

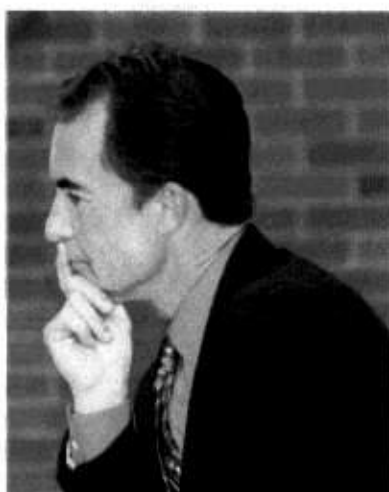
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CORDIALLY INVITE YOU TO THE

# HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY CEREMONY

GUEST SPEAKER:

BERND WOLLSCHLAEGER, MD



AUTHOR OF



WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2015

RECEPTION – 6:00 P.M.

PROGRAM – 6:30 P.M.

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# City of Laredo



"ALWAYS A REASON TO CELEBRATE IN LAREDO"

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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[www.cityoflaredo.com](http://www.cityoflaredo.com)

## Why We Remember: Holocaust Remembrance Day Ceremony

*Ceremony combines spiritual, secular aspects to help memorialize those killed;  
keynote speaker son of a Nazi General*

**Laredo, TX—May 22, 2015**—After the horrors of the Holocaust, the world vowed to never let such a thing happen again. To that end, the City of Laredo, the Laredo Public Library Wall of Tolerance Center & Museum, the Laredo Convention & Visitors Bureau and Congregation Agudas Achim will host the Holocaust Remembrance Day Ceremony on Wednesday, May 27, 2015, starting with a reception sponsored by IBC at 6:00 p.m.; the ceremony will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Laredo Public Library HEB Multi-Purpose Room, 1120 East Calton Road. This year, the featured speaker will be Dr. Bernd Wollschleager, whose father was a highly-decorated World War II tank commander and Nazi officer. Immediately following his presentation, a candle ceremony to memorialize the six million Jews and six million others killed during the Holocaust will be held, with various community leaders participating, will be held.

The U.S. Congress established the Days of Remembrance as the nation's annual commemoration of the Holocaust and created the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum as a permanent living memorial to the victims.

"The Holocaust was a time of unspeakable horror and unimaginable hatred and cruelty perpetuated by the very government established to protect its people," said City of Laredo Mayor Pete Saenz. "We remember because the Holocaust provides one of the most effective subjects for examining basic moral issues. Democratic institutions and values are not automatically sustained, but need to be appreciated, nurtured, and protected. Through this ceremony, by our remembrance of the 12 million who perished during this government sponsored genocide, we vow as citizens of the world, of one human family, to never let such a thing happen again. That is why we remember."

The event, which is free and open to the entire community, begins at 6:00 p.m., with a reception sponsored by IBC Bank. "We are honored to be a part of a remembrance that to this day, should still strike a chord with people of all faiths, ethnicities and background," said Gabriel Castillo, Senior Vice President of Corporate Marketing at IBC Bank.

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The program that follows is open to persons of every faith and will feature a mix of celebration and somber remembrance. High school and middle schools students especially, are invited to attend the ceremony, as they must learn to carry on the message and action of peace and tolerance.

“Together people of all religions and origins remember the Holocaust, to make our call that persecution and discrimination will be no more,” said Rabbi Gabriel Frydman, of Congregation Agudas Achim. “Please join us on Wednesday, May 27 here in Laredo in the house of learning, our public library.”

Father Iden Bello of the Diocese of Laredo will open the ceremony with an invocation, praying for peace to take hold and help heal the wounds of intolerance that may still linger in the world.

The program concludes with the Holocaust Remembrance Day Candle Ceremony. Although secular in the sense that there are no religious obligations or prohibitions, special prayers and rituals have developed over the years, such as lighting six memorial candles—one for each million of the six million Jews who were murdered during the Holocaust.

Various community leaders will be participating in treading the prayers associated with the candle ceremony. **Xavier Garcia**, a 3rd grade student at *St. Peter's Memorial School*, will read the Prayer for the Children; **Judge Monica Notzon** of the *111<sup>th</sup> District Court* will read the Prayer for the Mothers, while **Webb County Judge Tano Tijerina** will read the Prayer for the Fathers; **Sylvia Bruni**, *Executive Director of the Children's Advocacy Center* will read the Prayer for the Elders; **Webb County Sheriff Martin Cuellar** will read the Prayer for the Fighters; and **David H. Gonzalez**, *Associate Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction of United I.S.D.* will read the Prayer for the Righteous.

“The Holocaust is one of the greatest tragedies the world has ever seen, and as a human race, we are obligated to remember our mistakes and to continue to protect the rights of all those innocent people currently suffering senseless persecution,” said Monica Z. Notzon, 111<sup>th</sup> District Court Judge.

This year's keynote speaker for the ceremony is Bernd Wollschlaeger, MD, FAAFP, FASAM, a board-certified family physician in private practice in Aventura, Florida. He received his medical education in Germany and Israel and completed his residency training at Jackson Memorial Hospital. Dr. Wollschlaeger is also a book author, and his book “A German Life: Against All Odds Change is Possible” describes his struggle growing up in Germany in the shadow of his father, a highly-decorated World War II tank commander and Nazi officer. He eventually converted to Judaism, emigrated to Israel and served in the Israel Defense Forces as a Medical Officer. Later next month, he will release his novel “Samson's Shadow” and his book “Stauffenberg: My Life in the Shadow of a Hero.” He also actively participated in the documentary “The Ghosts of the Third Reich” which was aired in the U.S., Europe, Brazil and China. In addition, he is producing a documentary titled, “Elias' Dream: A Man's Journey Towards Peace” highlighting the issue of Jewish- Arab Coexistence in Israel.”

“The events and the results of the Holocaust were so devastating. It was an extreme that we can barely imagine,” says Raye Farr, Film Curator, during a video exhibit on display at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. “But we remember. We remember because it is an unthinkable scar on humanity. We need to understand what human beings are capable of.”

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### **Why We Remember: Holocaust Remembrance Day Ceremony / page 3 of 3**

According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: What you do matters. Remembrance not only obligates us to memorialize those who were killed during the Holocaust, but it also reminds us of the fragility of democracy and the need for citizens to be vigilant in the protection of democratic ideals. We remember because we recognize the importance of preserving freedom, promoting human dignity, and confronting hate whenever and wherever it occurs.

“Memory is what shapes us. Memory is what teaches us. We must understand that’s where our redemption is,” said Estelle Laughlin, Holocaust survivor:

People of every faith and age are invited to attend the ceremony. For more information, contact Renee LaPierre at the Laredo Public Library at (956) 795-2400, x2237 or Xochitl Mora Garcia at (956) 791-7461 or [lmora@ci.laredo.tx.us](mailto:lmora@ci.laredo.tx.us).

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