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Joseph Stevens Freedom Endowment Speech, delivered in 2004

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Joseph Stevens Freedom Endowment

The Joseph Stevens Freedom Endowment celebrates the experience of one holocaust survivor and exists to teach us and remind us; to teach us about an event so evil and dehumanizing that we cannot understand 20th century history without knowing about it, and to remind us that we must always be on guard lest cruelty of such proportions is unleashed again. Tonight Professor Barbie Zelizer from the University of Pennsylvania is here to teach and remind as the Joseph Stevens Freedom Endowment lecturer. **WE WELCOME HER.**

I brought with me a copy of Joe Stevens' memoir of his survival in the face of Nazi aggression entitled Good Morning. This is a story you should all read if you have not already. The book was published because Hank and Fred Meijer thought it should be, and because Professors Rob Franciosi, Roger Gillis, Dan Royer, and Jo Ellyn Cleary did the work to make it happen. Joe Stevens' story is yet another valuable contribution to Holocaust literature.

The Holocaust course, initiated by Professor William Baum, and the Stevens Endowment, suggested by him as well, are Grand Valley State University's commitment to make certain that our students know and

understand the importance and the horrors of this Nazi program of ethnic murder. When from time to time we are emotionally touched by this act of cruelty and the suffering and death it brought to millions and wish we in our lives could do something about it, consider a gift to the Joseph Stevens Endowment Fund at Grand Valley. It is one way we here in west Michigan can put our names on the line against the holocaust and any repetition of it.