



Dr. Stanley Bykov

Statue dedication speech

Good Morning

Today is a very emotional day for me as I am representing my father, grandmother, great grandmother and aunt who were and are holocaust survivors who witnessed many atrocities through the holocaust massacre.

Thank you, everyone, for coming to this very meaningful dedication. I would especially like to thank our local government representatives for joining us this morning. Thank you for your dedication to the Brooklyn community and thank you for your ongoing commitment to holocaust awareness. I would also like to thank the holocaust survivors with us today. Your strength is an inspiration to us all. Thank you to the veterans we have with us this morning. Thank you for your service and for your dedication to our freedom. I am grateful to be here, at Kingsboro Community College, and am proud to know that our gift of the Infinity Statue, which commemorates the victims of the holocaust, will stand at this institution of higher learning. We are all here this morning because my father, Mitya Bykov, has made it his mission to assure that our local and global community remembers the history of the holocaust.

As a child, I always wondered why many families were so large when ours was so small. I wanted to ask my parents, but understood that this was a sensitive topic. People from the old country did not discuss the past very openly. Later, I learned about my family history: When my father was 18 months old, he was one of 33 members of my family that was sent to a concentration camp in the village of Bogdonovka, in the Transnistria region of Ukraine. 29 of my relatives were summarily murdered at an extermination center in Bogdanovka. The only people to continue through the holocaust nightmare were my great grandmother Sima, my grandmother Rosalia, my aunt Emma and my father, Mitya. My grandfather Yefim, was a soldier in the Soviet army. He was away, fighting in World War 2, when our family was taken. Unfortunately, he was unaware of what was happening to his loved ones. My family survived horrors that no one should experience. They witnessed the gruesome murders of their loved ones, friends, and community members. They had to endure starvation, inhumane living conditions, deadly winters and disease. The knowledge that they could be murdered at the whim of a zealous guard produced lifelong trauma. It is a miracle that they survived. Also I would like to add that it was a miracle and a tremendous achievement that my grandfather with Soviet troops entered Berlin and ultimately helped win the war.

I want to let you all know how saddened I am by this history of immense hatred and violence. I am horrified that my family and the families of my loved ones and friends shared in this brutal experience. My wife also comes from a family of holocaust survivors. As a father, I encourage my two sons who carry the Bykov name, to be a voice for inclusion, friendship and justice. I urge them to fight all forms of hate, racism, and antisemitism. I hope that their generation works to ensure that the world fights against such atrocities. It is extremely important for our global community to remember that such hatred takes root gently but grows brutally. As we dedicate the Infinity statue and commemorate the victims of the holocaust, my wish is for all of us to take up the flame that the statue depicts and fight for a world where the atrocities of the past will not recur. This statue was placed in the most appropriate location as behind me is a holocaust museum and a library that emphasize the fact that we should never forget that tragedy. My family and I deeply appreciate professor Richard Tobeck for his efforts in teaching the history of the holocaust and increasing the likelihood that this horror will not happen again. We give our gratitude to President Cohen, of Kingsborough Community College, to the Board of Directors, and certainly to the college staff for making such an event possible. The world unfortunately is still in danger and people are being killed for just being themselves. The strength of humanity lies in fighting against hatred, racism, and anti-Semitism. This statue is also placed centrally in front of the library where people can take pictures and share the message of the Infinity flame with their friends and families around the globe. Our message of remembrance will be spread across the world. We are honored to be involved in such a important event, remembering so many lives lost during the dark days of the Holocaust and celebrating those who survived! As we, now, dedicate the Infinity Statue, please join me in fighting for a better world, and repeat with me 3 times: "Never again. Never again. Never again!"