In turn, a number of Bob's publications in the last year honored the career accomplishments of other prestigious Holocaust scholars. In the fall of 2014, he attended a conference at Cape Town University to honor Professor Milton Shain on his retirement. Palgrave Macmillan will publish a collection of papers given at the conference, including Bob's contribution, "Pastors and Professors: Assessing Complicity and Unfolding Complexity." Bob also edited a volume of papers from a 2013 conference held to honor the long and important career of John Conway, Professor Emeritus at UBC in Vancouver. That collection, Reassessing Contemporary Church History, appeared in the fall of 2014 as a volume of Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte and includes Bob's paper, "Church Historians, 'Profane Historians,' and our Odyssey since Wilhelm Niemöller."

Another of Bob's papers, "A Radical Minority: Resistance in the German Protestant Church," will be republished in August 2015 in the book Germans Against Nazism, edited by Francis R. Nicosia and Lawrence D. Stokes, in honor of the 85th birthday of Professor Peter Hoffmann of McGill University. In the near future, Bob will give a paper at the German Studies Association meeting in a session honoring Hoffmann and also will serve as commentator in a session celebrating the 80th birthday of Professor Hartmut Lehmann, founding director of the German Historical Institute in Washington, D.C. Lastly, Bob will have the great pleasure of contributing to a Festschrift to honor the remarkable career of Christopher Browning.

Support from The Kurt Mayer Endowment allowed Bob to spend time in Berlin in 2014, completing research for Christians in Nazi Germany, forthcoming from Cambridge University Press. He also spoke at Stockholm's Swedish Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities on the topic of "Resistance or Complicity? Balancing Assessments of German Churches under Nazism." That presentation will be published in Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte in 2015. Bob continues his service with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum as Chair of the Committee on Ethics, Religion and the Holocaust. In May, he co-hosted a two-day workshop at the museum on the question of Jewish, Christian and Muslim views of the Holocaust. Also, as the search for Bob's replacement as Kurt Mayer Chair in Holocaust Studies continued into the early part of 2015, Bob continued to contribute to Holocaust and Genocide Studies at PLU and graciously agreed to teach two classes in spring semester 2015.

POETRY AFTER AUSCHWITZ?
In the Winter 2015 issue of The Reform Jewish Quarterly, PLU faculty Bruce Kadden, Lisa Marcus and Beth Kraig, with former PLU instructor Nick Barr-Clingan, published their commentaries from the "Poetry After Auschwitz?" forum held during the Fourth Annual Powell-Heller Conference on Holocaust Education. The issue also highlights poems written by Marcus and Kadden after their separate trips to Auschwitz in 2012. Versions of the forum took place four times from 2010 to 2012. Students from classes in English, History, International Honors and Religion offered readings, musical performances, a video diary, a poem and additional personal reflections.

ALUMNI UPDATE

Julia Walsh '14, History Major & Religion Minor
[Julia is earning an M.A. in Holocaust History at the University of Vermont.]

I know full well that I would not be doing what I’m doing today if I had gone to any other university than PLU.

I know that nowhere else would I have had access to programs and mentors that allowed me to shine. The Holocaust conferences, the interactions with major scholars, the Kurt Mayer fellowship research and the Lemkin Essay Contest—by the end of my PLU career I estimated, conservatively, that I had spent 1,000 hours reading, writing and talking about Holocaust topics. That kind of effort was possible only because it was appreciated and funded by amazing people like the Powell, Heller and Mayer families. And that kind of effort was possible only because I had the teachers (and the librarians!) and the support to make it happen.

A REPORT ON SCHOLARSHIP AND ACTIVITIES

Robert Ericksen, Kurt Mayer Chair of Holocaust Studies Emeritus

In March 2014, the Seventh Annual Powell-Heller Conference for Holocaust Education featured a retirement dinner to celebrate Robert Ericksen’s contributions to Holocaust Studies and PLU. Donors created the Robert Ericksen Teaching Excellence Fund to provide resources for ongoing faculty development and curricular programs that continue Bob’s legacy in the classroom and as a mentor to students. Bob also was honored at the biennial Lessons & Legacies Holocaust Conference in Boca Raton, Fla., in October.

Historians, and our Odyssey since Wilhelm Niemöller,” Another of Bob’s papers, “A Radical Minority: Resistance in the German Protestant Church,” will be republished in August 2015 in the book Germans Against Nazism, edited by Francis R. Nicosia and Lawrence D. Stokes, in honor of the 85th birthday of Professor Peter Hoffmann of McGill University. In the near future, Bob will give a paper at the German Studies Association meeting in a session honoring Hoffmann and also will serve as commentator in a session celebrating the 80th birthday of Professor Hartmut Lehmann, founding director of the German Historical Institute in Washington, D.C. Lastly, Bob will have the great pleasure of contributing to a Festschrift to honor the remarkable career of Christopher Browning.

Support from The Kurt Mayer Endowment allowed Bob to spend time in Berlin in 2014, completing research for Christians in Nazi Germany, forthcoming from Cambridge University Press. He also spoke at Stockholm’s Swedish Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities on the topic of “Resistance or Complicity? Balancing Assessments of German Churches under Nazism.” That presentation will be published in Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte in 2015. Bob continues his service with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum as Chair of the Committee on Ethics, Religion and the Holocaust. In May, he co-hosted a two-day workshop at the museum on the question of Jewish, Christian and Muslim views of the Holocaust. Also, as the search for Bob’s replacement as Kurt Mayer Chair in Holocaust Studies continued into the early part of 2015, Bob continued to contribute to Holocaust and Genocide Studies at PLU and graciously agreed to teach two classes in spring semester 2015.
NEW COURSE IN HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE STUDIES

Is the definition of genocide that Raphael Lemkin proposed in the 1940s still viable in the 21st century? Who "owns" (and is entitled to speak for) Anne Frank? How should we understand and label the abusive treatment of North America's indigenous peoples by European colonizers and the U.S. government? What does it take for Rithy Panh, survivor of the Khmer Rouge's violent regime, to sit down in conversation with "Comrade" Duch, one of the men responsible for the torture and murders that Panh witnessed? These questions and many more are at the heart of HGST 200, the Introduction to Holocaust and Genocide Studies class that launched in September 2014 at PLU. The class filled quickly as continuing students registered in April. Some in the class are among the 10 students who already have declared a minor in Holocaust and Genocide Studies (offered at PLU since September 2014).

Kirsten Christensen, Associate Professor of German in the Languages and Literature program, and Rona Kaufman, Associate Professor and current Chair of the English Department, team-taught the class. From January through May 2014, a five-member faculty team met regularly to discuss and plan its development. In addition to Christensen and Kaufman, the team included Rabbi Bruce Kadden, Visiting Instructor in the Religion Department; Lisa Marcus, Associate Professor of English; and Beth Kraig, Professor of History and Director of the new HGST minor. Why involve five people in the development of one class? The class, like the new minor, features critical consideration of the Holocaust and other genocides from an interdisciplinary perspective. Eventually, faculty from disciplines like Art History, Philosophy and Global Studies may be teaching students in HGST 200.

Among the proud graduates of this initial class was Natalie Mayer, daughter of Kurt Mayer. The class will be taught in Fall 2015 by Lisa Marcus and Beth Kraig.

The 2014 Kurt Mayer Summer Research Scholars presented their work at a lunch hosted by Gordon Thomas Honeywell, sponsors of the Summer Scholar program, on Nov. 21, 2014. From left: Spencer Davenport ('15, History and Economics), who wrote "An Examination of Religious Life in the Ghetto of Łódź, Vilna, and Warsaw", Laura Johnson ('16, English), who wrote "What good were the words?": the Child Reader and Writer in Markús Zusák’s The Book Thief, Robert Erickson, Kurt Mayer Endowed Chair of Holocaust Studies Emeritus; and Samuel Ryan ('15, History and English), who wrote "Zionism: Jewish and Evangelical Perspectives on Faith, Practicality, and Identity in the State of Israel.”

‘SWEET DREAMS’ INSPIRES PLU STUDENTS

(excerpted and edited from the article by Natalie DeFord in The Mooring Mast, Oct. 31, 2014)

The Pacific Lutheran University community had the chance to experience something sweet on Oct. 28, 2014, with both film and ice cream. The Holocaust and Genocide Studies program's fall event remembered the 1994 Rwandan genocide by screening the film "Sweet Dreams," followed by discussion and an ice-cream social.

"Sweet Dreams" is a documentary by Rob and Lisa Fruchtman about the only all-women drumming troupe in Rwanda. The women in the drumming troupe opened their own ice-cream shop in Rwanda after partnering with businesswomen in Brooklyn. All this was done while the women in Rwanda continued to deal with the many challenges of life post-genocide.

A crowd of more than 260 people attended the documentary screening, followed by a Q&A session with Lisa Fruchtman, who said she was very pleased with the screening at PLU. ‘The evening wrapped up with a wonderful dessert provided by Ice Cream Social from North Tacoma, and many guests lingered to reflect with friends and colleagues on the film's message of resilience, lingering fear and ongoing economic struggles in post-genocide Rwanda. "I was thrilled to see so many people, and I hope they benefited," Fruchtman said. “It was great to see such a full house.”

Rachel Diebel, a junior at PLU, said the audience was very reactive. There were moments during the film when people cried, cheered, clapped, held their breath or laughed out loud. "People should be prepared to experience the ultimate sadness but also incredible joy while watching this film," Diebel said. “It's an emotional roller coaster, and I was not prepared for the highs and lows.”

To make a gift, or for more information on how to support Holocaust and Genocide Studies at PLU, please contact Katie Delph in the Office of Advancement: 253-535-7177 or delphka@plu.edu. For more information on HGST programming and public opportunities, contact the PLU History Department at 253-535-7595 or murraybj@plu.edu.