin project
- “The Imperative of (Post) Racial Identity” lecture by Dr. Sybol Anderson, St. Mary’s College (Spring Lecture Series)
- “The Elephant in the Room: Race in the Classroom” faculty development seminar with Dr. Anderson
- Yom HaShoah Commemoration in Sedona, joint program with Jewish communities of Sedona and Flagstaff
- “Immigration Awareness Week: Photography and Art Exhibit” co-sponsorship, opening reception at MSI “Gallery”
- “On Genocide” class-lecture by Krondorfer at FALA
- “Life and Death in the Będzin Ghetto: Interdisciplinary Holocaust Research” presentation by students at NAU’s Undergraduate Symposium
- “Transatlantic Relations” roundtable conversation with German Consul General Dr. Bernd Fischer of Los Angeles
- “Commemoration & Reflections on End of World War II and the Holocaust” with Doris Martin
- Racial Reconciliation Seminar. 5-day retreat, Flagstaff. Joint project with students from NAU and St. Mary’s College. Facilitated by Dr. Krondorfer and Dr. Anderson
- Internship at U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. MSI sponsored four undergraduate students for 2-week research on Będzin Ghetto in Washington D.C., accompanied by Dr. Kalb
- “Challenges of Teaching the Holocaust in Multireligious World” meeting at Advanced Center for Holocaust Studies at USHMM, Washington D.C.
- “Holocaust and Human Behavior” Advance Holocaust Educators’ Institute, with Fran Sterling (Facing History and Ourselves)

# South Africa: Trauma and Reconciliation

Imagine you have a chance to meet Khadijah and Esther, two women leaders from Nigeria, to talk about the violence that tears their respective Muslim and Christian communities apart. Disenchanted and marginalized youth, whipped up by fanatic religious voices, attack villages and hack to death women and children. After a particular vicious assault, Esther, a Christian minister, reached out to Khadijah, a Muslim woman leader, and together they started a grassroots peace initiative. At threat to their lives, they began to visit each other's communities and to work with the youth.

Such were the encounters at an International Conference at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein (UFS) South Africa, which Björn Krondorfer, Director of the Martin-Springer Institute and Endowed Professor of Religious Studies, attended in December 2012. The multi-day conference brought together 200 participants from around the globe under the theme, "Engaging the Other: Breaking Intergenerational Cycles of Repetition." Scholars, activist and therapists shared projects and ideas about how to heal traumatized communities.



Professor Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela and Björn Krondorfer, Cape Town

Dr. Krondorfer, one of the external consultants of the conference, also presented a paper on "Unsettling Empathy." With his colleague Professor Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, former member of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission and author of *A Human Being Died That Night* (about her encounter with an apartheid perpetrator), Krondorfer works on issues of trauma and reconciliation. As Faculty Affiliate of UFS, Krondorfer hopes to create a joint summer program for South African and NAU students on reconciliation and conflict-management in conjunction with UFS's "Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice."

## A Student's Experiences at the Mexican Border

As an immigrant from Mexico, I was fortunate enough to cross with a passport to the United States with my family in 2003. I did not have to run across the desert or pay a "coyote" to get me into the U.S. Like many other immigrants, my family and I were seeking opportunities.

Traveling to the border with 15 other students from NAU was not a camping trip. Rather, it was a field trip to experience the hardships of other migrants as they try to reach the land of opportunity. We spent freezing cold nights in the No More Deaths camp in the Arivaca desert and witnessed first-hand the Operation Streamline procedures in Tucson. In the courtroom, we saw the depressed faces of shackled men and women. Our trip to the border became a source of my passionate involvement for advocating immigration rights.

Angel Arzola Ortega,  
Junior in Biomedical Sciences, NAU

## Donations

Please help make our programs happen!

To make a tax deductible donation, make checks out to NAU Foundation, Fund 5138 and post to:

Martin-Springer Institute  
Northern Arizona University  
PO Box: 5624  
Flagstaff AZ 86011-5624

For gifts of stocks or to include us in your estate planning, please contact Annette Carter at [annette.carter@nau.edu](mailto:annette.carter@nau.edu)

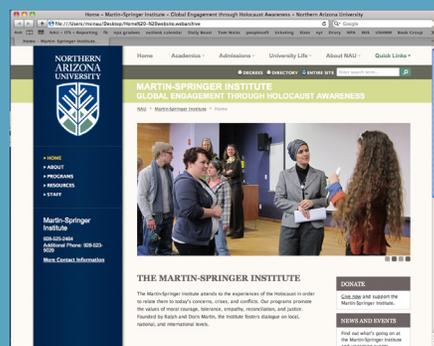
## Additional contact information

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For updates, like us at [facebook.com/MSIatNAU](https://www.facebook.com/MSIatNAU)



and see our website at [nau.edu/msi](http://nau.edu/msi)





## *Adopt a student, become a sponsor!*

MSI seeks funds for all programs, especially for underrepresented and minority students.

- \$1,500 will send one student to a 2-week summer internship at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum
- \$850 will invite one student to our 5-day Racial Reconciliation Seminar
- \$350 will support one student for a multi-day trip to the AZ-MX border

Contact us to “adopt-a-student.”

## **MSI 2013-14 Preview**

**September:**  
Bullying Prevention Conference

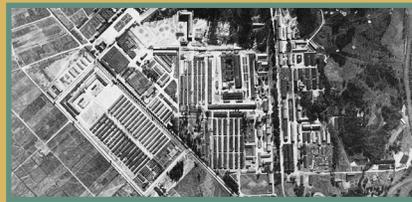
**November:**  
Night of Broken Glass  
Speakers Series

**January 27:**  
Morris Dees, co-founder of the  
Southern Poverty Law Center,  
International Holocaust Remembrance Day



Artwork by Arie Galles

**March 11- April 26:**  
“Wounded Landscapes: Post-Shoah Drawings, Artist Books, Paintings”  
Exhibit at NAU Art Museum, with Arie Galles and Karen Baldner  
A joint project by NAU Art Museum & The Martin-Springer Institute



**April:**  
Yom HaShoah Commemoration

**May:**  
Racial Reconciliation Retreat

**Summer:**  
Merrill and Rhoda Abeshaus Advanced Holocaust Educators’ Institute



### **Martin-Springer Institute**

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