



Assembly Member **SANDRÉ SWANSON**
News Release

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Swanson Honors Holocaust Survivors In Assembly Memorial Ceremony

(Sacramento) - Assemblymember Sandré R. Swanson (D-Alameda) spoke in honor of California's Holocaust survivors yesterday as part of the State Assembly's Sixth Annual Holocaust Memorial Ceremony. Two local survivors, Nelly Cesana and Marcel Nathans, were among the over 70 honorees recognized on the floor of the Assembly. Veterans of the Armed Forces from throughout California who liberated Europe were also present and received recognition.

"By honoring the survivors today, we commit to a world free from genocide. Such a commitment is one that we must reaffirm constantly, and must pass on to each succeeding generation," said Assemblymember Swanson.

Nelly Cesana grew up in Warsaw, Poland. Her brother escaped to join the underground resistance after the Nazis established the Jewish Ghetto. Ms. Cesana and her mother eventually escaped as well, and spent the remainder of the war as house slaves to a wealthy German couple. Though her brother was killed near the close of hostilities, her mother remarried a fellow survivor and the family moved to Israel, eventually immigrating to the United States in 1967.

Marcel Nathans was born and raised in the Netherlands in a secular Jewish family. Though ordered to report to a labor camp after the Nazi invasion, he and his uncle hid through the Underground in a series of safe-houses in the Dutch countryside. After the war, Nathans worked as a guard and a translator for the Allied Occupation. Nathans later moved to the United States, where he was a doctoral student in Chemistry at UC Berkeley. He worked in industry for many years, until changing careers and opening a law practice, which he maintains to this day. "I am so grateful to the Assembly for putting together this wonderful ceremony," Nathans said.

As part of the memorial, Assemblymember Swanson's office partnered with local high school students from the College Preparatory School. The students interviewed the survivors and wrote essays based on their conversations, which will be collected with other essays from students throughout the state and published by the State Assembly.

Jason Lucibello was one of the students who interviewed the survivors. "We really enjoyed our interview with Ms. Cesana. She's quite an amazing person, with an amazing story to tell," said Jason.

"Every year, the number of people who experienced this terrible history and survived to tell the world decreases at a faster and faster pace. The oral histories our young people collect ensure that the survivors' stories will not only live on in the written record, but also in the hearts and minds of a new generation of Americans," Assemblymember Swanson concluded.

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