



# Alliance for the Study of the Holocaust & Genocide

## Sonoma State University

<https://holocaust.sonoma.edu/alliance> • email: [alliance@sonoma.edu](mailto:alliance@sonoma.edu)



## Annual Newsletter: 2025 In Review

### Report from the 2025 Alliance Co-Presidents

Welcome to the new virtual Alliance for the Study of the Holocaust & Genocide at Sonoma State University newsletter! To join the sustainability efforts of the Center for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide at SSU, the Alliance has also moved to publish all future Alliance Newsletters and events digitally. This will also allow us to share more promptly in the future by sending you the newsletter via email, in color with more photos, and with expanded reports such as of our Education Committee speaker engagements in our local secondary schools. If you know anyone who wants to be on our mailing list, who should be on our mailing list, or who might be interested in what we're doing, please forward their email address to the Center for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide at [centerh@sonoma.edu](mailto:centerh@sonoma.edu).



**Christyne Davidian**  
Alliance Co-President



**Susan Victor**  
Alliance Co-President

In addition to all the outstanding speakers and lectures for the 2025 Spring Lecture Series, our other 2025 highlights included introducing the Mary Davidian Dolbashian Armenian Genocide Education Endowment at a special dinner honoring Christyne Davidian for founding this endowment named for her late mother.

The Education Committee, under the leadership of SSU Emerita Professor of secondary education Susan Victor, once again reached well over 3000 students with more details in her report below. We welcomed a new board member to the Alliance, Jennifer Jaffe. Jennifer is the granddaughter of Simon Jaffe who was one of the founding members for the Alliance; thus, Jennifer has come full circle to continue the efforts and mission of the Alliance.

As always, we are grateful to all our Alliance Board members and Education Committee speakers for their commitment and dedication to supporting the Alliance, our community, and the SSU Lecture Series.

We offer our thanks to Dean Troi Carleton, Professor Stephen Bittner, and Director of Development Charlene Lennon for their guidance, vision and support through a challenging year as well as the SSU staff for their administrative help behind the scenes.

Finally, we deeply appreciate our donors who support helps to sustain the mission of the Alliance to preserve the memory of survivors and all innocent victims of genocide and further our educational outreach.

Most sincerely,  
Christyne Davidian & Susan Victor

# Spring 2025 Lecture Speakers

*We extend our sincere appreciation and thanks to all the 2025 speakers.*



**Reverend Lindsey Bell-Kerr,  
Rabbi Irwin Keller, Hanan Huneidi**  
January 21, 2025



**Professor Marc Dollinger, Ph.D.**  
January 28, 2025



**Professor Jeff Kopstein, Ph.D.**  
February 4, 2025



**Dennis Judd**  
February 11, 2025



**Davita Lesch, Psy.D., Susan Victor,  
Ed.D., Rena Victor**  
February 18, 2025



**Professor Ethan Katz, Ph.D.**  
February 25, 2025



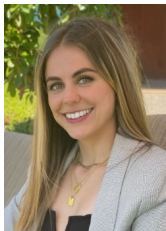
**Professor Dzovinar Derderian, Ph.D.**  
March 11, 2025



**Professor Micah Muscolino, Ph.D.**  
March 25, 2025



**Professor James Waller, Ph.D.**  
April 1, 2025



**Ashleigh Landau**  
April 8, 2025



**Professor Ussama Makdisi, Ph.D.**  
April 15, 2025



**Irfan Mizra**  
April 22, 2025



**His Excellency Johnston Busingye**  
April 29, 2025



**Her Excellency Mathilde Mukantabana  
and Geraldine Umutesi**  
May 6, 2025

## 2025 Report from the Education Officer

I am pleased to report on our very busy and successful 2025-26 school year, my third year as Education Officer and Committee Chair. As we reach the end of the school year, our 23 speakers will have completed 100 presentations in 27 different schools reaching approximately 3300 students and 115 teachers in Sonoma, Napa, and Marin counties.

Despite or perhaps due to current national and global events, we experienced a significant increase in requests this school year. (To compare, in the 2024-25 school year, we did 79 presentations reaching 2900 students.) Some highlights this school year included: Rena Victor, the only survivor in our group, completed seven presentations, sharing her story with, among others, sixth grade classes reading Alan Gratz's *Refugee* at Brookhaven Middle School in Sebastopol and Marin Country Day School in Larkspur. Rena Victor, Susan Victor and Davita Victor Lesch did their first three generation high school presentation at John Swett High School in Crockett, invited by former Petaluma English teacher Athena Kautsch who is now the principal at John Swett. Christyne Davidian completed twelve presentations this year, teaching students and teachers about Armenia and the Armenian Genocide. Madelyn Angress Hodges and Eric Angress together presented at Roseland Collegiate Prep where their father presented the year the school opened. Teacher Rachel Sibley noted the significance of this since RCP will close at the end of this school year. Several schools requested multiple speakers. We returned to Piner High School in Santa Rosa this year, where 12 speakers presented in World History classes for three teachers. At Petaluma High School, multiple English and World History teachers requested a total of ten speakers in their classes this year.



**Susan Victor**  
Alliance Co-President

We gratefully returned to Willowside Middle School in Santa Rosa where teacher Julia Castro does an extensive Holocaust unit during which 145 students read various Holocaust-themed books. The teacher expressed her appreciation to the five speakers noting "The students came back to school today and were saying how interesting and moving the presentations were, also noting the emotion with which your stories were told. You absolutely made an impact and have given them something to help them understand this time in history better." Earlier in the school year, students in all the ninth grade English classes at Montgomery High School in Santa Rosa heard from twelve speakers, as they read Elie Wiesel's *Night*. We continued our collaboration with Alex Peterson at Justin-Siena High School in Napa. Alex invited seven speakers to World History classes this year. First time schools this year included Vintage High School in Napa, Healdsburg High School and Twin Hills Middle School in Sebastopol.

Board member and long-time Holocaust educator, Jim McGarry, and I are continuing to expand the curriculum support materials we provide teachers who request speakers.

I am extremely grateful to the speakers and to the teachers who invite us. In one of many thank you letters we received, a student reminds us why our message of resilience and hope is essential for adolescents during these troubling times. "I appreciate you for coming to our class and talking about the life of your family, and the way you are strong enough to talk about it. The thing I learned about is to be strong and not give up no matter what."



Susan Victor, Rena Victor, Davita Victor Lesch with



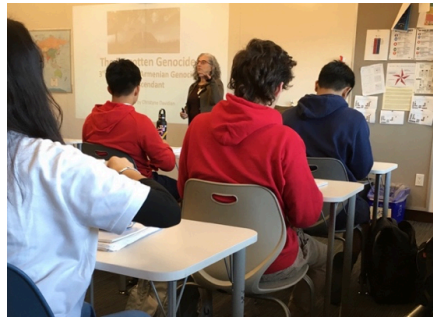
Kathy Dudgeon and Gloria Glickman with teacher Julia Castro at Willowside Middle School



Ann Slater at Piner High School





Michaela Grobbel at Petaluma High School



Christyne Davidian at Piner High School



Madelyn Angress Hodges & Eric Angress at Roseland Collegiate Prep


In Memoriam


**Larry Carlin** - Past Alliance Board Member and Publicity Manager from 2005-2011.  
*His kind soul and passion for social justice will be missed.*

**Edith Newman** - Holocaust Survivor  
**Taubia Weiss** - Holocaust Survivor

**Dinner Attendees Honoring Christyne Davidian and Her  
 New Endowment: *Mary Dolbashian Davidian Armenian  
 Genocide Education Endowment***



**Front Row L to R** : Carol Hurwitz, Suzanne Roberts, Maral Chalian, Dzovinar Derderian, Lynn Arsanis, Christyne Davidian, Emma Charlebois, Barbara Lesch McCaffry, Abbe Altman, Arline Thomas, Eszter Freeman, Susan Victor

**Middle Row L to R**: Harry Davitian, Hasmig Tatiossian, Diane Kaljian-Coombs, Gloria Glickman, Mimi Malaian

**Back Row L to R**: Jacob Yarrow, Todd Cereghino, Khatch Khatchadourian, Mark Combs, Elena Kaljian, Peter Kaljian, George Hamamjian, Dean Troi Carleton, Michaela Grobbel, Matthew Hubert, Linda Gozurian McMahon, Nicole Bloch, Charlene Lennon

## 2025 Donations and Tributes

*Our deepest gratitude to the following donors who make it possible to continue the work of our Alliance founders:*

### ***Adele Zygielbaum Memorial Endowment***

Geoff & Deborah Perel

### ***Alexandre Kimenyi Memorial Education Fund***

Ambassador Mathilde Mukantabana

Anonymous

Todd W. Cereghino, in honor of FORA

David Salm

### ***Alliance for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide***

Dr. Karen Moranski & John Moranski

James & Patricia McBride

Nancy Harris, in memory of Claire & Robert L. Harris

Robin & Barry Weinzveg

Arnold & Karen Herskovic

Daniel & Deborah Mason

Martin Klein

Alfred & Karen Snyder

Shelley Bauer

Dzieza Family Fund of American Endowment Foundation

Karin Wandrei, in memory of Linda Pearl Cushman

Charles & Margo Klipp

Sanders & Laureen Newman Feldhorn

Dr. Madeleine Rose & Mr. Edward Berger

Michael Tange & Joanne Figone

Anonymous, in memory of Rozsa & Oszkar Nussbaum

### ***Armenian Genocide Memorial Lecture Fund***

Lynn Arsanis, in memory of Margaret & Apkar Parokian

Todd Cereghino, in honor of WWII Armenian Righteous

Gentile Rescuers

Gloria Glickman, in honor of Christyne Davidian

### ***Center for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide***

Laurie Johnston

AbbVie, Inc. Matching Gift on behalf of Laurie Johnston

Judith Cain

Daniel & Deborah Mason

Benevity Community Impact Fund

Ernest & Sherie Hintereder

Paula Freeman & Michael Cusick

Jewish Community Federation, San Francisco Region, in

tribute to Dr. & Mrs. Ernest Newbrun

Mary K. Praetzellis, in memory of Estelle Goldstein

Dr. Clarice Stasz, in honor of Barbara Lesch McCaffry

Abbe Altman, in memory of Berni Altman

Geoff & Deborah Perel

Christyne Davidian, in memory of Barbara Bittner

Carole Priven, in memory of Franta MaierDr. Barbara Lesch

McCaffry, in memory of Barbara Bittner

Dr. Naomi W. Granvold

### ***Emil & Lillian Judd Endowment***

Ivan Barta, in memory of Lillian Judd

Melvin Decker

### ***Mary Dolbashian Davidian Armenian Genocide Education Endowment***

Harry Davitian, in memory of Siranoush Davitian

George Hamamjian

David Salm

Rosemond & Arthur Muncheryan

Medtronic, Inc., Matching Gift on behalf of Christyne Davidian

Medtronic, Inc., Volunteer Grant on behalf of Christyne

Davidian

### ***Paul V. Benko Endowment***

Jamie & Gary Blumenthal

Flora Lee Ganzler

Joel & Pam Neuberger, in honor of Dr. Stephen Bearg

Sahib-Amar & Amar Khalsa, in memory of Sylvia G. Sucher

Dr. Janice L. Wilson, in honor of Michael McCaffry

Ruth & D. Steven Nash

Sandra Walton, in memory of Paul Benko, Susan Garfin, &

John Steiner

David Salm

Evelyn Gurevitch

Dr. Barbara Lesch McCaffry, in memory of Larry Carlin

Rudy Lacoce & Peggy Hammett Charitable Fund

Dr. Barbara Lesch McCaffry, in memory of Edith Newman, a Holocaust survivor

Dr. Barbara Lesch McCaffry, in memory of Marcelle Marcus

### ***Dr. Peter Stanek Memorial Lecture on the History of Asia Pacific War Endowment***

Sue Lim Yee

Kristin Jensen

Cathy Tsang

Dr. Kenneth A. Ross

## Giving to Our Programs

***Your kind gift can be submitted ONLINE by selecting one of the funds listed below. For fund descriptions and making your donation, please use this link:***

- **Paul V. Benko Endowment**
- **Adele Zygielbaum Memorial Endowment**
- **Emil and Lillian Judd Endowment**
- **Lecture on the History of the Japanese Occupation of China and the War in the Pacific Endowment**
- **Mary Dolbashian Davidian Armenian Genocide Education Endowment**
- **Center for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide**
- **Alliance for the Study of the Holocaust Annual SSU Lecture Series Fund**
- **Alexandre Kimenyi Memorial Education Fund for The Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda**

Email [advancement@sonoma.edu](mailto:advancement@sonoma.edu) with any donation questions.

## Alliance History

The Alliance for the Study of the Holocaust was formed in 1983 after the Yom Hashoah commemoration that year at Sonoma State University in order for the survivors to tell their stories, to educate others about their experiences, and to honor the victims. Those who began this collaborative effort between the community and members of the Sonoma State University faculty promised to let the world know of the atrocities that had occurred. The objective was to learn the historical details of the Holocaust from survivor testimonies and scholars, so that we never forget.

As a result of these efforts, a highly successful annual Lecture Series on the Holocaust and Genocide was created at Sonoma State University. As a university-community partnership, the Alliance Board includes members of the community, the University, and students who have participated in the Lecture Series. In 2010, the Alliance was changed to the Alliance for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide to reflect its revised mission and its continuing educational commitment to include all those affected by genocide.

### Alliance Mission Statement

#### Our Mission

Honor the experience and preserve the memory of the innocent victims, survivors, and rescuers impacted by the tragedy of genocide.

Support Holocaust and genocide education in conjunction with the Center for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide at Sonoma State University.

#### Our Work

Attract, collaborate, and coordinate with scholars, survivors, and experts. Outreach to our community, schools, and survivor groups. Seek funding and support methods to preserve memory.

#### Our Vision

Inspire a “never again” moral stance that focuses on our common humanity. Promote personal action and proactive prevention awareness of the causes of intolerance, genocide, and denial.

## Alliance 2025 Board Members

#### Abbe Altman

**Nicole Bloch, *Hans Angress Award Recipient & 3G Education Committee***

**Todd Cereghino, *Secretary & Publicity Officer***

**Christyne Davidian (SC), *Co-President, Fiscal & Newsletter Officer, & Education Committee***

**Eszter Freeman, *Education Committee***

**\*Jennifer Jaffee**

**Gloria Tausk Glickman, *Education Committee***

**Michaela Grobbel, Ph.D., *Education Committee***

**Yehoyada Mbangukira (SC), *Past Co-President***

**Barbara Lesch McCaffry, Ph.D., (SC), *Past President & Education Committee***

#### Associate Members

Dennis Judd, *Education Committee*

Davita Lesch, Psy.D., *3G Education Chair*

Sadie Simon, *Education Committee*

#### Senior Advisors

Joel Neuberg

Virgil Miller

H.E. Mathilde Mukantabana

Sue Ross

David Salm

#### Emeritus Board Member

**Jim McGarry, Education Committee**  
**Chiaya Rawlins, Social Media Officer**  
**Suzanne Roberts, Education Committee**  
**Rachel Sibley, Past Education Chair**  
**Arline Thomas (SC), Education Committee**  
**Susan Victor , Ed.D., (SC), Co-President & Education Officer**

Ilka Hartmann

\*New 2025 Board Member

(SC): Steering Committee Members

(3G): Third Generation Holocaust Descendants

**Past Lecture Archives**

Past Lecture Archives can be found at:

<https://holocaust.sonoma.edu/annual-lecture-series/lecture-archive>



Follow the Alliance Facebook Page at:  
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Alliance for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide | Sonoma State University 1801 E. Cotati Ave. | Rohnert Park, CA 94928 US

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