

THE Zekelman HOLOCAUST CENTER

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The Zekelman Holocaust Center's 39th Anniversary Benefit Honors Community Leaders, Reflects on Power of Education to Fight Antisemitism

The special evening recognized Cynthia and Marvin Zucker

FARMINGTON HILLS, Mich., November 13, 2023 – [The Zekelman Holocaust Center](#) (The HC) celebrated its highly anticipated 39th Anniversary Benefit Dinner on Sunday, November 12, 2023, at Detroit's Huntington Place. Lifelong Detroiters Cynthia and Marvin Zucker were honored for their unwavering support of Holocaust education as an antidote to counter rising antisemitism.

Against the backdrop of October 7, when 1,200 Israelis were murdered by Hamas terrorists and 240 people from 40 countries were taken hostage, The Center's flagship fundraising event brought together a diverse community united in solidarity, including Holocaust survivors and their families, business and educational leaders, philanthropists, and war veterans.

Over the course of the evening, attendees remembered the past, celebrated achievements, and looked toward a hopeful future. In January 2024, The Center's new permanent exhibit opens with updated scholarship and technology, further centering personal stories of those who experienced the Holocaust to humanize history's darkest period.

"The danger of hate is palpable," Cynthia Zucker, a past president of the Highland Lakes campus of Oakland Community College, told the crowd. "No other entity in Detroit does a better job teaching the public where hate can lead than The Zekelman Holocaust Center.

"By hearing the personal stories of Holocaust survivors," she continued, "we come to understand the power of a human being's individual choice to commit acts of good or evil, [and gain] deeper understanding of – and commitment to – civic engagement, and to becoming active participants in our democracy.

In telling the story of his parents who survived the Holocaust and who never spoke of their harrowing quest for survival, Marvin Zucker, a retired Managing Director of the Zucker Dines Investment Group at Wells Fargo said, “For the sake of the next generation, I need to take a stand. I need to do my part so that one by one, the education provided by The Center will make a difference...[We must] support the museum’s efforts to teach about the dangers of hate and the consequences of silence.”

The atrocities of October 7 harken back to the 1930s and are “a product of years of demonizing and dehumanizing Jews, preaching the destruction of Israel and that killing Jews is a virtue,” said Event Chair Arn Tellem, Vice Chairman of the Detroit Pistons basketball franchise.

Noting that antisemitic incidents are up four-fold since October 7, Tellem said, “This is why the Zekelman Holocaust Center is so important. This center – and others like it throughout the world – serve a vital role in our communities by preserving our history, so that its lessons can inform our future.”

Keynote speaker Ben Sasse, University of Florida President and a former U.S. Senator for Nebraska, and a vociferous defender of the first amendment, addressed antisemitism on college campuses and more broadly in the context of U.S. history.

“Liberty,” he said, “assumes people have shared principles. In the case of free speech, we defend engaging with ideas — wrestling with them is how we learn restraint and self-control. We open ourselves to being wrong. This is how a republic, as George Washington said in his Farewell Address, doesn’t rely on any single individual. What the Holocaust Center ultimately teaches strengthens our democracy.”

During the evening, The HC announced a major gift from the William Davidson Foundation in support of the exhibit renovation.

“The William Davidson Foundation gift supports our Center as a premier destination in Southeast Michigan where people can learn the lessons of the Holocaust in a meaningful and relevant way,” said Rabbi Eli Mayerfeld, CEO of The Zekelman Holocaust Center. “We are so fortunate for the support of our incredible community to advance work that has been shown to influence communities to resist acts of hate and discrimination.”

Annually, The HC reaches 150,000 people through in-person and virtual programs, events, and teacher training workshops. The HC’s new core exhibit will be unveiled to the public in January 2024.

For more information about The Zekelman Holocaust Center, please visit <https://www.holocaustcenter.org/>.

About The Zekelman Holocaust Center

Founded in 1984 by Michigan survivors who were intent on creating a lasting memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, The Zekelman Holocaust Center is guided by its mission to engage, educate, and empower by remembering the Holocaust.

Each year the Center welcomes thousands of visitors who benefit from having a local resource where they can learn the lessons of history's darkest period. Exhibits and artifacts on display include survivor testimonies, documents, paintings, and films, an authentic WWII-era boxcar, and a sapling from the tree located outside Anne Frank's hiding place window that is described in her diary. The Center also invites the public to make use of its extensive Library Archive, which contains more than 20,000 volumes.

Embedded in the community, the Center's Museum Educators and Docents tell the human story of the Holocaust to school and adult groups through customized tours, training, and programs. Participants are empowered to apply the lessons learned to create a compassionate society where people take responsible action. Learn more at www.holocaustcenter.org.

Hours: Sunday through Thursday 9:30 am to 5:00 pm and Friday 9:30 am to 3:00 pm. The last admission is one hour before closing. Wheelchair accessible. Free parking. For additional information, visit www.holocaustcenter.org or call 248-553-2400.

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