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PHOTOS ATTACHED**

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Cornelia Connelly School

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Holocaust Museum Finds New Home at Cornelia Connelly School

October 18, 2018 Anaheim, CA – Cornelia Connelly School is honored to house Holocaust survivor, Mel Mermelstein’s unique collection of art and artifacts from the Holocaust on their campus, which will be accessible to the public in spring 2019. To honor two men with ties to Anaheim, and who shared a significant moment in history, the City of Anaheim hosted an event that would allow Holocaust survivor Mel Mermelstein, to meet his liberator, Dr. William Kott, 73 years later. The date of this meeting, October 9, was also significant as it marked the date Mermelstein was granted a major victory in a 1981 lawsuit against Holocaust deniers. A judge declared that the gassing of Jews is “simply a fact,” and that “It is not reasonably subject to dispute.”

Although the meeting between Mermelstein and Kott did not end up taking place due to last-minute health issues from 92-year-old Mermelstein, the event at Anaheim’s council chambers still proceeded. Guests to the event included Mermelstein’s daughter Edie and his grandson Michael, Kott’s family, friends, Cornelia Connelly School students and administrators, veterans, and several reporters.

Anaheim Mayor, Tom Tait, introduced Dr. Kott to the audience, who was treated to a history lesson from a living WWII eyewitness who fought in the European Theater. The 96-year-old WWII veteran, Bronze Star recipient, concentration camp liberator, and Anaheim community leader recounted his experience in the U.S. Third Army under General George Patton as photos of him as a young soldier in his 20’s were displayed. Kott fought in the Battle of the Bulge and then later, on April 11, 1945, helped liberate the Buchenwald concentration camp where Mel Mermelstein and thousands more were imprisoned.

After Kott finished speaking, Mel Mermelstein’s daughter, Edie, clutched Kott’s hand and with much emotion said to him, “I just want to thank you. Without you, my family wouldn’t be here today.” Mel Mermelstein was the only member of his family that survived Auschwitz-Birkenau, Gross Rosen, and Buchenwald.

Over the past several decades, Mermelstein has been collecting artifacts from the Holocaust and has even created new art from some of the pieces he's collected. This unique collection has been graciously donated to Cornelia Connelly School in Anaheim, who plan to make the museum accessible to the public, particularly to schools so they can enhance their curriculum, which typically includes studying the Holocaust in U.S. History. Kott's son, Paul, told Edie "Your father's donation - your family has made Anaheim a richer place."

Cornelia Connelly School, an all-girls private Catholic high school established in 1961 in Anaheim, is pleased to be the new home to Mermelstein's collection. Connelly's Assistant Head of School, Dr. Cathy Rauterkus, was on-hand at the event. She told reporters that "Any way we can keep the history alive and make sure that students understand this history is what matters the most." The school is preparing to tentatively open the museum doors to the public in spring 2019.

Cornelia Connelly School in Anaheim Founded and sponsored by the Society of the Holy Child Jesus in 1961, Connelly is a Catholic, independent, college-preparatory high school for young women. The school is a member of the Holy Child Network of Schools and is sponsored by the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus. The Society of the Holy Child Jesus operates schools – preschool through college level – in the United States, Europe and Africa. Exchange programs offer Connelly's students unique opportunities to study at Holy Child Schools in the United States and Europe. Connelly's exceptional curriculum and programs prepare young women to be leaders based on an underlying philosophy of trust, reverence and respect. For more information about the school, please go to www.connellyschoolanahem.org.



Caption for above photo 1 (*kott-mermelstein-connelly2000px.jpg*): (from l-r) Cynthia Werelius, Dr. Cathleen Rauterkus '95, Noelle Mourani '20, Edie Mermelstein, Mayor Tom Tait, Paul Kott, Channing Lee '19, Myra Juma '19, Jacqueline Sienkowski, and Dr. William Kott, gather for a photo.

Caption for above photo 2 (*Anaheim-mayor-connelly-students2000px.jpg*): Anaheim Mayor, Tom Tait, talks to Cornelia Connelly School student representatives Myra Juma '19, Channing Lee '19, and Noelle Mourani '20 at the City Council Chambers of Anaheim.