

JSU holds 20th annual Holocaust commemoration ceremony

By Stephanie Pendergrass

The Chanticleer News Editor

JSU held its Annual Days of Remembrance in commemoration of the Holocaust of World War II last Thursday night. At the event Holocaust survivor Max Herzl told of his experiences during the war, and the fact that he holds no grudges against the German people.

The commemoration also featured a welcome by SGA president Robert Hayes, an invocation by Rev. Margaret Northen, a candle lighting by Lauren Lemmons and commentary by Dr. Russel Lemmons, of JSU's history department.

Middle school winners of the "Imagining the Holocaust" writing competition read their winning entries, and the high school winners of the contest were announced. Dr. Samuel Brown and Kaylor Willingham sang at the event, with accompaniment by Dr. Legare McIntosh.

The evening concluded with members of Temple Beth-El, of Anniston, reading the Kaddish. According to the Holocaust commemoration's program, "The



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Holocaust survivor Max Herzl speaks to the audience at JSU's Holocaust commemoration ceremony Thursday.

Kaddish is traditionally recited by mourners at public services after the death of close relatives. We offer it tonight in remembrance of the millions who were systematically exterminated during World War II."

Along with the Holocaust commemoration, Herzl made another appearance on campus. Last Friday, he and his wife were guests in Dr. Steven Whitton's Honors 102 English class.

Again Herzl explained his survival during World War II and told of his reuniting with the few family members that lived through the experiences of the Holocaust.

In one story Herzl said he rode on the bicycle of a militiaman. While Herzl was trying to escape potential trouble, the militiaman offered him a ride on his bicycle. If he had have been discovered, he could have been thrown into a camp, or even killed.

Herzl said he didn't remember anything about the man he was riding with, except his boots, Herzl said, "My heart was racing, and I couldn't wait to get off that bicycle."

Herzl's family was sent to an internment camp, which he explained was a pipeline to the concentration camps. While he and his brother and father escaped the camp by paying off guards, Herzl's mother was held hostage at the camp and was released a couple of weeks later.

Other experiences Herzl spoke of included his mother's attempted suicide. He said that when this happened, she was sent to a psychiatric hospital and later served that hospital as a nurse's aid and

seamstress.

She stayed there for the duration of the war; thus she wasn't subjected to the concentration camps. According to Herzl, "God in his own way had a special way of handling it."

According to Herzl, his father died at Buchenwald, a concentration camp located in Weimar, Germany. His death, which was 93 days before the liberation of the camp, was brought on by dysentery, famine, malnutrition and "you name it," Herzl said.

Herzl came to the United States from Belgium when he was 18 years old. He was drafted by both the French and U.S. armies and served in the United States Air Force. He now resides in Birmingham with his wife and speaks at many events concerning the Holocaust.

When asked if he still felt anger towards the Germans, Herzl said, "Not really. I don't have any anger against individuals or countries. What I don't like ... I don't like Nazis. I firmly believe in freedom, I believe in liberty, I believe in the principles that America stands for; that's why I served with honor and I'm proud."