Secretary Clinton Appoints U.S. Delegation to the Prague Holocaust Era Assets Conference

BUREAU OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS       ESTHER FINDER
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Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton today announced the appointment of the U.S. Delegation to the Holocaust Era Assets Conference to be held in Prague June 26-30. In May, Secretary Clinton announced that Ambassador Stuart E. Eizenstat, former Deputy Secretary of the Treasury, would head the delegation.

Representatives of 49 countries, most of which were affected by Nazi crimes during World War II, and nearly two dozen NGOs have been invited to attend. The Conference will focus on immovable (real) property, Nazi-looted art, Holocaust education and remembrance, archival access, the recovery of Judaica, and the social welfare needs of survivors of Nazi persecution.

Included in the U.S. Delegation was Germantown Psychology part-time professor: Esther Finder, President, The Generation After and member of the Coordinating Council of Generations of the Shoah International (GSI).

Esther Finder and Israeli Delegate and Holocaust survivor Reuven Merhav

In the words of Esther:

For those of us who were born out of the ashes of the Holocaust, commemoration and remembrance are very important. We often think about those members of our families who were absent from our lives: grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. The homes and communities where our parents were raised are long gone but we are here to remember.

Along with remembrance comes education. It is important that new generations learn about the horrors of the Holocaust and what can happen when hate, intolerance and discrimination become institutionalized. There is so much to learn from the World War II experience. As a psychology instructor, I teach my students about post-traumatic stress disorder, the Milgram experiment, the power of the situation, etc. I am also a member of the Montgomery College Speakers Bureau. There are lessons in history, literature, political science, ethics, and other disciplines to be found in this tragic human experience.

I helped organize the very first Holocaust commemoration at Montgomery College and have worked on many over the years. The Paul Peck Humanities Institute holds an annual Holocaust Commemoration in April to correspond with Yom Hashoah, the international Day of Remembrance on the Jewish calendar. This Rockville event has a wide following at the college, typically bringing in audiences of 300 or more people, and gives our diverse community an opportunity to become involved in remembrance and education. In the past two years we initiated a segment where student volunteers read brief histories of some of the victims and survivors and that has made the experience more personal to both the readers and the audience.

I also help coordinate the annual commemoration in the DC area. As President of The Generation After, the Washington area group of children of survivors, I have brought survivors together with students and Montgomery County residents on many occasions. It is meaningful for the survivors because they can see that people care enough to listen and learn about the Holocaust and it is good for the community as they get to meet eyewitnesses to history.

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Montgomery College commemorations are wonderful opportunities for students to meet and listen to Holocaust survivors but there is a larger community that should also be reached so I worked with former Maryland State Senator, Len Teitelbaum, to get legislation passed to create a Holocaust, Genocide Studies, Human Rights and Tolerance Center in our state. I went to Annapolis to testify before the State Senate and House of Delegates and tried to convince our legislators of the value of Holocaust education. We were successful, this was passed into law and the center will be housed at Towson University. It was my honor to be on the task force that created the concept for this center.

For years I worked as an oral historian recording survivor testimony for both the US Holocaust Memorial Museum and Steven Spielberg’s Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation. The hundreds of testimonies I documented will help generations unborn learn from people who were actually there during the war.

This past summer I had an opportunity to reach a unique audience. In addition to my work locally, I am one of the founders of Generations of the Shoah International (GSI), a network of survivors, their children and grandchildren. GSI also serves as the bridge between the survivor community and the major Holocaust-related organizations and institutions worldwide. GSI promotes education and commemoration and also tries to improve the situation for our aging survivor parents. Holocaust survivors are in their golden years and their needs go beyond the needs of other aging Americans.

In my work with Generation After and GSI, I have had the opportunity to interact with US government agencies and foreign embassies. I was invited to become part of the official US Delegation to the Holocaust Era Assets International Conference in Prague. My role was to speak on behalf of our aging parents and to talk about how survivors in the US have issues and concerns that differ from survivors in other parts of the world.

People in other countries think that the US is a rich place and Holocaust survivors have everything they need. The truth is that about half the survivors in the US live at or below the poverty level and are struggling.

For many survivors, the horrors of the past never left them. After the war they rebuilt lives, had children, and worked hard making a living. Now they are retired and have time to reflect on the pain and loss they endured. For survivors who have dementia and short term memory issues, their long-term memory is good. They may regularly be re-living the concentration camps and each time they do, it is like a fresh experience complete with suffering and terror.

The US State Department wanted me to talk about these issues so representatives from the 49 countries at the conference could understand what the situation is for survivor families in America and elsewhere. A copy of my presentation is posted online: Caring for Our Aging Survivor Parents. (http://www.genshoah.org/prague_presentation062809.pdf)

When I came home from Prague there was an email waiting for me from the Washington Jewish Week newspaper asking me to write up an Op Ed on the conference. My Op Ed was published in the paper and also picked up by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA) and distributed all over the world: Op-Ed: Should the killers be the victims’ heirs? (http://jta.org/news/article/2009/07/12/1006475/op-ed-should-the-killers-be-the-victims-heirs)

By teaching the lessons of the Holocaust I hope that future generations can learn from the mistakes of the past. Maybe, just maybe, these lessons can one day help make this world a better place… Esther’s e-mail address: etfinder@juno.com

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From the Provost:

Dr. Judy A. Ackerman

A Special Warm welcome

to the new part-time faculty who have joined our campus community this semester and welcome back to those of you who are returning to the College. For those of you who are new, I hope that you will come to believe that Montgomery College is a special place with endless possibilities and where we are in the business of changing lives.

Each fall I look forward to the release of the Beloit College “Mind-Set List”, a humorous attempt to describe the world view of their entering freshman class. It reminds us that our students really have grown up in times that were different than ours and that their reality is different than ours. The Mind-Set list for the class of 2013 included 75 items. Here are some of my favorites from this year’s list:

- The Green Giant has always been Shrek, not the big guy picking vegetables.
- They have never used a card catalog to find a book.
- Tattoos have always been very chic and highly visible.
- They have never had to “shake down” an oral thermometer.
- State abbreviations in addresses have never had periods.
- Amateur radio operators have never needed to know Morse code.
- Everyone has always known what the evening news was before the Evening News came on.

Fall enrollment is up substantially at all three campuses this semester. There is a record number of students at Rockville with just over 17,000 credit students.

This was the summer of construction projects large and small on the Rockville campus. The largest and most dramatic project is clearly the new science center and by now, the progress is pretty dramatic as work is beginning on the structure of the fourth floor. The duck pond, aka storm water management pond, was drained in the spring so that work could be done on underground connections east of the pond. Next summer it will be drained again for additional work on the pond and the road which serves as a dam. Once all of the permits are approved for the pond, work will also begin to move the tennis courts and create an additional parking lot on the current courts.

This summer’s sidewalk work also included IT cabling to the new building site. The first day of classes found all of our sidewalks open. All that remains to be completed is the work in front of Theatre Arts. We continue to think green with the construction of a rain garden, a water feature powered with solar power, and a sundial surrounded by inspirational words about nature.

The news on the economy is still not good. At the end of August we became aware of a proposal to cut state aid to community colleges by 5% to help to address the state’s $700 million shortfall. This amounts to $1.9 million for Montgomery College. Additional cuts are anticipated from the County. Montgomery College will continue the Cost Savings program that was initiated last year. That means that with very few exceptions hiring and long distance travel are frozen and major purchases are subject to additional review.

Emergency planning and preparation are an ongoing fact of life on college campuses and takes place here under the leadership of Mr. Robert Wirth, Director of Emergency Planning. He reminds us of the following four items regarding H1N1:

- The best way to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated. H1N1 vaccine will be available later in the fall.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, wash your hands often, and avoid contact with individuals who are ill.
- If you are sick, stay home until at least 24 hours after you are fever free without fever-reducing medications.
- Check the website flu.gov for the latest news on H1N1 and seasonal flu.

We all need to plan ahead now on how we might keep students informed about course work and assignments in the event that large numbers in our College community come down with the flu or we need to make changes in our academic calendar. This may be the perfect opportunity for you to try new to you technologies as one way to communicate with your students this semester. I recently read two articles on this topic. The first one, Teaching the Quarantined, appeared...
A special warm welcome

Continued

in the August 19th issue of Inside Higher Ed, an online publication. The other, In Case of Emergency, Break Tradition – Teach Online, was in the August 17th Chronicle of Higher Education. This may also be the semester where we will all have to be just a little more flexible regarding attendance and due dates if we really expect those who are ill to stay home.

The Facilities Department is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for students, employees, and visitors to learn, work, and enjoy campus facilities. They have developed a number of emergency planning documents. The Emergency Procedures provide guidelines for employees and students when reporting or responding to emergencies. This is available on the College webpage at http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/EDU/Plain2.aspx?id=4191

Teaching and learning is our business so I am always interested in best practices and ideas to implement in the classroom. The August 17th issue of The Chronicle of Higher Education included an article by Rob Jenkins, Tips for New Teachers at Community Colleges. There were five tips that really apply to all faculty members.

1. Appear confident. He describes good teaching as largely performance theater and suggests that if you act confident, students will have confidence in your abilities.

2. Be consistent. This will allow you to establish your credibility because you will have determined in advance what you intend to accomplish in the classroom and how best to go about it. If you need to make changes, he suggests that you provide the class with a clear explanation of what you’re doing and why.

3. Don’t take yourself too seriously. He says, “They’re much more likely to conclude that some aspects of your course really are important if you don’t act as if everything is.”

4. Keep your distance by developing a user-friendly persona while maintaining an appropriate professional relationship with your students.

5. Remember whom you’re teaching. Your students are probably not the type of student that you were as an undergraduate.

As we start this academic year under the cloud of continued economic problems and with the threat of a major H1N1 outbreak we need to work together to work on building and enriching our community so that we support one another through these stresses. A number of opportunities will take place where you can come together with other member of our campus community. I will host What’s On Your Mind? several times a semester to provide informal opportunities to talk about the issues that we face and for you to offer constructive suggestions and will continue the Innovations in the Classroom brown bag sessions where we talk about what you are doing in your classrooms. I will be particularly interested in hearing about additional ways that you devise to distribute information and communicate with your students in the event that H1N1 has a major impact on our campus.

On the first day of classes, the campus was overflowing with some very important people, our students. They joined some other very important people, our Montgomery College faculty, staff and administrators. I thank you for all that you do to help our students accomplish their academic goals. Please let me know how I can help you. judy.ackerman@montgomerycollege.edu

Sally McClean

I want to thank each of you who have supported my husband’s memorial fund which was set up to benefit Germantown part-time Instructors. With your help, we can next year have a catered adjunct appreciation reception with white tablecloths! If you would like to contribute to the fund, please make out checks to:

Philip McClean Germantown Adjunct Faculty Memorial Fund #TU2261
Montgomery College Foundation
900 Hungerford Drive,
Rockville, Md. 20852.
Tecola W. Hagos [Phineaus] was a Diplomat in the United States as a Delegate representing Ethiopia at the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York City in 1976 when radical revolutionary military officers took over the Transitional Government of Ethiopia. He moved to Washington DC and started a new and difficult life. He participated in a number of resistance political movements, and was an active supporter of the political Party that is now in power in Ethiopia after defeating the Military dictatorship in 1991. In 1991 he went back to Ethiopia after fifteen years of exile and opposition politics hoping to rebuild the devastated nation due to war and natural disasters. Sadly, soon after he joined the new administration as Senior Advisor to the Prime Minister, and a Deputy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he became aware of the fact that what he helped establish was a worse autocracy of narrow ethnicism that replaced the previous military dictatorship in name only. He promptly left the new dictators and came back (on his second exile in 1993) to his second home the United States, which he profoundly and greatly appreciates with far deeper understanding of the vigilance required to keep a democratic society functioning.

Fighting for Christian principles and for Ethiopia’s national vital interest is not something new to Tecola and his ancestors. He is born into a Family of great scholars and warriors who had served Ethiopia for hundreds of generations. A family legend has it that five hundred years earlier from Europe’s First Crusade (AD 1095-1101), the real “First” Crusade was launched by King Kaleb of Axum (Ethiopia) in AD 829-30 to protect Christians from vicious persecution by a local Arab new convert to Judaism called Dhu Nuwas Yusuf Dhu Nuwas, a floruit 510s) was the last king of the Himyarite kingdom of Yemen. Some sources state that he was the successor of Rabiah, a member of the same dynasty; the archeologist Alessandro de Maigret believes he was an usurper….., the Himyarite ruler of Yemen, a brutal tyrant, in what is now Saudi Arabia/Yemen. The righteous Axumite army was commanded by one of his ancestors. The tyrant Dhu Nuwas was liquidated and peace was restored, and Ethiopia ruled the area until the time of Mohammed a century later.

In our own modern age, for example, there is a new book written by Andrew Hilton, *The Ethiopian Patriots* (2008), with a Chapter on the heroic account of Tecola’s patriotic father, Gramatch Hagos Hailu, who fought the Fascist Italian occupation Army for five years 1935-41, as a young man barely out of his teenage years, along with Tecola’s Grandfather and cousins. Whereby Mussolini’s Fascist army was trashed and Ethiopian independence of over three thousand years once again preserved from historic enemies. Sadly Tecola’s other patriotic maternal Grandfather was executed at Lake Hayek shores (Tecola’s beautiful ancestral home with the great Cathedral of St. Stephens on the Island) by an Italian Fascist military firing squad in 1936 during the height of the patriotic resistance struggle.

Tecola earned his first professional Degree (equivalent to a Juris Doctor), from Ethiopia’s famous National University, Haile Selassie I University (1964-71), and later earned several Graduate Degrees from Georgetown University and Law Center (1979-85) where he studied international law, foreign relations, laws of international organizations, literature, jurisprudence and philosophy. He was also Fellow at Harvard University for two years (1983-98), after he resigned from the new Ethiopian administration on principle, where he finished writing a couple of books on human rights and the development of constitutional democracy and political change in Ethiopia, and on the process of the creation of the new South Africa. And one of his books was required text for two graduate courses at Harvard University Kennedy School of Government, where he was also invited several times as a guest speaker.

Tecola has been an adjunct faculty member for over ten years at Montgomery College (MC) starting his association with MC at the Takoma Campus in 1998 teaching EN 101/101A and other ESL courses. Having moved to the Rockville Campus in 1998, he had been teaching Philosophy Courses (PL 201 - Intro. to Philosophy; PL 202 – Ethics; PL 180 - Law and Morality; PL 190 - Logic) until last year. He continues to teach EL 104 to date. Tecola participated in a number of school activities, such as the Montgomery College at Takoma Park Community Colloquium, where he presented papers as member of the discussion panels; along with his students participated at the recent Holocaust Commemoration and the Darfur genocide awareness rally [http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/Departments/ planet/NavigatingUncertainties/home.html]

Not only Tecola is an avid reader of books and journal articles but also a prolific writer. He has written several books (two in print) on a variety of subjects (about ten manuscripts), including a Primer on Logic for College Students. He is actively engaged in both local and international politics. He is the Editor of a Website (since 2001) [www.tecolaflagos.com][1] [the famous Ethiopianist Donald Levine, Professor Emeritus at the University of Chicago, identified as “the best-edited and most sophisticated Ethiopian websites I have seen”] where experts in various fields contribute serious works for publication. Tecola has written numerous articles, book reviews, and commentaries posted both in his own Website and in others. He is also an art critic and an accomplished painter. Some of his popular works (paintings) are on permanent display at the National Museum of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa, and in private collections around the World. The National Museum of Ethiopia is the home of the world famous fossil “Lucy” a hominid some three million years old, and many other extraordinary collections of artifacts. [http://www.mediaethiopia.com/arts/nationalmuseum.htm][2] [http://www.ethiopianart.org];
Butterfly Skewered on a Pin

The other day a friend said, “'want ‘see my collection?”

“Sure, no great harm, in being a guest of One,”

I mumbled. In glass boxes, row after row,

Big ones, little ones, and big ones again,

Some shimmering, vested in ephemeral tints glow,

These shards of light, the hand that sculpted attain

Fluttering quanta, origami of folded Rainbow:

The Monarch, the Ulysses, and the Blue Morpho—

Heaven's filaments all, weightless as flakes of snow—

Aurora Borealis wondrous light stoops,

Stretches, spreads, and stabs through the ages,

At the eternal sublime Dance of Life, I shrieked.

Forgive us all; I atone for these lifeless wings!

Be speak’ of riddle the Oracle of Axum or of Thebes:

Through each throbbing life, how so each single pin threads

A thing of beauty? I pondered the dreams of Vishnu,

Why spike light in frames? Isn't Man butterfly too?

In glass boxes, row after row,

Big ones, little ones, and big ones again,

For I too a skewered-butterfly wiggle in pain

My imprint on humanity, my soul’s shadow!

By Tecola W. Hagos [Phineaus]

Phineaus.St.Claire@montgomerycollege.edu

From Arsenic and Humor: A Book of Verses [manuscript]

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Wired & Wireless,” an EN 102 Learning Community on the Takoma Park Campus taught by Mark Miller, Takoma Park Librarian and Dr. Saundra Rose Maley for several semesters focuses on serious library research. The students are to think of themselves as scholars and to move beyond the confines of the classroom to examine primary sources at one of the greatest libraries in the world—the Library of Congress, especially the Manuscript Division. These visits to the Manuscript Division are often the highlight of the semester. The opportunity for students to hold and examine actual letters, diaries, and other documents of famous (Frederick Douglass, Sigmund Freud, J. Robert Oppenheimer) and not-so-famous figures (Edward Bernays, Reinhold Niebuhr, Vannevar Bush) ignites a spark of enthusiasm that carries them through the rigor of creating footnotes and bibliographies. They return to class exhilarated and relate their adventures and discoveries to the class. Their delight is contagious. For most students, this experience is the first time they have ever felt that they, too, can be included in the “Great Conversation” that has been going on among scholars for centuries.

This kind of broad exposure to the varied aspects of scholarship is invaluable to students’ interest in and understanding of intellectual pursuits and encourages their development as educated, well-informed, and confident young people. The principles they learn about evaluating and documenting sources, speaking with experts, and ultimately producing original research in their final papers can be applied across the disciplines. Ultimately, what they learn about combining the new technology of the digital age (Wired) with the traditional methods of scholarship (Wireless), lays a foundation for a lifetime of learning.

Robin Lovrien (AELP-Takoma SS) has published a chapter entitled "Issues in Identifying Learning Disabilities for Adult English Language Learners." This chapter appears in "Learning to Achieve: A Review of the Research Literature on Serving Adults with Learning Disabilities," published by the National Institute for Literacy in July, 2009. The publication is available for free at NIFL.gov. Ms. Lovrien, who has studied issues around language learning difficulties in adults for over 20 years, is currently a Ph.D candidate at Lesley University, Cambridge MA and a busy ESL teacher and consultant in the DC area.

The Part Time Faculty Committee at Germantown held its initial meeting for the 2009-2010 school year. The committee is comprised of three adjunct faculty, Belle Scheibner (co-chair), Dina Yagodich (co-chair) and Richard Berglund, as well as three full-time faculty, Janis Gallagher, Tami Isaacs, and Jorinde van den Berg. Meetings will be held monthly, with the first 30 minutes open to adjunct faculty who have comments or interests to share. The next meeting will be held Friday, October 9 at 12:00 in SA145. This year, in addition to planning the Part-Time Faculty Reception held in the Spring, the committee is considering a “lecture series”, showcasing the experience and knowledge of our talented adjuncts. In addition, the creation of a welcome packet geared to part-time faculty teaching at Germantown or the first time has been discussed. If you have suggestions or comments you would like to present to the committee but cannot attend the meeting, please email either Belle Scheibner (belle.scheibner@montgomerycollege.edu) or Dina Yagodich (dina.yagodich@montgomerycollege.edu). We hope to hear from you!
Do Not Come to Class!!

Not if you have flu symptoms which include fever, lethargy, lack of appetite, coughing, runny nose, sore throat, nausea or stomach problems. Also warm your students to stay away from class if they have similar symptoms.

www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu