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## STUDENT'S ESSAY SHARES LITTLE-KNOWN HISTORY OF HOLOCAUST

To USF St. Petersburg Honors College student Erik Durneika, the significance of the Holocaust is one that must not be forgotten. As the winner of the [Tampa Bay Consular Corps' 2016 Holocaust Remembrance Essay Contest](#), Durneika received a \$1,000 cash award for an essay he wrote detailing the actions and lives of three individuals who risked their lives to save Jews from annihilation and how people can combat modern anti-Semitism.

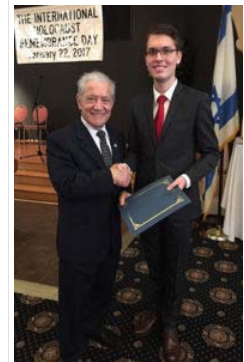
"I feel even as a non-Jewish individual that it is important to educate the future generation about the Holocaust as an unjust and cruel event," said Durneika, 18, a USFSP Political Science senior and a national scholar. The paper highlighted the actions of three people—Varian Fry, Waitstill Sharp and his wife Martha—who risked their lives to harbor and transport Jewish people to safety. It also discussed a lesser known effort by the Shanghai Chinese who forged long-lasting relationships with European Jews to provide them refuge.

"History often repeats itself," said Durneika, who has served as a volunteer at the Florida Holocaust Museum for the past three years. "My philosophy focuses on promoting global tolerance, encouraging respectful dialogue, combating hatred, and preventing future genocides. It is essential for humans to be upstanders, rather than bystanders, to injustice that is manifested in modern national and international events."

Durneika said he always has had a strong interest in 20th century history. His honors thesis, titled "The Jews of Kaifeng, China: Jewish Life and Traditions in Retrospect," details the history, traditions, and customs of the Jewish diaspora located in the Central Chinese city of Kaifeng.

"Unfortunately, the number of Holocaust survivors is decreasing, so I feel a sense of responsibility to educate future generation through facts, historic accounts, and narratives in order to learn from the past and hope for the future," he said.

Read Durneika's essay "[Combating Anti-Semitism: The Importance of Tolerance in Modern Times](#)."



*From right: USFSP student Erik Durneika receives his award from Vincent Genovese, the consular correspondent of Italy for Tampa Bay.*

## Student's Essay Shares Little-Known History of Holocaust

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