

Annual JSU event remembers the Holocaust

By Rosalind Moore

The Chanticleer Staff Writer

"It is important that we remember the Holocaust and that it not happen again," said Dr. Steven Whitton, professor of English and member of the JSU Holocaust Committee.

Each year, JSU remembers an element of history that has been associated with senselessness and grave adversity. The tragic plight of those who were persecuted, executed and tortured during the Holocaust of World War II, is forever etched into the history of our world.

The JSU Holocaust Remembrance began in 1982 as a project of the Wesley Foundation. Through years of development, the memorial has become a major event, and a dedication to learning from past



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Henry Aizenman, Holocaust survivor, answers questions during last week's Holocaust remembrance.

wrongs.

Last Thursday the JSU Holocaust Memorial Committee hosted this year's remembrance ceremony. The keynote speaker for the night was Henry Aizenman, now a resident of Birmingham.

The mission statement of JSU's Holocaust Committee emphasizes a dedication to "educating members of the University community and the community-at-large" in a time of Remembrance.

This year's remembrance was moved from the library conference area to the Ernest Stone Performing Arts Center Theatre.

"The new venue worked very well for the program," Whitton said. "I heard many comments and people were very pleased. They were more comfortable and they could see better in the theatre."

The program began with a welcome from newly elected SGA president, Chris Cook. English department professors, Susan Sellers and Teresa Reed, who also announced winners of the "Imagining the Holocaust"

writing contest for middle school and high school students.

The highlight of the evening was the keynote speaker, Aizenman. Aizenman was nine years old when, he and his family were put into the Warsaw Ghetto and were transported to over a dozen different concentration camps.

He answered questions from the audience and also gave words of wisdom to the nearly 200 listeners that crowded into the Stone Center theatre.

Aizenman was liberated by American forces at the age of 14, and he commented that "That's when [his] life began."

"I am a great American patriot," Aizenman said. "Not a mindless patriot, that thinks everything America does is

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good. I just believe that the United States is the best country in the world. I have never regretted my stay in the United States.”

Aizenman talked about his experiences in the concentration camps of Poland and also talked about his new life in the United States. He is now a father and lives in Birmingham where he worked as a jewelry salesman.

“I used to have nightmares for about 20 years,” Aizenman said. “When my son was in high school, I went and spoke to his class for a history project. I think he helped me more than I helped him, because my nightmares started to fade. I have

been talking to groups ever since.”

The remembrance ended with a traditional Jewish prayer, the Kaddish. Mourners at public services traditionally recite the Kaddish after the death of close relatives. Members of the Temple Beth-El in Anniston recited it at the remembrance as a memorial.

“Sometimes, I think like it [the Holocaust] was yesterday,” Aizenman said. “Most times I think it was a dream or my imagination. I just want people to ask me questions because after I am gone, you will have to read about these things from a book.”