

# Survivor speaks during commemoration

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It has been almost 45 years since Adolf Hitler and the Nazis opened a hole of death and pushed six million Jews over the edge. Forty-five years many seem a long time to some, but on April 3, 250 people were brought together by a Holocaust commemoration program sponsored by the Student Government Association, the Center for Southern Studies and the JSU Holocaust Committee, which consists of Phil Attinger of the SGA; Clint Baker, a student; Linda Cain, assistant professor and assistant librarian; Teresa Suco, assistant professor of foreign language; and Steve Whitton, professor of English.

The program started with a welcome by Attinger and then was followed by an invocation by Dan Spector of Temple Beth-El in Anniston. Music was then provided by Samuel Brown and Jerryl Davis of the JSU Department of Music. Poems and comments were made by Teresa Carter, Attinger, Matt Brooks, Clint Baker and Susan Methvin, who is an instructor in the Department of English. There was also a silent slide presentation, which depicted the horrors and hope of the Holocaust.

The highlight of the presentation

was the story of Ruth Siegler, a survivor. She described her life in a very frank and human way.

In the late 1930s, her father left Germany for Holland to escape the Nazis. Before he could return, Germany captured Holland. His family joined him at a deportation camp in Holland called Westerbork. They had to register as Jews and wear the Cross of David.

"Every Monday," said Siegler, "the soldiers would round up thousands and put them on the cattle trains."

Once people left, they were never heard from again.

In 1944, her brother was assigned to be shipped out. The family decided they wanted to be together so they all went. The family was shipped to Theresienstadt, which was a "model camp" set up by the

Nazis to show the Red Cross how well the Jews were being treated.

"People did not get enough to eat," Siegler said. "People just starved to death."

The family was then sent to Auschwitz.

"They herded us into the train like cattle," she said. "There was not much food or water and the air was stale."

When they arrived at the camp, all possessions and then clothes were taken. The group was then herded into the gas chambers.

"I can still feel the cold grates of the floor on my bare feet," she said.

The floor was in reality a trap door that opened and emptied the bodies from the gas chamber.

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# Survivor

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For some reason Siegler's party was **not** gassed. The **doors** were opened and they taken **to a neighboring** compound. Here she and her sister were separated. She said her family was never reunited.

The **two** sisters were then taken **to Birkenau**, which was a labor camp.

"We were beaten **all the time**, or mistreated just **to keep us busy**," she said, "If you refused to **work** they (the Nazis) **would take your life**."

As Russian forces advanced

**against the Nazis**, the sisters were forced to march with 800 other prisoners. On the way, hundreds died.

"Out of 800 people only 50 survived," she said.

As the group was nearing the sea, one of their guards told them to run for their lives. Weak and sick with typhoid, they ran and began searching for a place to stay. Eventually, they came to a house but discovered 20 Nazi soldiers inside. The Nazis left them alone and when they awoke the next morning, they dis-

covered they were alone. A Russian major found them and arranged for them to go to a hospital for treatment.

After the war, Siegler moved to the United States. She now lives in Birmingham

At the end of Siegler's speech, Suco presented her **with long-stemmed yellow roses**

The program was ended by Rudy Kemp, an Anniston business man. After speaking briefly, he ended the service by reciting the Kaddish, a prayer of mourning