

SEPTEMBER 20, 2005

REPRESENTATIVE SCHAKOWSKY TODAY DELIVERED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT ON THE PASSING OF SIMON WIESENTHAL

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Statement by Representative Schakowsky on the passing of Simon Wiesenthal:

Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate Simon Wiesenthal, who passed away last night at the age of 96. Wiesenthal, a Holocaust survivor, founded the Simon Wiesenthal Center in 1997, and is responsible for bringing over 1,100 Nazi war criminals to justice. Equally as important, he is the founder of the world renowned Museum of Tolerance, which works diligently for the defense of human rights and the Jewish people.

The work of Mr. Wiesenthal is especially important to my district which is home to one of the largest concentrations of Holocaust survivors in the United States. Just this past weekend I stood with many of those survivors and several of their liberators in Skokie, Illinois to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps. As the conscience and voice for not only the Holocaust's 6,000,000 Jewish victims but for the millions of others who were murdered by the Nazis as well, Wiesenthal was and will always remain a hero to our community.

When Simon Wiesenthal was asked why he chose to pursue the Nazi criminals and bring them to justice, Wiesenthal responded, "You believe in God and life after death. I also believe.

When we come to the other world and meet the millions of Jews who died in the camps and they ask us, 'What have you done?', there will be many answers. You will say, 'I became a jeweler.' Another will say, 'I have smuggled coffee and American cigarettes.' Another will say, 'I built houses.' But I will say, 'I didn't forget you'."

When the Holocaust came to an end, Simon Wiesenthal never forgot. And because he became the leading representative of the victims, determined to bring the perpetrators of history's greatest crime to justice, we will never forget Simon Wiesenthal. Many have noted that the heinous acts of the Holocaust, for their scale and brutality, make real justice for victims and survivors impossible. No punishment, even death for those Nazi criminals who were later apprehended, could match the horrific misery suffered by Hitler's victims. But, nonetheless, Simon Wiesenthal's work, his tireless pursuit of the last century's most abhorrent criminals, brought a measure of justice and a measure of peace to the Jewish community. Most importantly, he was a reminder that "Never

Forget" is not a guarantee, but a pledge, one for which we all share responsibility. Mr. Wiesenthal's work reminded the world that crimes against humanity left unpunished, will be repeated. With the passing of Simon Wiesenthal, the world now has an additional responsibility to embrace the lessons of the Holocaust and fight hatred and intolerance wherever it exists.