

# **Gov. Pritzker Announces Seventeen Appointments to the Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission**

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SPRINGFIELD - Building on a strong team of diverse experts in their fields, Governor JB Pritzker announced the following appointments in his administration to coincide with the anniversary of The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide:

## ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE COMMISSION

**Danny M. Cohen, Ph.D. will serve as a co-chair of the Commission.** Cohen is a learning scientist and writer specializing in marginalized narratives of atrocity. A Charles Deering McCormick Distinguished Professor of Instruction at Northwestern University's School of Education and Social Policy and The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies, Cohen teaches about Holocaust education design, Holocaust memory, fiction, and film, pedagogies for history and injustice, and design for social change. The grandson of Holocaust survivor Maurice Ziekenoppasser, Cohen is an author of human rights fiction. His works include the choose-your-own-pathway mystery *The 19th Window*, the short story *Dead Ends*, and the historical novel *Train*, a teacher fellows selected text of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Danny is the founder of Unsilence, a national nonprofit that creates highly interactive learning experiences to support young people and communities to talk about historical and contemporary injustices. Cohen was an inaugural appointee to the Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission, he was a member of the editorial advisory board of the journal *The Holocaust in History and Memory*, he designed the pedagogical track of the inaugural docent training program of Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, and he was a faculty fellow of the Auschwitz Jewish Center.

**Kelley Szany will serve as a co-chair of the Commission.** Szany is an award-winning Holocaust and genocide educator with over 20 years of experience in the field. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Association of Holocaust Organizations and Educators Institute for Human Rights. She serves on the Advisory Councils for Together We Remember and Unsilence. Szany has won multiple awards for her educational and human rights work, including the Samuel Goldsmith Award from the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, Damen Award from the Graduate School at Loyola University of Chicago, and the Carl Wilkens Fellowship where she worked alongside national leaders to create and strengthen a permanent anti-genocide constituency through both advocacy work and influence of U.S. policy. Szany is the author of "Teaching the 1994 Rwandan Genocide Through Stanton's 8 Stages," and "The Power of Story: Teaching About Genocide Through Literature Circles," in *Teaching About Genocide: Insights and Advice from Secondary Teachers and Professors*, Volume I and II (Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2018 and 2019). Szany holds a bachelor's degree in history from Canisius College, and a master's degree in public history from Loyola University Chicago.

**Susan Abrams will serve on the Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission.** Abrams is CEO of Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center (IHMEC). Under Susan's leadership, the Museum has become a global leader in Holocaust and museum education and opened the groundbreaking exhibition, the Take a Stand Center, including

the world's first interactive, holographic Abe & Ida Cooper Survivor Stories Experience. The interactive survivor holograms are being licensed globally, changing the trajectory of Holocaust memory and education. For this work, IHMEC was awarded the National Medal by the Institute of Museum & Library Services, the highest honor for a museum. Susan previously served as Chief Operating Officer for JCC Chicago and held leadership positions at Northwestern University and Chicago Children's Museum, where she was instrumental in the planning and execution of the museum's move to Navy Pier. She also has worked as a consultant at McKinsey & Company and an analyst at Goldman Sachs. Ms. Abrams holds an MBA degree from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management. She is the author of *The New Success Rules for Women: 10 Surefire Strategies for Reaching Your Career Goals* (Random House, 2000) and regularly speaks to students and corporate groups on related topics. Abrams is a member of the Economic Club of Chicago, The Chicago Network, and Northwestern's C100.

**Lina Sergie Attar will serve on the Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission.**

Attar is a Syrian-American architect and writer from Aleppo, Syria. She is the founder and CEO of Karam Foundation, a nonprofit organization based in Lake Forest, IL. Karam means generosity in Arabic and its mission is to build a better future for Syrian refugee youth through innovative education and community-driven aid. Named one of 50 Women Groundbreakers Changing the World in 2020 by Worth Magazine, her articles and essays have been published in the New York Times, Chicago Tribune, Foreign Policy, Politico, The Atlantic, and BBC. Lina has spoken about the Syrian humanitarian crisis at schools, universities, and institutions including RISD, Harvard, University of Chicago, Johns Hopkins, Northwestern University, Phillips Exeter Academy, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, New America, the Aspen Institute, and others. Lina studied architecture at the University of Aleppo and continued her graduate studies at the Rhode Island School of Design, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Lina is a co-founder of the How Many More? project which is dedicated to remembering those who have lost their lives in the Syrian conflict. She serves as Chair of the Board of Directors of The Syria Campaign, and is a non-resident fellow at New America.

**Sarah Cushman, Ph.D. will serve on the Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission.**

Cushman is Director of the Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University and a lecturer in the History Department. The Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University advances Holocaust education at the university level throughout the world by supporting scholarship and teaching. She has been involved in Holocaust education and scholarship for nearly two decades, serving as Director of Youth Education at the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Long Island and Head of Educational Programming at the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University. She earned her doctorate in

Holocaust History from Clark University in 2010. Cushman's research centers on women's experiences during the Holocaust and the history of the women's camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau. She is currently working on her first book, *Auschwitz: The Women's Camp*, which is an adaptation of her dissertation.

**Nora Flanagan will serve on the Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission.**

Flanagan has been teaching high school English in the Chicago Public Schools for over twenty years. Born and raised on Chicago's South Side in an (other) especially tense era, Flanagan joined organized efforts against racism and other forms of bigotry at an early age. Ranging from direct confrontations with neo-Nazis in her community to various formal advocacy groups, Flanagan has stayed engaged with this issue for over thirty years. Flanagan currently researches and organizes against white nationalism as a Senior Fellow with the Western States Center, a Portland-based nonprofit working to support inclusive democracy and confront bigotry nationwide. Most recently, this work has involved speaking to law enforcement and other government agencies, school administrations, community groups, and media outlets about the intersection of bigotry and youth culture. She recently co-authored *Confronting White Nationalism in Schools*, a toolkit designed to help schools thoughtfully and effectively respond to incidents of racial hostility and proactively strengthen school communities.

**Peter Fritzsche, Ph.D, will serve on the Illinois Holocaust and Genocide**

**Commission.** Fritzsche has taught history at the University of Illinois since 1987. He has lived in Berlin and Tel Aviv and is the author of twelve books on the rise of National Socialism, World War II, and the Holocaust including prize-winning *Life and Death in Nazi Germany* and *An Iron Wind*. A leader in his field, Fritzsche is a veteran of the archives: across Germany, and in Israel, New York, and Washington DC. In his work, Fritzsche has analyzed Jewish diaries, ghetto reportage, and, notably, endangered Jews' relationships to God. He has also examined how publics responded to Hitler and the Holocaust. The recovery of voices especially of victims but also perpetrators is a keynote of his work. At University of Illinois, he teaches the university's main Holocaust course in addition to seminars on war, ethnic cleansing, genocide, and refugees and exiles. Fritzsche writes for the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* and serves as a primary consultant for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and its effort to revamp the permanent exhibit.

**Jessica Gallwill serve on the Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission.** Gall began her professional career in 2002 teaching English literature and coaching competitive speech. For six years, she worked in two different public high schools in Fremont and Omaha, Nebraska. During that time, Gall became interested in Holocaust education and traveled to Poland and Israel with the Jewish Labor Committee's Holocaust and Jewish Resistance Program, took part in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Belfer I and Belfer Next Step programs, and began learning and

facilitating ADL's Echoes and Reflections training. In addition to teaching, Gall also served as Coordinator of the Tribute to the Rescuers Essay Contest for the Plains States ADL and Institute for Holocaust Education. Eventually, she joined the Plains States ADL staff as Education Director, overseeing ADL's A World of Difference Institute providing anti-bias training and resources to educators, parents, students, and the greater community. In late 2013, Gall moved to Chicago to join the ADL Midwest staff and she is now ADL Midwest's Senior Associate Regional Director and Regional Office Law Enforcement Contact overseeing hate crimes, implicit bias, and violent extremism law enforcement programming and the Glass Leadership Institute. Gall has over 18 years of experience in Holocaust, diversity, equity and inclusion training and consulting.

**Jack Goodman will serve on the Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission.** A Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School alumnus, Goodman is a junior at Walter Payton College Prep in Chicago, Illinois. His passion for promoting Holocaust education stems from the importance he places on his Jewish identity. He began his work in Holocaust history in the eighth grade, participating in a year-long program at Bernard Zell through Unsilence. Jack has spent the last year and a half interning with Unsilence, helping the organization with data management and analytics. He also serves as a board member in JUF's Voices Alumni program. In his spare time, Jack tutors ESL students with Literacy Chicago, is a member of the executive board of his school's Model UN team, plays piano in his school's jazz band, and enjoys reading and creative writing.

**Doug Kiel, Ph.D. will serve on the Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission.** Kiel is an Assistant Professor in the Department of History and the Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities at Northwestern University. He is also a faculty affiliate of Northwestern's Center for Native American and Indigenous Research (CNAIR). Kiel is a citizen of the Oneida Nation, and received his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He studies Native American history, with particular interests in the western Great Lakes region and Indigenous nation rebuilding. His publications include scholarship on the erasure of Indigenous histories in the American Midwest, the origins of racial "blood quantum" policies in Native America, and legal disputes between the Oneida Nation and the Village of Hobart, Wisconsin, a mostly non-Native municipality that is located within the boundaries of the Oneida Reservation and seeks to block the tribe from recovering land that was lost a century ago. Beyond the university, Professor Kiel has worked in numerous museums, testified as an expert witness in regard to Native American land rights, and in 2008 was as an Indigenous Fellow at the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva, Switzerland. Kiel is also an Adjunct Curator at the Field Museum, where he currently serves on the advisory committee for a new exhibition on Native North America that will open in late 2021.

**Greg Kocourek will serve on the Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission.**

Kocourek is a graduate of Illinois State University and has been studying the Holocaust, genocide and human rights since his work on these topics during his undergraduate studies. Kocourek has shown a consistent commitment to excellent teaching in social studies and in genocide studies in particular, since beginning his teaching career in 2007. After completing a master's degree in teaching and Learning at Illinois State University, Kocourek became a fellow of TOLI (The Olga Lengyel Institute for Holocaust Studies and Human Rights) in New York studying Holocaust related topics in a community of fellow educators and excellent mentor teachers. After creating content for C-SPAN Classroom concerning America's response to the Holocaust and interview sources during a fellowship in 2016, he was selected to serve at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum as a teacher fellow. During this fellowship a cohort of educators created projects and shared pedagogical practices to improve one another's teaching and student's learning. He is continuing to advocate for the best quality instruction for students to engage and consider this difficult history with the goal of creating more civically engaged, inclusive, and safe communities.

**Charlotte Masters will serve on the Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission.**

Masters is a senior at Northwestern University's School of Education and Social Policy majoring in Human Development and Psychological Services with a Minor in History. She is the granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor and has spent the last six years involved with various initiatives geared towards Holocaust education and curriculum development. From 2014 to 2018, she served as part of a national cohort with the USC Shoah Foundation charged with learning about and developing tools to support tolerance education. During this time, she traveled to Poland and Hungary to help pilot the iWalk program, an interactive tool to connect physical locations with survivor testimony and assist educators from around the globe in creating testimony-based course content. In 2015, Charlotte launched a Survivors Speakers Bureau to bring Holocaust survivors to Washington, DC area schools, reaching over 800 students in total. She has written numerous poems about her grandmother's experience as a Czech Kindertransport survivor and Holocaust memory in general. Masters is passionate about working with children and currently serves as an intern at the Pediatric Developmental Center of Advocate Medical in Chicago and a senior member of the executive board of her university's chapter of Kesem, a non-profit dedicated to supporting children through and beyond their parent or guardian's cancer. She is particularly interested in education accessibility and the role testimony plays in the construction of collective memory. Charlotte aims to conduct future research on how the Roma community in Poland organizes to promote cross-cultural understanding.

**Samantha Oberman will serve on the Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission.**

Oberman is a current Learning Specialist at The Noble Academy in Chicago, and a

graduate student at the Relay Graduate School of Education, where she is earning a Master's degree in Teaching with an endorsement in Special Education. She graduated Summa Cum Laude from Northwestern University's School of Education & Social Policy with a B.S. in Human Development & Psychological Services, Gender & Sexuality Studies, and Psychology. As an undergraduate student, Samantha wrote her Honors Thesis on the influence of human rights education on student empathy. She has been instrumental in the resource and curriculum development at Unsilence, a social justice education non-profit focused on elevating historically silenced stories of injustice and oppression. Specifically, she co-designed "Hidden," a collection of interactive experiences on Hidden Holocaust Histories for learning, commemoration, and empathy. She has also facilitated Holocaust education workshops both live and in the virtual setting across the country.

**Erika Quinn will serve on the Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission.** Quinn earned her Ph.D. in Modern European History from the University of California, Davis, and has been teaching history at the university level for twenty years. Professor of History at Eureka College, she received the Helen Cleaver Distinguished Teaching award in 2015. Her research interests lie in Central European cultural history, focusing on subjectivity and the history of emotions. She published her book, *Franz Liszt: A Story of Central European Subjectivity*, in 2014. She has also published articles on twentieth-century war widowhood in the *Journal of First World War Studies*, the *Women in German Yearbook*, and elsewhere. She is currently at work on two book projects: a microhistory of World War Two based on a German woman's diary, as well as a co-edited volume, *Feeling beyond the Human*, which investigates human emotional interactions with AI, machines, and animals in German cultural history. In 2019, Quinn was a Fellow at the Holocaust Educational Foundation's Summer Institute, and she is a Qualified Administrator of the Intercultural Development Index.

**Keisha Rembert will serve on the Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission.** Rembert is a lifelong learner and educator. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Teacher Preparation at National Louis University. Prior to entering teacher education, she spent more than 15 years teaching English and U.S. History in the Chicago area. Her passion for equity, social justice, and youth literature coalesce in her membership and work on the National Council for Teachers of English's (NCTE) Committee Against Racism and Bias, as a member of the Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of NCTE (ALAN) Committee for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and a member of ALAN's Board of Directors, an advisory board member for the Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History, as well as in her service on the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center's Educator Advisory Board. In 2019, Rembert was named Illinois History Teacher of the Year as well as the 2019 National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE) Outstanding Middle-Level English Educator. Her commitment to advocacy and equity is best reflected in her published works, myriad nationally

recognized presentations, consultant work and as a Teach Plus Policy Alum, her work with the Illinois State Board of Education's Diverse Learner and Teacher Ready Network and as a Master Teacher for the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

**Jennifer Scott will serve on the Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission.** Scott is an anthropologist, curator and public historian, whose work explores connections between museums, arts, place, and social justice. She recently served as director and chief curator of Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, a historic landmark in Chicago that focuses on civil rights and human rights issues. At Hull-House, she led the exhibitions, community engagement efforts, and overall vision of the Museum for nearly six years. In 2019, the Museum was recognized with the Award for Excellence in Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice by the Association of Midwest Museums. Previously, Jennifer served as vice director and director of research at Weeksville Heritage Center in Brooklyn, a nationally significant historic site that memorializes a free Black independent community in 19<sup>th</sup> century New York. Jennifer is currently the Vice-President for the Association of Midwest Museums and a board member for the National Association for Museum Exhibition. A civic leader in Chicago, she was appointed in 2020 by Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot as co-chair of Chicago's new Monuments and Memorials Advisory Committee. She also serves on the City of Chicago's Cultural Advisory Council and served as co-chair for the City's Museum Task Force created to help museums re-open under the pandemic. For over 18 years, Scott has been faculty at The New School in New York, where she teaches courses in arts and civic engagement, cultural anthropology, race and ethnic studies, and museum and global studies. Scott researches, writes, and lectures locally and internationally on arts and social change, memory and place, contested histories and innovative strategies for museums, history sites, arts and cultural centers.

**Jill Weinberg will serve on the Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission.** Weinberg currently serve as the Midwest Regional Director for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. She has been in this position for the past 31 years and has been the first and only Midwest Regional Director since the position was created to build the museum. She has been a part of the creation of the museum, the opening years, and now the growth and development of museum through the decades. Prior to her work at the USHMM, Weinberg worked for the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago for 11 years with a focus on leadership training, adult education, and Mission travel experiences to Israel, Eastern Europe, NYC, and DC. Weinberg has participated in the Wexner Heritage Program, a two-year educational experience for leaders and staff in the Jewish Community. Weinberg has a Master of Social Work and Master's degree in Jewish Communal Service from Yeshiva University in NYC and a Bachelor of Arts from Colorado College.