

# Holocaust

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"At the time, there were no faxes, TV or Internet. Information about what Germany was doing was not known," Verveer said.

Verveer said her family felt safe going back to Holland, a country that had remained neutral for the duration of the first World War.

But on May 5, 1940, everything changed. Germany attacked France, Belgium and Holland. "There was no escape," Verveer said.

Some Jews committed suicide, she said. Others waited to see what would happen. Some Dutch government officials became Nazi sympathizers, but the infrastructure of the country did not change immediately.

In 1941, the Nazis made Jews register for new identities and had them cite their religion as part of the process.

"No one thought anything (was strange) when religion was requested," Verveer said. "The whole Jewish community was now registered."

Verveer said the changes imposed by

the Nazis were gradual.

"People would resist if the changes happened too fast," she said.

Jews were slowly separated from the community. Her father lost his job and the children were not allowed to go to school, the park or ride a bicycle. Jews over the age of 14 were required to wear a star and had to abide by a curfew that made them stay indoors from 8 p.m. to 7 a.m.

Verveer's mother could not go to a hospital to give birth because only Jewish doctors could treat Jewish patients, and Jewish doctors were no longer allowed to practice in public hospitals.

In 1942, Verveer said the Nazis "finally showed their hand." Jews were to be relocated to Poland, and when the first group of citizens was sent off, they were not heard from again, she said.

"Rumors started that it may not be such a good place," Verveer said. "But we said it couldn't possibly be so bad. No one could have imagined that there would be wholesale killing going on."

Verveer said she and her family soon went into hiding because those who did not report to be relocated were hunted by police and taken to a pun-

ishment camp or killed.

Her family hid in a family's cellar until the Gestapo discovered them. Verveer was then placed in an orphanage. She was two years old.

"Scenes at the train station boxcars were indescribable," she said. "The Germans wanted to complete their high priority of exterminating Jews."

Verveer was sent to Bergen-Belsen by train in a cattle car. The trip took three days and three nights.

"It was murderously hot," she said. "We got no new water or diapers. If one child wasn't crying, then it was another, and there was nothing anyone could do for us."

Verveer stayed in Bergen-Belsen for two months before being transported to Terezin concentration camp.

"It was over crowded and there was dysentery, typhoid and other diseases," Verveer said. Her camp was liberated by the Russians in 1945 and she was kept in quarantine afterward for six months because of disease.

During the same time period, Verveer's father, who had been asked to assist the Dutch Resistance, was betrayed and soon

executed by the Nazis. Her mother and one brother hid for more than two years in the crawl-space under a house, coming out for only a few hours at night.

After the family's ordeal, Verveer said her family was never the same.

"We were slammed together after a horrendous experience. We never worked as a family unit," she said.

Verveer addressed the notion that the Holocaust never happened.

"Some people say it never happened. It happened. It happened to ordinary people in an ordinary place in an extraordinary time," she said. "And it happened again in Yugoslavia and Uganda. The world did next to nothing."

Verveer said people have a natural tendency to single out people different from themselves.

"We love to blame 'them,'" she said.

Verveer said speaking about her ordeal is an effort to teach others about the possibilities of human cruelty.

"I am telling you this because we can create a better world," she said. "If there is a true concern (in the international community), people will make things happen."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Traffic, parking to change for Parents' Weekend

In response to anticipated traffic congestion during Parents' Weekend, Old Main Drive will be closed to through traffic on Friday and Saturday. The 30-minute parking spaces on Lamar Street will also be unavailable for use. Parking services officers will be on site to direct the traffic flow.

Those needing access to PA 42 may drive east on Old Main and enter the lot from one of the designated crossovers. Those needing to park in PA 28 or PA 44 may gain access through Lamar Street and Central Houston. The traffic will be routed in a counter-clockwise pattern in this area of campus.

# The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi

proudly announces its Annual Induction Ceremony  
Friday, April 12, 2002 at 3:45 p.m.  
Student Recreation Center, Archery Room



### FACULTY INDUCTEES

Wendy Lisabeth Keeney-Kennicut  
Friedhelm Schroeder  
Roger H. Schultz

### OUTSTANDING JUNIORS

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College of Business

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College of Education

Christopher Tysor  
College of Engineering

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College of Geosciences

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College of Veterinary Medicine

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Tiffany ReNae Chovanec  
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