

Securing the Living Legacy

A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE SECOND DECADE



September, 2005

UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM



Mission Statement

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is America's national institution for the documentation, study, and interpretation of Holocaust history, and serves as this country's memorial to the millions of people murdered during the Holocaust.

The Holocaust was the state-sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Jews were the primary victims—six million were murdered; Gypsies, the handicapped, and Poles were also targeted for destruction or decimation for racial, ethnic, or national reasons. Millions more, including homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents, also suffered grievous oppression and death under Nazi tyranny.

The Museum's primary mission is to advance and disseminate knowledge about this unprecedented tragedy; to preserve the memory of those who suffered; and to encourage its visitors to reflect upon the moral and spiritual questions raised by the events of the Holocaust as well as their own responsibilities as citizens of a democracy.

Chartered by a unanimous Act of Congress in 1980 and opened on April 26, 1993 adjacent to the National Mall in Washington, D.C., the Museum strives to broaden public understanding of the history of the Holocaust through multifaceted programs: exhibitions; research and publication; collecting and preserving material evidence, art, and artifacts related to the Holocaust; annual Holocaust commemorations known as Days of Remembrance; distribution of educational materials and teacher resources; and a variety of public programming designed to enhance understanding of the Holocaust and related issues, including those of contemporary significance.

A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE SECOND DECADE

“...the Commission recommends establishment of a living memorial that will speak not only of the victims’ deaths but of their lives, a memorial that can transform the living by transmitting the legacy of the Holocaust.”

—Report of the President’s Commission on the Holocaust, Elie Wiesel, Chairman, September 1979

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is a living memorial—it recalls the past for the sake of the future. It is a far-reaching institution where Holocaust remembrance and education have an impact on American society, where the lessons of history aim to influence the conscience of humanity. It is a memorial and a museum, an education center and a cause, but it is fundamentally about a powerful conviction—that the legacy of the Holocaust has the potential to transform the present and the future. The plan addresses how this living memorial can secure its national and international stature, influence, and resources, and achieve a deeper, more enduring impact on individuals, perhaps eventually on society as well. Rooted in the mission statement, the plan encompasses three strategic imperatives:

Protect and strengthen the core of the Living Memorial

- Aggressively rescue the evidence to assure the comprehensiveness of the Museum’s Collection
- Ensure the continued vitality of Days of Remembrance, the Permanent Exhibition, Remember the Children, the *ushmm.org* Web site, and the Committee on Conscience
- Promote and enhance the excellence and vitality of the emerging field of Holocaust studies

Enhance the nation’s moral discourse

- Develop special programs targeted to audiences who play an important role in educating, protecting, defending, and leading society, focusing initially on educators and those in positions of civic leadership (for example, law enforcement, the judiciary, the military, and government officials) and eventually on religious, business, and opinion leaders

Secure the future of the Memorial Museum

- Strengthen ties to Holocaust survivors, their descendents, and other key constituencies
- Develop strong and enduring relationships with our targeted audiences so that they become Museum advocates and supporters
- Launch the Second Decade campaign to secure the legacy and provide a base that will enable succeeding generations of Museum leaders to seize new strategic opportunities
- Effectively manage financial, human, and operational resources to implement the plan
- Further strengthen governance processes to ensure that the Council is utilized to its fullest capacity as a vital resource for the Museum

These imperatives are interdependent. None is possible without effective governance, leadership, and management; high accountability; well-functioning systems; and adequate resources, including space.

WHY THESE IMPERATIVES FOR THE SECOND DECADE

In the First Decade our responsibility was...

To create a Memorial Museum that would pay meaningful tribute to the memory of all of the victims and present Holocaust history in a way that would resonate broadly in our pluralistic democracy.

The Museum was created through an extraordinary partnership among Holocaust survivors, donors, Presidents of the United States, and the Congress. This living memorial was the dream of a few visionaries, and that original dream has now been exceeded. The Museum and the event it memorializes have become part of our civic dialogue about freedom and justice, have achieved national and international standing, and have helped humanity in its search for a moral compass.

The lessons of the Holocaust have found remarkable resonance with Americans from all walks of life. The institution's centrality and credibility have been affirmed by the tens of millions who have visited the Museum and its traveling exhibitions, participated in its educational programs, and used its Web site. Over the First Decade, the institution solidified its standing, as demonstrated by the willingness of so many around the world to entrust it with archival records and personal artifacts of the Holocaust; permanent authorization from the U.S. Congress; Federal appropriations of \$280 million; and \$430 million in private donations (including a \$200 million capital campaign that built the Museum and created an initial endowment of \$50 million, as well as \$230 million for operations).

The Memorial Museum's initial success led to rapid growth as it created a broad array of programs frequently in response to public demand. There were extraordinary accomplishments across a diverse set of activities and audiences. It has become clear that the Museum can do many things well; it is now time to focus its efforts. Clear institutional direction and corresponding strategic criteria are necessary in order to develop sustained relationships through meaningful programs designed to have a lasting impact. To safeguard the institution's future and realize our extraordinary capacity as a national force, the Museum needs a plan for the Second Decade.

In the Second Decade our responsibility is...

To assure that the Museum truly is a living memorial, that the lessons of the Holocaust—lessons about moral responsibility, the fragility and importance of democracy, the dangers of antisemitism and racism, and the need to prevent genocide—not only are learned, but also embraced by new generations.

Today the survivors bear witness and give voice to the silenced victims. The Museum must preserve and transmit those memories and sustain that authenticity for future generations. Safeguarding the memory and meaning of the Holocaust—including the memory of the culture that perished—requires a partnership bridging survivors and successor generations, especially those whose roles are central to fostering society's humanitarian values and democratic principles.

Although a visionary few had long recognized the need for and importance of a national memorial, it was only after the Museum opened that many people began to understand the full power of its moral premise. Prior to opening, few could have predicted its impact on the American public.

In the First Decade we discovered the potential; in the Second Decade we must seize it.

To do so, we must answer the following questions:

- *What must we do to assure that the memory of the dead truly affects the living? What must we do that no other Holocaust organization is prepared to do or able to accomplish?*

The collections, expertise, programs, and resources we have built are an inadequate memorial if we do not achieve significant national impact. We must decide how to balance our responsibility to provide direct services and programs in the near term with our obligation as stewards of memory for the long term. How do we manage the responsibility to preserve the Memorial Museum facility and its educational impact, recognizing the challenges of attracting new visitation and knowing that our mandate requires us to serve a national audience? How can we best secure the core foundation of knowledge and the collection, build strength for the future, and invest in infrastructure? Determining which audiences and constituencies are most critical to the institution's continued vitality will help answer these questions.

- *How can we sustain growth, increasing both impact and financial support?*

Sustaining the Museum's impact requires

- 1) the long-term support of key constituencies;
- 2) an annual stream of private funding and an annual Congressional appropriation; and
- 3) a significantly larger endowment. The Memorial Museum must remain a vital, unique institution if it is to continue engaging public interest and raising funds from its core supporters.

- *How do we sustain long-term programmatic effectiveness in a Federal memorial museum of international stature, based on a public-private partnership, that deals with a subject of such magnitude as the Holocaust?*

Tensions may be inevitable given the Museum's various components, such as: the institution's mission of remembrance, education, and conscience; its public-private partnership; and the enormous significance of the Holocaust. But the Memorial Museum will succeed by remaining faithful to its mission and maintaining the confidence of its key constituencies.

- *How do we assure high performance and demonstrate to our constituencies that the Museum is well led and managed, that it is worthy of support, that every dollar is well-spent?*

There must be efficient management systems to deliver programs and assure accountability; high standards must be pervasive; strong governance processes and a solid operating model, including performance measures, must be in place; and the institution must have the transparency to retain supporters' confidence.

The Museum has a responsibility to the past—to history and memory—and it has a responsibility to future generations whose lives it could influence. As the leader in the field of Holocaust studies and education, the Museum must sustain what has been achieved, but it must also do more if it is to fulfill its responsibilities.

INSTITUTIONAL VALUES

Our institutional values must guide our decisions:

- **Commitment to Mission**—a sacred trust, moral integrity
- **Authenticity**—collections, scholarship, eyewitness legacy
- **Excellence**—creativity, innovation, self-evaluation, high ethical standards, performance
- **Service and Accountability**—stewardship, public service
- **Respect**—collegiality, consultation, trust, dignity
- **Council-Staff Partnership**—respect, collaboration, mutual accountability

THE CHALLENGE—STRATEGIC CHOICES AND INVESTMENTS

As with all institutions, the Museum faces the reality of limitations. We must make strategic choices. There are more opportunities and needs than resources. If the Museum is to fulfill its mission, the *quality and power of its message* must remain a high priority.

While a compelling case can always be made for a wide variety of important endeavors, not every worthwhile Holocaust program can be the Museum's program.

- The question is not what is needed or advocated, but what *must* be done in the Second Decade by *this* institution as the leader in Holocaust education, remembrance, and research.
- While the institution must always be appropriately responsive, a strategic rather than reactive approach will enable the Museum to maximize its ability to achieve quality as well as quantity and to have substantial impact.

Current funding is relatively flat. Tight financial management and stronger fundraising are essential.

- Federal funds are expected to remain constant in current dollars, and donor funding must be revitalized. This will require disciplined financial management, substantial attention to development, major changes in our fundraising approach, and strong Council and managerial leadership.
- New initiatives may be supported by reallocating resources (funds, staff) from existing programs and raising new dollars.

Choices and investments must be driven by:

- **Legacy**—what is fundamental, meaningful, transformative?
- **Stewardship**—what secures the legacy for future generations?
- **Timeliness**—what must be done now that cannot be missed or deferred?

Our plan must be bold. Our responsibility does not allow otherwise.



A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE SECOND DECADE

The Museum must be faithful to its mission. To ensure the Memorial Museum's ongoing resonance as the Holocaust recedes in time, we must secure its stature, influence, and resources by focusing on these imperatives and strategies:

Protect and strengthen the core of the living memorial

Strategies:

- Rescue the evidence of the Holocaust during this limited window of opportunity
- Extend the impact of the Permanent Exhibition by enhancing the on-site experience and taking the “core story” to those who cannot visit the Museum
- Shape the emerging field of Holocaust studies to promote its excellence and vitality
- Assess the Museum experience for family visitors

Enhance the nation's moral discourse

Strategies:

- Continue the development of the National Institute for Holocaust Education which reaches: general audiences; under-served audiences; and leadership audiences—those who teach, lead, and defend
- Continue to refine the newly redesigned Wexner Learning Center as a major technological endeavor to enhance the on-site experience as well as outreach to targeted audiences
- Effectively use the Committee on Conscience to respond to contemporary genocide
- Engage new audiences in Days of Remembrance

Secure the future of the Memorial Museum

Strategies:

- Launch the Second Decade Endowment Campaign and revitalize fundraising
- Maintain and enhance the Museum's national and international stature
- Develop and implement electronic communications mechanisms to build and sustain relationships with key audiences and constituencies
- Further strengthen governance processes
- Further tighten management and budget practices

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFORMANCE GOALS IN THE ANNUAL PLAN AND GENERAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVE IN THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Annual performance goals will serve as milestones toward achieving the overall mission goals and objectives of the Museum. These milestones represent key achievements on the critical path to attaining mission goals. Performance goals are set annually through an iterative process involving evaluation of past-year results and input from Museum staff, Council members, OMB, and the Congress. Priorities and general strategies are developed by senior staff in consultation with the Council. They reflect measured consideration of the results of the previous year's activities, long-term mission goals, and the range of external factors relevant to the Museum and its stakeholders.

The format adopted for the Museum's GPRA documents has been designed to allow ready comparisons between the Strategic Plan, the Annual Performance Plan, and the budget submission. Each mission goal itemized in the Strategic Plan is referenced in the Annual Performance Plan and each mission goal in the Performance Plan is accompanied by a list of annual milestones relevant to that goal. Some milestones may reference more than one goal. Output measurement indicators for each milestone are included along with an indication of the budget sub-activities that will take primary responsibility for accomplishment of the milestones.

PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

The Museum does not conduct program evaluations on a routine, recurring basis, but engages in periodic evaluations and assessments. It has conducted a regular series of studies and surveys related to teachers and Holocaust education in schools and universities. The Museum recently completed a major professionally conducted evaluation of the Permanent Exhibition. A series of audience research projects are underway to assess educational impact of various components of the memorial museum and targeted audiences such as teachers, law enforcement, and Web visitors.

The Museum is regularly audited in a variety of ways. There is an annual independent audit of the finances, and the Museum's internal auditor regularly reviews the effectiveness and efficiency of various administrative and programmatic departments. In 2001, the Museum successfully completed the American Association of Museums (AAM) accreditation process which was essentially an external audit of the entire institution and how well it adhered to its responsibilities as a public museum.



Education



Remembrance



Conscience



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