

# Holocaust refugee UCSC endows chair

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SANTA CRUZ — Longtime Santa Cruz resident Anne Neufeld Levin, whose family fled Europe to escape Nazi persecution of Jews, gave UC Santa Cruz \$250,000 Friday for Holocaust studies to "add faces to the people who perished."

This is the first such endowed chair in UCSC's history. Levin will also donate an extensive family archive of Holocaust memorabilia to UCSC's McHenry Library on June 6.

On Friday afternoon, UC regents accepted the endowment from Levin, who was 3 years old when her family fled Austria for the United States in 1939. "We really got out just barely," said Levin, whose grandparents, two aunts, and many other friends and

family members perished in the Holocaust.

Income from the endowment will support Holocaust-related studies. Levin said the professor who holds the chair can use interest from the \$250,000 for research.

"In my mind the Holocaust embodied much more than just history," Levin said. "There is the literature connection, the art and music connection."

In a prepared statement to UCSC, Levin detailed her vision of the program.

"My reason for presenting this collection ... is to help subsequent generations of students understand that behind the atrocities of the World War II Holocaust, there were real families, people with faces, educations,

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skills, professions, hobbies, failings and talents.

"All that remains of most of the millions murdered by the Nazis are their names and numbers, and piles of their shoes in the U.S. Holocaust Museum," she said in her statement. "I feel compelled to add



Levin

faces to the statistics because, as a survivor, I came within moments of being one of them."

Levin, 59, will give several generations' worth of family artifacts, from a birth certificate dated 1840 to letters from Nazi officials, stamps issued by the Third Reich, passports, and identity papers marked with "J" for "Juden" —

German for "Jew" — and swastikas.

One item is a letter Levin's father wrote to an American couple who took in her brother when he was sent ahead by the family in Austria. Her father wrote the letter believing he'd never see her brother again, but they eventually reunited in the U.S.

Levin has kept the items with her in boxes and albums. "There were a few things I found I could not part with, a few memorabilia pieces from my father, some things I couldn't give up quite yet. A matchbook cover. A shaving mirror. My father's World War I medal."

With permission from the campus library, students and professors will have access to the materials, which will also appear in special exhibits open to the public.

Many people who fled Nazi Germany destroyed their documents because they represented such painful things. Levin said. "But my

father kept everything."

Taking inventory of the items brought back a rush of memories. "It's been a very draining exercise for me to do this," she said.

"I didn't realize how much this would affect me. We didn't talk a whole lot about what happened at the dinner table. My father didn't dwell on the past (but) there was a sadness in his eyes. He insisted on cheerfulness in the family and doing the best we could."

Levin chose to give the gift to UCSC because she and her family have lived here 30 years. An active fund-raiser, Levin is on the UCSC Foundation and also co-chairs a scholarship committee. She also has served on the board of trustees for the Greater Community Foundation in Santa Cruz.

Levin is married to Dr. Paul Levin, a retired orthopedic surgeon. She has four children. Her late parents, Henry and Hedy Neufeld, were Santa Cruz residents.