Arizona Law Enforcement Lauded by Holocaust Memorial Museum

On March 15, 2018, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum presented to Arizona law enforcement professionals, including Yavapai County Attorney Sheila Polk, the Leadership Tribute Award for their work in learning and disseminating lessons from the Holocaust. Marcus Appelbaum, the Museum’s Director of Law, Justice and Society Initiatives, presented the award to Arizona Governor Doug Ducey who accepted it on behalf of Arizona’s law enforcement professionals.

In presenting the award, Mr. Appelbaum stated, “I represent the Museum in acknowledging your contributions to preserving the memory of those who perished during the Holocaust and your efforts in ensuring the Lessons of the Holocaust are never forgotten.”

The award from the Holocaust Museum is the result of a twelve-year partnership between the Museum and Arizona. It began in 2006 with a visit, sponsored by Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Prescott, in which County Attorney Polk participated. “Something ignited in me during that visit,” said Polk. “Upon leaving the Museum, I knew with great clarity that I wanted to bring to all criminal justice professionals in Arizona a Holocaust study program from which we can learn contemporary lessons about the importance of doing our work to the best of our abilities.”

Working with educators from the Holocaust Museum and members of the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Prescott, Polk and her team developed a program called “What You Do Matters: Lessons from the Holocaust.” It is a 3.5-hour interactive program during which participants examine policing within the political and legal framework of Nazi Germany. The focus is on the years 1933 to 1942 and how police incrementally shifted from protectors of the people to enforcers of Nazi ideology and collaborators in acts of genocide.

Dr. David Hess, President of the Prescott Jewish Foundation, noted the “ripple effect” of the visit his organization sponsored in 2006. Courses are taught around the state by teams consisting of a law enforcement officer and a prosecutor. To date, Polk and her team have trained over 4000 law enforcement officers and prosecutors in Arizona.

In his acceptance remarks, Governor Ducey graciously emphasized that he was accepting the tribute on behalf of Arizona’s law enforcement leaders.

Director Appelbaum stated, “Never before in the Museum’s 25-year experience have we witnessed such a diversity of organizations working toward a dedicated goal of disseminating the Lessons of the Holocaust. What the Museum has observed in Arizona is truly unique.”

CAPTIONS FOR PHOTOS:
Photo 1 Left to right: Sheila Polk, Yavapai County Attorney, Governor Doug Ducey, Marcus Appelbaum, US Holocaust Memorial Museum Director of Law, Justice and Society Initiatives

Photo 2: Governor Ducey, Marcus Appelbaum and Sheila Polk pose with Arizona law enforcement professionals