

The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous
80 Main Street
West Orange, NJ 07052
973-736-1800
www.jfr.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Joshua Steinreich
Steinreich Communications
(212) 491-1600
jsteinreich@scompr.com

**23 EDUCATORS FROM 8 STATES SELECTED FOR ADVANCED-LEVEL
EDUCATION PROGRAM FOCUSED ON TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST TO THE AI
GENERATION**

WEST ORANGE, New Jersey – The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous (JFR) selected 23 middle and high school educators and Holocaust center staff from eight states to participate in its 2026 Advanced Seminar, an intensive two-day academic program focused on strengthening Holocaust education and addressing both historical and contemporary antisemitism. This year's seminar placed special emphasis on the opportunities and challenges of artificial intelligence in Holocaust education and research. The program took place January 17–18 in New Jersey.

The Advanced Seminar is an intensive graduate-level program in which a select group of educators who are already well-versed in Holocaust history are given the opportunity to study more focused topics relating to the Holocaust and antisemitism from world-renowned lecturers.

This year's program focused on the future of teaching the Holocaust, including the impact of Artificial Intelligence in Holocaust education, historical research of the Holocaust, and its impact on antisemitism.

This year's speakers included Prof. Andy Pearce of University College London, Prof. Avinoam Patt of New York University, Prof. Noah Shenker of Colgate University and renowned Holocaust historian and exhibition curator Paul Salmons.

Participants hailed from Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Texas and included:

- Amy McDonald of the Alabama Holocaust Education Center in Birmingham, AL
- Mindy Walker of Northside High School in Northport, AL
- Kendra Tallent of Glen Rose High School in Benton, AR

2026 ADVANCED SEMINAR
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- Maureen Carter of Boca Raton High School in Boca Raton, FL
- Julie Gates of Logger's Run Middle School in Boca Raton, FL
- Sandy Lopater of John I. Leonard High School in Greenacres, FL
- Mary Ellen Richichi of Independence Middle School in Jupiter, FL
- Krystal Lamb of Dr. Joaquin Garcia High School in Lake Worth, FL
- Sheri Crowley of Polo Park Middle School in Wellington, FL
- Christine Giles-Lefkowitz of Palm Beach Central High School in Wellington, FL
- Kimberly Coombs of the School District of Palm Beach County in West Palm Beach, FL
- Micaela McNiff of the School District of Palm Beach County in West Palm Beach, FL
- Kelly Warsaw of inSight Through Education in West Palm Beach, FL
- Bradd Weinberg of the School District of Palm Beach County in West Palm Beach, FL
- Yara Lugo of the Florida Holocaust Museum in St. Petersburg, FL
- Lauren Crampton of the Holocaust Education Resource Council in Tallahassee, FL
- Julie Klein of Fenwick High School in Oak Park, IL
- Jill Tejada of Livingston High School in Livingston, NJ
- Sarah Coykendall of Kean University's Holocaust Education & Resource Center in Union, NJ
- Cara Tharpa of Kean University's Holocaust Education & Resource Center in Union, NJ
- Leigh Ann Totty of Bethel Park High School in Bethel Park, PA
- Stacy Steele of Lancaster High School in Lancaster, SC
- Laurie Garcia of the Holocaust Museum Houston in Houston, TX

The program is open to JFR Alfred Lerner Fellows and to middle and high school educators who have already attended the JFR Summer Institute for Teachers. Both programs are meant for educators who teach the Holocaust either in classrooms or through Holocaust Centers, have taught for at least five years and are at least five years from retirement.

“Each of these educators has already distinguished themselves through a strong commitment to teaching the Holocaust and to deepening their own understanding of the antisemitism that shaped it,” said JFR Executive Vice President Stanlee Stahl. “Through this intensive, graduate-level program, participants developed a more nuanced understanding of Holocaust history, testimony, pedagogy and contemporary tools and challenges for teaching

about the Holocaust, strengthening their own effectiveness in the classroom and enabling them to mentor other colleagues who teach the subject.”

The JFR continues its work of providing monthly financial assistance to aged and needy Righteous Gentiles living in 10 countries. Since its founding, the JFR has provided more than \$46 million to aged and needy rescuers. Its Holocaust teacher education program has become a standard for teaching the history of the Holocaust and educating teachers and students about the significance of the Righteous as moral and ethical exemplars. For more information, visit <https://www.jfr.org/>.