

9/11 and Holocaust Memorials focus of Alfred University's Lefkowitz Lecture in Jewish Studies

2/08/10

Prof. James E. Young of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst will deliver the inaugural Leonard and Saradona Lefkowitz Lecture in Jewish Studies at Alfred University at 5:15 p.m. Feb. 24 in Nevins Theatre in the Powell Campus Center. Entitled "The Stages of Memory: From Berlin to New York," Young's illustrated lecture will focus on the idea of memorials and will examine the processes of memorialization around the Denkmal in Berlin and at the World Trade Center Memorial at Ground Zero in New York City. A member of the jury for the WTC Center Site Memorial, Young has also served as a consultant to Argentina's government on its memorials to the desaparecidos and was appointed by the Berlin Senate as an advisor for the construction of Germany's "Memorial to Europe's Murdered Jews." As an observer and commentator on "the living memory of survivors," Young, through his work, illuminates the collective memory of communities and nations through a focus on public art. The lecture, sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, is open to the public, free of charge. In conjunction with the Lefkowitz Inaugural Lecture in Jewish Studies and Young's lecture on Holocaust memorials, Herrick Library will be mounting a display of Holocaust and 9/11 related books, Feb. 10-24. Hillel is sponsoring the screening of two Holocaust films, both to be shown in Nevins Theatre at 6:30 p.m. Both are free and open to the public. On Monday, Feb. 15, Dr. Robert Reginio, assistant professor of English, will lead a discussion following the 6:30 p.m. screening of *Europa, Europa* (1990), Agnieszka Holland's award-winning film about a Jewish boy in Nazi Germany who joins the Hitler Youth to hide his identity. Dr. Gordon Atlas, professor of psychology, will moderate a discussion after the 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 18, screening of *The Pawnbroker* (1964), a Sidney Lumet film which focuses on the memories and ethical conflicts of a concentration camp survivor making his way as a pawn broker in New York City. A number of faculty are also integrating assignments into their courses in connection with the Lefkowitz Lecture, noted Mary McGee, dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. For example, she said, Dan Napolitano's "Drawn to Diversity" class will be making memorials in the week prior to the lecture. As noted in his extensive faculty biography on the UMass-Amherst website (<http://www.umass.edu/juda...>), Young's books include *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust* (1988), *The Texture of Memory* (Yale University Press, 1993), which won the National Jewish Book Award in 1994, and *At Memory's Edge: After-images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (Yale University Press, 2000). Editor-in-Chief of the ten-volume *Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization* (Yale University Press), Young also served as guest curator of "The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History," exhibited at the Jewish Museum in New York City in 1994, with subsequent venues in Berlin and Munich. Aspects of Young's work on memorials intersects with the learning goals that go on between and within each of Alfred's undergraduate divisions, be that engineering, art & design, business, or liberal arts and sciences, observed McGee. "We thought that Professor Young would be the perfect speaker to inaugurate the newly endowed Lefkowitz Lecture in Jewish Studies; we wanted to showcase a scholar whose work would have broad appeal across our Alfred community, and Dr. Young's work does just that, demonstrating how the integration of disciplines can illuminate our understanding of ideas about memory, public art, history, literature, buildings, memorials, and the Holocaust." McGee expressed her gratitude to Dr. Leonard and Saradona Lefkowitz who have endowed the new lectureship within the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences to help cultivate knowledge and understanding about Jewish cultural and historical experiences. The Lefkowitzes will be coming to Alfred for the inaugural event of this endowment; a reception in honor of Young and the Lefkowitzes will immediately follow the lecture. Len Lefkowitz, a 1957 alumnus of Alfred University, said his decision to endow the lecture series came after he attended his 50th class Reunion at AU in 2007. He said he experienced an "unexpected feeling of melancholy" upon leaving Alfred at the end of the weekend, wondering if he would ever have another occasion to visit his alma mater. Although he had always intended to leave a bequest to the University, he recalls thinking, "Why leave money after I'm dead? I'll make a contribution while I am still alive to enjoy the result." That led to a gift that makes possible the Leonard and Saradona Lefkowitz Fund for Jewish Studies. He said he wanted to create a program that would not only serve the Jewish students on campus, but that would have a broader scope and provide something of value to the entire community. He wanted the series to talk about Jewish cultural influences - not just how Jewish culture has shaped societies, but also how Jewish culture has been influenced by other cultures. He envisions a series that potentially will include a broad spectrum of issues and perspectives from history, the arts, women's studies and political science. Lefkowitz practiced medicine in the Washington, DC, area. He is now semi-retired, working part-time at George Washington University in DC. The Lefkowitzes make their home in Rockville, MD. For more information

about the Lefkowitz series and the events in conjunction with it, please contact Mary McGee, dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Alfred University, 607.871.2171.