

2016 HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL Mayor's Remarks

We are here today to remember the Holocaust. And for those of you who attend this ceremony every year, my words today will sound a lot like what I said last year ... and the year before ...

But that is by design. The message of the Holocaust does not change, although our world certainly does. Every day we read in the papers and watch on television the violent, graphic images of acts of terrorism carried out in the name of ethnic cleansing ... or as we call it, genocide.

This is not the 1930s and 1940s. We are not in a World War against a single dictator. But we are dealing with new faces of evil.

So, yes, the years have progressed ... but the issues and challenges remain the same, which is why it's important to gather and talk about the Holocaust. So that we never forget.

Not so very long ago – in the heart of civilized modern Europe – democracy failed. The courage to remember this HORRIFIC TIME is essential, so that we protect our own society from such a fate.

The holocaust did not happen during primitive times. It occurred in an enlightened, cultured and well-educated society. REMEMBER – It was engineers who designed and built the gas chambers.

It was professional lawyers who wrote the Nuremburg laws excluding Jews from German life and taking away many of their natural rights.

It was physicians who conducted so-called “scientific experiments” on human beings at Auschwitz and other extermination centers.

And, it was from the pulpits of churches and the lecture halls of universities that National Socialism was promoted – paving the way for the “ethnic cleansing” of the Holocaust.

Ordinary people – just like you and me – in cities and towns all over the Reich – were capable of doing evil. WE MUST REMEMBER how that happened and we must continually strive

to overcome intolerance and indifference so that such terrible things do not happen again.

We must never forget the atrocities that can occur when individuals or nations choose to look the other way – when they choose to cower in fear rather than to stand up with courage and fight against the injustices of oppressors of freedom.

We must REMEMBER stories of bravery and courage.

We are gathered here in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, and in honor of the survivors, as well as the rescuers and liberators.

Sixty-seven years ago, as American, British, and Soviet soldiers moved across Europe to stop the advancing Nazi troops, they

encountered and liberated concentration camp prisoners who suffered terrible atrocities at the hands of the Nazis. We are so fortunate to have with us today those who can help us remember that even in the darkest hours, there is hope.

The Holocaust began with a seed of prejudice and grew to appalling proportions and included terrible crimes against humanity.

More than six decades after the end of the Third Reich, it remains our responsibility as a free people in a democratic society to strive to overcome intolerance and indifference through learning and remembrance. And by remembering the terrible events of the Holocaust, we must rededicate ourselves to remain vigilant against hatred, persecution, and tyranny in all forms.

The story of the Holocaust, as troubling as it is, must continue to be told so that our children and grandchildren know the result of indifference and intolerance.

MAYOR: AT THIS TIME YOU WILL READ THE PROCLAMATION LOCTED ON THE PODIUM.

MAYOR: INTRODUCE KEYNOTE SPEAKER, TIBOR KLOPFER

I would now like to introduce our keynote speaker Tibor (TE-BOR) Klopfer (KLAP-FER) who will speak on his family's experience. Tibor's parents Mancie (MUNCIE) and Michael, were from Hungary and were among those thrown into prison at concentration camps in Poland and Germany.

In July of 1944, his mother was deported from Hungary to Auschwitz-Birkenau and then taken to a slave labor camp at Guben (GOO-BEN). As Russian soldiers advanced that winter, she and others were forced to leave the camp on foot.

Tibor's father lost all of his immediate family, including his first wife and two young daughters. He spent much of the war Hungarian and German forced labor camps.

Presentations like the one we are about to hear put a real human face on a tragic historical event that many of us have only experienced in the pages of history books.

Please join me in welcoming Tibor Klopfer!

HAND THE PROCLAMATION TO TIBOR.

RETURN TO SEAT.