



FAIRFIELD CONNECTICUT

SHOAH MEMORIAL

**"If anything can, it is memory
that will save humanity."**

ELIE WIESEL, NOBEL PRIZE LECTURE, 1984

The World is Forgetting ‘Never Again’

“Never Again” is a powerful statement of resolve against the Holocaust. But its strength requires collective memory. Today, 80 years after the liberation of Auschwitz, those memories—and the lessons drawn from that experience—are rapidly fading.

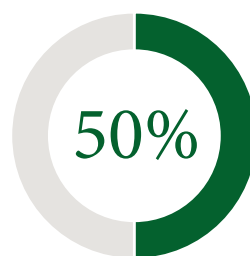
In a recent interview on MSNBC, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer cited a report that as many as half of young adults have no knowledge of the Holocaust.

*The Economist*¹ reported in 2023 that 20 percent of respondents aged 18-29 believe the Holocaust is a myth – even more think it has been exaggerated. It is no different in Connecticut. In a survey, 45

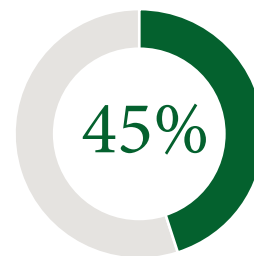
percent of Millennials and Gen Z adults in the state could not name Auschwitz or any concentration camp, death camp or ghetto. Not much better than Alabama’s 50 percent! Most shockingly, 15 percent of them believe Jews caused the Holocaust².

We know what to do. Jewish research organizations have been following these trends for years. We know how to bend the curve back toward the truth.

But it happens only when those who do remember make a firm commitment to keep the memory alive. A commitment that ensures no young person will wonder about the meaning behind the words, “Never Again.”



Don't know what the
Holocaust was



Could not name Auschwitz
or any concentration camp,
death camp or ghetto



Believe the
Holocaust is a myth

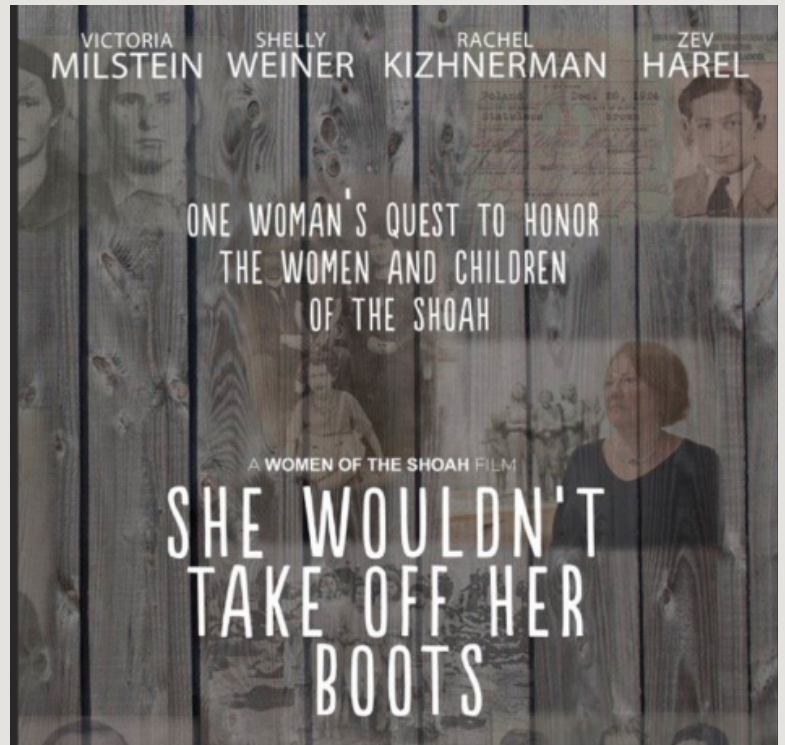


Believe Jews caused the
Holocaust

Remember, Educate, Prevent

A multi-faceted project, the Shoah Memorial of Fairfield, Connecticut (SMFC) will help ensure that the dignity and resilience of those who perished in the Holocaust are never forgotten.

It will also serve to inspire current and future generations to continue the fight against hate, violence and injustice.



Components of the Project



A deeply moving bronze sculpture of women and children called *She Wouldn't Take Off Her Boots* to be on permanent display on the campus of Fairfield University in Fairfield, Connecticut.



A modified middle- and high-school curriculum designed to meet Connecticut's Holocaust and genocide education requirements, mandated by state legislation in 2018.



On-site, self-guided tours of the memorial will employ the latest smartphone technology to display educational material.



A full-length documentary film that expands on the story behind the sculpture and the significance of what it displays.



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**SHOAH
MEMORIAL**
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The Horror Behind the Sculpture

On December 14, 1941 in Riga, Latvia, the police rounded up 2,700 of the city's 5,700 Jewish residents. Women and children were separated from the men, and then transported to the dunes along the Baltic Sea near the city of Liepāja, where they were shot in groups of 10. In a single day, nearly half of Riga's Jewish population had been mercilessly murdered.

The women were forced to strip before being killed. Among the group of two women and three girls, one woman stood defiant and refused to remove her boots. Frume Purve's quiet act of resistance demonstrated her unshakable courage and dignity in the face of certain death. A Nazi photographer captured their final moments, and a Jewish worker risked his life to preserve the photo. The sculpture is based on that photo.³



Woman in Boots: Dignity in Genocide

The original casting of the sculpture was installed in Greensboro, NC in April 2023. Since that time, many thousands have come to see it. Perhaps its most powerful message is honoring the often-overlooked struggles of women and girls during the Holocaust and other genocides. Also known as Woman in Boots: Dignity in Genocide, the sculpture is a tribute to the resilience, courage, and strength of women throughout history, often in the face of immense oppression. It makes a powerful statement against violence, antisemitism and genocide while calling attention to the continuing fight by women worldwide to defend their dignity and fundamental rights.

“

The Opposite of
Love is Not Hate;
it's Indifference.”

ELIE WIESEL





The Sculpture in Fairfield, Connecticut

The Shoah Memorial of Fairfield, Connecticut is a nonprofit organization dedicated to restoring and maintaining the memory of the Holocaust and the continued power of "Never Again." The bronze sculpture, *She Wouldn't Take Off Her Boots*, is the most visible part of its program. Created by artist Victoria Milstein, it will be on permanent display on the campus of Fairfield University in Fairfield, Connecticut.

The sculpture provokes thought and inspires engagement. Opposite the figures is a freestanding bronze camera, a replica of the one used by the Nazi photographer more than 80 years ago to capture their last moments. By looking through the camera's lens, viewers—especially students—become virtual witnesses to the event.



This interactive and immersive experience with the sculpture seeks to create a deep, emotional and intensely personal connection with the history and lessons of the Holocaust.

A Second Chapter for the Memorial

The Fairfield University project started when SMFC Chair Paul Burger attended the unveiling of the original sculpture in Greensboro. Deeply moved, Paul realized that the powerful message of the memorial needed to reach a wider audience. After seeking potential locations in Connecticut, he approached Fairfield University (below⁴).

The university is a Jesuit Catholic institution with the nationally recognized and respected

Carl and Dorothy Bennett Center for Judaic Studies, which is home to the University's Judaic Studies program within the Meditz College of Arts and Sciences. The University embraced the vision, recognizing the sculpture's potential to foster both education and reflection—not only for its students but also for the broader community across Connecticut.



Powerful Educational Components

Women of the Shoah, the Greensboro organization, has classroom-tested three 90-minute lesson plans about the Holocaust relating to the sculpture. The curriculum includes plans for a detailed field trip to visit the installation. SMFC is licensed to use this material and customize it for Connecticut. Each lesson can be taught on its own, or as part of a unit in English, social studies, or art classes. It can also be adapted to middle- and high-school students.



3

Lesson Plans



90

Minutes each



1

Field Trip Plan

Holocaust Education Works!



A major 2020 survey⁵ of 1,500 U.S. college students aged 18-24 compared students who had attended Holocaust education programs in high school and those who did not. Unsurprisingly, 78 percent of students whose high school curriculum included Holocaust education reported “knowing a lot or a moderate amount about the Holocaust” compared to 58 percent for others.

In addition, those with Holocaust education are significantly more likely to agree that people should learn about the Holocaust to:

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Recognize the dangers of antisemitism



Stand up for those who are being discriminated against



Stop something similar from happening again



The Monument offers a self-guided tour with QR codes placed around the site linking to print, audio and video material, including survivor interviews.

The full-length documentary film, *She Wouldn't Take Off Her Boots*, features artist Victoria Milstein expanding on the story behind the sculpture plus three survivor interviews. The film was featured at the International Jewish Film Festival in Boca Raton, Florida, in February 2025.

Fairfield University Art Museum



The sculpture will be donated to the Fairfield University Art Museum by Shoah Memorial Fairfield, Connecticut and will become an integral part of the University's outdoor sculpture collection.

Fairfield University is an 83-year-old Jesuit institution with 5,000 full-time undergraduates and 1,200 graduate students, offering bachelor's through doctoral degrees in its five schools and colleges.

The University has an agreement with SFMC to make the sculpture and its site available for public programs year-round, providing access to college classes, middle and high school students, as well as community groups across the region through outreach and educational initiatives.

SMFC's gift will help Fairfield University fulfill its mission of fostering education, remembrance, and reflection on the atrocities of the Holocaust, as well as the broader issues of antisemitism and genocide against women and children.

The four-part program will serve as a powerful testament to the enduring human spirit and a solemn reminder of the atrocities of the past and inspire future generations to stand against injustice and promote peace and tolerance.⁶

83

Year-Old Jesuit
Institution

5000

Full-time
Undergraduates

1200

Graduates students

5

Schools and Colleges





Early Support

Several major organizations have come out in support of this project because they recognize that the meaning of “Never Again” cannot be allowed to fade from our collective consciousness. Early endorsers in Connecticut include Voices of Hope, Jewish Foundation of New Haven, and the Bennett Center at Fairfield University. In addition, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum offers our donors benefits including VIP access when they visit the facility in Washington, DC. They know, as we do, that lessons from the Holocaust can be applied to every human rights violation throughout the world.

LATVIANS MEMORIALIZE THEIR MURDERED JEWS

In 2005, Latvia honored the slaughtered Jews of Liepāja with a memorial in the shape of a Menorah set in the sand dunes and killing fields outside the city.

Granite slabs, each weighing seven tons, symbolize the seven flames of the menorah. The slabs are inscribed in Hebrew with text from the Lamentations of Jeremiah. They include translations in English, Latvian and Russian.

References and additional notes:

¹The Economist. (2023, December 7). One in five young Americans thinks the Holocaust is a myth. <https://www.economist.com/united-states/2023/12/07/one-in-five-young-americans-thinks-the-holocaust-is-a-myth>

²“U.S. Millennial Holocaust Knowledge and Awareness Survey,” September 2020, Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference)

³Lebovic, Matt. (2023). Harrowing Šķēde massacre photos help reframe Holocaust in German-occupied Latvia. The Times of Israel. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/harrowing-skede-massacre-photos-help-reframe-holocaust-in-german-occupied-latvia/>

⁴Fairfield University <https://www.fairfield.edu/academics/schools-and-colleges/index.html>

⁵Echoes & Reflections (ADL, USC Shoah Foundation, Yad Vashem) U.S. College Survey (2020). <https://echoesandreflections.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/College-Survey-Summary-Article-September-2020-a.pdf>

⁶Fairfield University is neither involved nor responsible for any of the SMFC fundraising activities; will neither receive nor be involved in the management of any Funds raised towards the project which instead will be managed through Shoah Memorial Fairfield, Inc, a separate 501(c)(3) created and oversee exclusively by its Directors. The university will have no responsibility for any issues, concerns, or challenges related to the Memorial's fundraising, management, or execution. Bellarmine Hall photo by Joe Adams.

Join Our Effort

Many states—including Connecticut—have enacted laws requiring Holocaust and genocide education in public school curricula. Bringing these lessons to life requires resources and innovative learning tools, especially public art.

Your support for the Shoah Memorial of Fairfield, Connecticut is an opportunity to preserve that history and ensure that no child or young adult in the community will ever wonder about the meaning of “Never Again.”



Gift Recognition Levels



MONUMENT

\$100,000 and up



CURRICULUM

\$2,500 - \$17,999



BRONZE CAMERA

\$50,000 - \$99,999



PARTNERS IN REMEMBRANCE

\$500 - \$2,499



ONSITE SELF-GUIDED TOUR PLAQUES

\$18,000 - \$49,999



FRIENDS OF SMFC

\$19 - \$499

Giving levels will receive recognition on the website and on location at the monument installation. For more information on donations, including wire transfers and stock donations, contact **SMFC Board Chair, Paul Burger: paul@paulburger.net / 203-762-6700.**



**Donor benefits
include VIP access
to the U.S. Holocaust
Memorial Museum.**

Send tax-deductible donations to:

The Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven, CT
Shoah Memorial Fairfield, CT
360 Amity Road, Suite 201
Woodbridge, CT 06525

**Make checks payable to the Jewish
Foundation/Shoah Memorial**

The Jewish Foundation of New Haven, CT, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and will send donors confirmation of the charitable donation.

For information on fundraising goals and costs associated with the installation of the monument visit, www.shoahmemorialfairfieldct.com.

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