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Press release : 2015 : 12 : 17 : Debbie and Brent Sembler Florida Holocaust Museum Lecture Jan. 25

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USFSP News

Debbie and Brent Sembler Florida Holocaust Museum Lecture Jan. 25

The USF St. Petersburg [Honors Program](#) will host the Debbie and Brent Sembler Florida Holocaust Museum Lecture on Monday, Jan. 25 from 2 to 3 p.m. The lecture, one of USFSP's 50th Anniversary events, will be presented in partnership with the [Florida Holocaust Museum](#) (FHM).

"The idea is to bring the mission of the FHM out of the museum and onto the campus," said Thomas Smith, associate professor of Political Science and director of the USFSP Honors Program. The partnership between the museum and the University allows them to alternate between lectures and events focused specifically on the Holocaust, and events that deal with broader issues of tolerance, respect, and human rights, he added.

The featured speaker will be Mark Weitzman, director of Government Affairs and director of the Task Force Against Hate and Terrorism for the Simon Wiesenthal Center. Weitzman, who also serves as chief representative for the Center to the United Nations in New York City, focuses much of his work around issues of racism, Antisemitism, and hate groups both in the U.S. and around the world. He will speak about hate groups in America and the resurgence of antisemitism.

"He is a powerful speaker," Smith said about Weitzman. "Given the recent spasms of violence and terrorism in today's society, this topic is particularly pertinent."

USF Trustee Debbie Sembler said the idea for creating the annual lecture series was brought to her by the university's then-vice president of Development, who knew of her personal involvement with USFSP and the Florida Holocaust Museum. "I was enamored immediately with the idea as I've always had a passion for the FHM's mission of educating on tolerance," she said. "Bringing these two fine institutions together was a perfect fit and they have collaborated on many programs ever since."

The annual lecture series has been offered at USF St. Petersburg since the early 2000s.

“The FHM is extraordinarily grateful to Debbie and Brent Sembler for having the vision to create and endow this special program,” said Elizabeth Gelman, executive director of the Florida Holocaust Museum. “Our partnership with USFSP continues to enrich both institutions.”

The event, which is free and open to the public, will be held in the University Student Center Ballroom. Learn about [other events](#) USF St. Petersburg is hosting in celebration of its 50th Anniversary.



Debbie and Brent Sembler



Mark Weitzman



