

A TRIBUTE

THE OBERMAYER GERMAN JEWISH HISTORY AWARDS

PRESENTED TO:

ELISABETH BÖHRER

GABRIELE HANNAH, MARTINA &
HANS-DIETER GRAF

MICHAEL IMHOF

EGON KRÜGER

HILDE SCHRAMM & THE RETURN FOUNDATION

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD:

BENIGNA SCHÖNHAGEN

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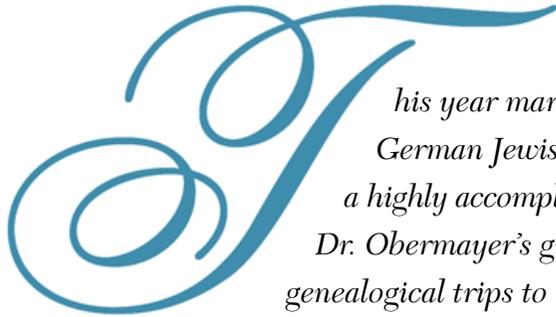
DEALING WITH THE PAST

In recent decades, many individuals and organizations in Germany have worked creatively and selflessly to preserve, raise awareness of, or breathe new life into the once-vibrant Jewish culture in their communities. They have conducted research, restored cemeteries, renovated synagogues, developed educational programs, staged exhibitions, created websites and publications, and reintroduced music that had been forgotten. Together, they have advanced the cause of intergenerational and intercultural healing. The Obermayer German Jewish History Awards were established to pay tribute to those who have made extraordinary contributions to this effort. Award recipients have included teachers and engineers, publishers and judges, artists and bankers, lawyers and business executives, and they come from every corner of the country. They have built bridges in their own communities and around the world, forging meaningful relationships with former residents and their descendants while also making it possible to teach the lessons of history to new generations.

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ENRICHING THE FUTURE



This year marks the 19th annual presentation of the Obermayer German Jewish History Awards, founded by Dr. Arthur S. Obermayer, a highly accomplished American entrepreneur, scientist, and activist. Dr. Obermayer's grandparents all came from southern Germany; on genealogical trips to Germany, he met a range of people working to raise awareness of local Jewish history and to rebuild an appreciation of Jewish culture. He decided that their work needed to be recognized. "So many people in the rest of the world, especially Jews, have not yet forgiven the Germans and don't recognize that the German population today almost entirely had nothing to do with the Holocaust and are trying to do their own part to make amends for their ancestors' past actions," he said in an interview shortly before his death in 2016.

German life was once filled with the contributions of Jewish scholars, scientists, writers, and artists, who often worked collaboratively with other Germans. The Nazi regime and its obliteration of the German-Jewish community ended a long period of peaceful coexistence and cooperation.

Today, an increasing number of German individuals and organizations maintain an interest in and commitment to Jewish history and culture. Many have worked for years to preserve that history, often at great personal cost and without being recognized for their efforts. The Obermayer German Jewish History Awards provide an opportunity to acknowledge these individuals and organizations. Their achievements reflect a personal connection to Jewish history and an embodiment of the Jewish concept of tikkun olam (repairing the world).

There are still many in the world who, by word or by deed, are ready to oppress Jews or other minorities. Knowing the lessons of history so well, the awardees honored here have often furthered the fight against intolerance. They exemplify how acknowledging a country's dark past can become a motivation to improve the present and future.

Awardee

ELISABETH BÖHRER

Sondheim vor der Rhön, Bavaria

“I always wanted to learn more, to do more.”

Her house, Elisabeth Böhrer confesses, is a mess. “In every room of my house I have papers; it looks like a professor’s house. I can’t even have visitors because I have only one room where people can sit down.” In truth, she wouldn’t have it any other way. The story of why begins nearly three decades ago, when her home was much neater.

In 1991, while working as a tour guide in Schweinfurt, in Lower Franconia, Böhrer was tasked with leading dozens of Jewish former residents through the town during its 1,200-year anniversary celebration week. She hurriedly read up on local Jewish history, gathering information to prepare for the visit. “But what was great was when the people actually came and I got to know them,” she recalls. “[I] found them all so kind and interesting. It was my first contact with Jewish people, and from this moment I had a connection with them. It was personal for me. Without meeting the actual Jewish citizens, the whole thing would not have started.”

The “whole thing” sparked by those initial encounters is what became her life’s work as a passionate, meticulous—and self-taught—historian and researcher dedicated to preserving the history of rural Jews in Lower Franconia and documenting Jewish lives for future generations. Those stacks of paper in her home constitute an extensive archive of Jewish lives and Jewish history, both before the Holocaust and extending back centuries.

Gripped by the moving family stories and experiences, Böhrer took it upon herself to travel to New York the following year and meet some of the descendants of Schweinfurt’s Jews. From there she cultivated relationships and correspondences with the relatives and began building

their family trees. “I developed everything step by step, through direct contact. I always wanted to learn more, to do more,” she says. Böhrer relentlessly pursued her research, obtaining old newspaper articles and collecting all the data she could find about prewar Schweinfurt, where 363 Jews lived until 1933. She invited numerous descendants to visit the town, led them to their families’ former homes, and guided them through Schweinfurt’s 19th century Jewish cemetery. It had been left largely undisturbed during the Nazi years, but hardly anything was known about it. Böhrer decided to change that.

“The gravestone inscriptions were often hard to decipher, and since the cemetery [had] people of all religions, I had to go through all the burials from 1874 onward to find out which ones were Jewish and which ones weren’t,” Böhrer says. “It was a labyrinth to figure out who was buried under each gravestone, but it was very important for me to be able to show the descendants the graves of their ancestors.” In 2009, after five years of meticulous research and writing, Böhrer published a book about the Schweinfurt Jewish cemetery, where she managed to recover information about more than 300 graves. That information is available today on the JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry.

She didn’t stop there. Böhrer wanted to know everything she could find out about the former Jewish residents of Schweinfurt, so she immersed herself in archives, both locally in Franconia and in Munich. Her research was complicated, she says, by the fact that 200 years ago Jewish people in the region didn’t use family names, only the names of their fathers, and therefore the names changed with every generation. Only in 1811, when the Bavarian government ordered priests from the village to record Jewish birth, marriage, and death dates, did clear family details become available. But none of this slowed Böhrer, who wrote to the Federal Archives and made it her

mission to track down the names and learn the fates of the 1,500 Jews who had inhabited Franconia between 1933 and 1945.

Böhrer meanwhile dedicated herself to helping Jewish families navigate the complex restitution process. “My Jewish friends said they never received money for their relatives’ houses. The restitution process for them was difficult,” she says. When Böhrer brought up the topic with the owners of homes where Jewish families once lived, they often answered, “We had to pay twice for our house, once when we bought it and once after the restitution process.” She would tell them, “Yes, you had to pay twice...because the first time you paid far too little.”

Born in 1953, Böhrer grew up in the nearby spa town of Bad Kissingen, where her father owned a bakery. Her mother told her stories about the terrible suffering of Jews under the Nazis, but otherwise she knew little about her region’s Jewish past. The oldest of four siblings, Böhrer went to work for the local district administration office after finishing middle school, then moved to Würzburg to complete her job training as an administrative assistant. In her late 20s she married and had two sons before moving to Schweinfurt, where she became a tour guide and encountered her passion to research and recover the Jewish past.

In the years since, Böhrer has uncovered fascinating legacies of Jews from the Schweinfurt region who have had global impact. One was Joseph Sachs, whose son Samuel became the famous American investment banker, giving his name to the Goldman Sachs company. Joseph Sachs came from a nearby village, and she was able to locate the place of his family’s burial.

Through her tenacious research, Böhrer also discovered that the grandfather and great-grandfather of Charlotte Knobloch, the former president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, came from a village close to Schweinfurt, and she compiled their family tree. Another family tree she constructed was that of Elizabeth Steinberger of Chapel Hill, N.C, whose uncle, Jack Steinberger, won the 1988 Nobel Prize in physics and whose grandfather, Ludwig Steinberger, was the cantor of Bad Kissingen synagogue from 1892 to 1937.

“I was very honored to make a family tree for a person who was a Nobel Prize winner,” says Böhrer, who first made contact with Jack Steinberger’s cousin, Hilde, at the 1991 town anniversary and later succeeded in tracing the

family tree back to 1755. “The family had already tried intensively to find their family roots, but they hadn’t been able to get the information. I discovered their family tree was written wrong on the Internet concerning where Jack’s grandmother had died, and I found out where their grandmother was buried. I knew where to look for it.”

Böhrer’s skill won raves from Elizabeth Steinberger. “Elisabeth is the oracle concerning German-Jewish history in Bad Kissingen and its environs. Anything she doesn’t know is probably not documented,” Steinberger says. “She is a veteran archivist, exceedingly skilled at locating and deciphering genealogical documents. Such experienced skill, razor-sharp precision, and dedicated diligence deeply deserve our respect and gratitude. Her exhaustive efforts and unfailing kindness have helped to heal the decades-old breach between Germany and its former Jewish citizens.”

In recent years, Böhrer has written numerous articles for the annual regional yearbook (*Heimatjahrbuch*). She has given lectures about and tours of a small, historically Jewish village five miles west of Schweinfurt, named Obbach, about which she also wrote a book. With a dogged eye for detail, she has spotted mistakes about family histories in the local newspapers and demanded they be corrected. Driven to turn over every stone necessary to reveal and reassemble the past, Böhrer remains steadfast in her work.

“A lot of people don’t understand why I do this. They don’t protest, but they cannot understand,” she says. “I think I have to do it, I must do it. There is so much.” Yes, her house is full of papers, but it’s well worth the trade-off. “When young people ask me what happened, I can tell them. I think most people don’t really know how it was in Germany. I feel that the work is important for the Jewish people who lost their homeland, and I see how thankful they are when I can show them the houses and the history. The work goes on. It’s an ongoing process that continues.”

Nominated by: Daniela Calvary, Buenos Aires, Argentina; Mark Dornhelm, Brooklyn, NY, USA; Charles Marks (dec.), Sharon, MA, USA; Faye Salmon, Ft. Lee, NJ, USA; Edith Schwartz, Little Neck, NY, USA; Elizabeth Steinberger, Chapel Hill, NC, USA; Dana-Leigh Strauss, Surrey, UK; Lou and Frances Walter, Pompton Plains, NJ, USA

Awardees

GABRIELE HANNAH, MARTINA & HANS-DIETER GRAF

Mainz and Seeheim-Jugenheim, Rhineland-Palatinate

*“If I meet and get to know someone,
then I lose my fear.”*

Gabriele Hannah believes in the power of a well-told story—the kind of story where you really get to know someone and understand their joys, their struggles, and their motivations.

Hannah, along with her brother and his wife, Hans-Dieter and Martina Graf, has made a specialty of telling this kind of story. Among them they have published three books, edited others, and written dozens of articles in newspapers and magazines, all examining the lives of Jews in the Rhine-Hesse region in interesting and compelling depth.

There are two important reasons to tell these stories, Hannah says, and those reasons are likely why they have resonated so well with readers. One is to remember the past, not only what happened during the Nazi era but also the hundreds of years of vibrant Jewish culture that preceded it.

A second is to use the power of narrative to fight bigotry and fear in current times. Bringing the characters of the past to life in a way that seems full and real creates understanding—of people and culture. “I’m afraid of something I don’t know. If I meet and get to know someone, then I lose my fear,” Hannah says. “You can have a picture of a person, but if you get to know this person through his stories and you find out what he did, then you’re no longer afraid; you’re open. And if somebody’s different, it doesn’t scare you...you do not develop hate.”

The first story that captured the trio’s imagination was that of Abraham David, who in 1862 emigrated to the United States at age 17. He came from Hannah’s home town of Gimbsheim in the Rhine-Hesse region of

Rhineland-Palatinate and landed as the American Civil War raged. He planned to stay with relatives, but they lived in the south, beyond the battle lines. Hannah and the Grafs discovered that a building with David’s name on it still exists in downtown Wilmington, N.C. When the war ended and he finally did settle in the South, he built a store and became an acclaimed men’s clothing retailer—among other things, introducing Levi Strauss jeans to the region.

They found his life so fascinating that they decided to research and write a book about him, *From the Rhine to the Cape Fear River (Vom Rhein an den Cape Fear River)*, published in 2013. That biography turned out to be just the beginning of the Graf family’s deep scholarship and investigation of the Jewish legacy in Rhine-Hesse.

“With Abraham David we stepped into the Jewish past, and the doors just opened wide,” Hannah says. “We said, ‘Wait a minute, there must be much more.’ So we started to research the Jewish families and were overwhelmed with what we found.”

The group proceeded to visit archives in Germany and Belgium and did painstaking research at the Leo Baeck Institute in New York and the William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum in Atlanta, Ga. Based on primary documents, photographs, genealogy database research, and the extensive correspondence they initiated with Jewish descendants, they compiled a vast trove of information about the lives of some 1,700 individuals in 600 Jewish families that once inhabited the region. “Even if there was just one name [mentioned] in our documented history, we needed to find out who they were,” Hannah recalls.

Seven years later, in May 2018, their work culminated in the publication of an epic 556-page

book, *The Jews From Old Rhine (Die Juden vom Altrhein)*, which provides an exhaustive account of the region's Jewish history and family stories, incorporating descendants from Sweden, Switzerland, Britain, Israel, Brazil, the United States, and elsewhere. The Grafts and Hannah interviewed Jewish and German families alike, relying on local eyewitness accounts from some of the last living individuals of the war-time era.

"If we talk about Jewish history in Germany," Hannah says, "what comes to mind are those 12 years of [the Nazi era] and we forget about the almost 1,000 years before that, and the time that came after. We owe the dead people the truth and we owe them remembrance. But our book is dedicated to the living descendants on both sides. We wanted to show that life changed for them, too, and that the Nazis did not succeed in extinguishing the Jewish families from Altrhein."

Beyond the sheer scope and size of the work—the book weighs 5.5 pounds (2.5 kilograms)—it is their artful storytelling style and gift of narration that makes it truly unique. Motivated to explain the past through writing, Hannah and the Grafts bring an array of skills and experience to their craft: Gabriele holds a master's degree in German studies and American studies and has lived in America, London, and Moscow; Hans-Dieter has worked in university research and public relations; and Martina has been an author for the Brockhaus Encyclopedia and Encyclopedia Yearbook.

In addition to writing *The Jews From Old Rhine*, the group has published many articles in the regional press as well as on their website, www.erichgraf.de. They have led descendants on walking tours through the towns of Gimbsheim, Hamm, Eich, and Worms and to visit their families' graves in the regional Jewish cemeteries of Mainz, Alsheim, and Osthofen. They have also published a children's book, *Moppi and Peter*, which tells the true story of two dogs and their Jewish owners during the Nazi period, creating a powerful allegory for younger audiences. "Young people can identify with the fate of Moppi and Peter. They can sympathize, and then they will ask the right questions. This is how you can introduce them to this very difficult topic," Hannah says.

Their work has gained support from the

regional Protestant and Catholic churches as well as from elected officials. At the same time, the group has also faced some opposition. "There are always people opposed to the subject, who tried to hinder us and put obstacles in our way to discourage us," Hannah says, "but we used the stones, so to speak, that they put in our way as stepping stones to get to the next level."

"Gabriele Hannah, Hans-Dieter Graf, and Martina Graf not only represent the spirit of reconciliation and friendship but also dedicate themselves in practice to the realization of these ideals. They have perpetuated the memories of the victims of the Holocaust and bestowed honor on their descendants," says Joe Schwarz of Ramat HaSharon, Israel, whose intimate experience with the group inspired him to write his own book, *Stepping Forward Into the Past (Ein Schritt vorwärts in die Vergangenheit)*, which Martina Graf later translated from English into German.

Now, Hannah says, she and the Grafts hope their own book raises enough awareness so that local people, working with the descendants of Altrhein's Jewish families, can preserve the decaying 1891 synagogue in Eich, one of the few remaining country synagogues. The building, which was sold in 1936 and later used as an animal stable and shed, is listed as a cultural heritage site and still retains the classic markings of a synagogue, with two tablets on its roof. But nothing has been done to restore it and Hannah fears "it's only a matter of time before it all decays and vanishes." Like the fate of the synagogue, restoring memory to Rhine-Hesse is a race against time.

"It is our duty, it is up to us, to tell their stories, to give them back to the younger generation so they have stories to tell, and to not forget what happened," Hannah says. "It was very important for us to preserve this history of the Jews from Altrhein. The trust and confidence of [the descendants] touched us deeply, and showed us that through personal encounters, remembrance work can actually happen, which liberates and lightens the burden of the past. And when this happens, there is hope of reconciliation."

Nominated by: Sanford Jacoby, Los Angeles, CA, USA; Jack Myers, Philadelphia, PA, USA; Joe Schwarz, Ramat Hasharon, Israel

Awardee

MICHAEL IMHOF

Petersberg, Hesse

“I know that we cannot change the world, but we can teach...”

As a teacher and researcher in the Hesse town of Fulda, Michael Imhof has passionately dedicated the past three decades to educating young people and town residents about his region’s rich Jewish heritage. He has led tours through Jewish Fulda, given countless school and community lectures, inaugurated a memorial to local students murdered in the Holocaust, and established successful college partnerships between the University of Fulda and multiple colleges in Israel.

He has also written two monumental books. The 440-page tome *Jews in Germany and 1,000 Years of Judaism in Fulda* (*Juden in Deutschland und 1000 Jahre Judentum in Fulda*) was published in 2011. And *400 Years of Jews in the Rhön* (*400 Jahre Juden in der Rhön*) was published in 2017 and has since become a traveling exhibition.

Throughout, Imhof has been guided by a deep motivation to capture young people’s interest and curiosity in a subject he continues to make relevant to them today.

“I know that we cannot change the world, but we can teach students and make them... sensitive to discrimination, to their humanity, to their feelings about others—to people who are searching and who need help,” he says. “We can give them new ideas about Jewish history and motivate them to deal with their local history. I think in this way I try to make them immune to certain [right-wing] tendencies. I always show pupils what may happen if we’re not engaged against anti-Semitism and racism against minorities.”

A retired educator who still leads student workshops about Jewish history three or four times a month, Imhof is expert in the art of the

slideshow presentation as a way of engaging young viewers. “I don’t only talk but I let them see. I explain many things through pictures, and I combine this with biographies of people. I always try, behind the documents, to show living people,” he says. It’s an approach that captures students’ attention while educating them at the same time. “When they stay for the great pictures of their streets and villages, they also get the information that there was a synagogue, and they say, ‘I never knew this [history]. My grandfather told us about the Jews. I’ll ask him again,’” Imhof says.

Born in Fulda in 1947, Imhof grew up in a family that was openly and courageously opposed to the Nazis. Imhof’s mother had forbidden his older brother from joining the Hitler Youth and had successfully hidden a relative who deserted from the Wehrmacht, keeping him alive through the remainder of the war. Imhof’s father, a teacher in a nearby village, ran afoul of the Nazis for his Catholic religious views. The Frankfurt Auschwitz trials happened while Imhof was in high school and impacted his views of German culpability. “It was shocking for me,...and it made me think,” he says.

He later taught high school in a town in Northern Hesse and at a comprehensive school in Marburg before returning to Fulda in 1980, where he worked as a teacher at the vocational Ferdinand-Braun School and then organized a teacher training service for the region. There, with a handful of other teachers, he dove into research about the region’s Nazi past as well as its Jewish history. He began leading students to Jewish sites, including cemeteries, synagogues, and former Jewish homes, and organized concerts featuring Yiddish songs. Then, in 1987, the mayor of Fulda, Wolfgang Hamberger, energized Imhof’s work when he invited Jewish survivors to visit the town with their families.

Working with his group of teachers, which

called itself the History Workshop (*Geschichtswerkstatt*), Imhof interviewed some 30 of the 150 survivors and their descendants who had come from as far away as Australia, South America, France, the United States, and Israel. “I said, ‘This is a possibility we won’t get later,’” Imhof recalls. “Some had survived the concentration camps.”

He made an especially interesting connection that week with two sisters whose family had formerly owned the house that Imhof’s in-laws bought in the 1950s. “Through our research, we found documents of what [became of] their brother and how their house was stolen in the Nazi time. I didn’t think that I would ever meet them,” he says. A second important encounter took place with Michael Cahn, the son of the last rabbi from Fulda, who later helped Imhof establish an exchange program between his training school and colleges in Jerusalem, Haifa, and Herzliya in Israel.

The conversations they had with survivors that week, which Imhof’s team transcribed and translated for the Fulda archive, inspired him to create a traveling exhibition in the late 1980s about Fulda’s experience during the Nazi period, prior to which some 1,000 Jews had lived in the town. Imhof continued to educate young people while organizing events, excursions, and discussions around Jewish themes.

His interviews with former residents became material for the book he painstakingly researched and wrote about Fulda’s thousand-year Jewish history. The story spans the accusations of ritual murder leveled against Fulda’s Jews in 1235, through the town’s apogee in the Early Modern Period (when it became a center for Jewish learning, home to a famous yeshiva and legendary 17th century Talmudic scholar Rabbi Meir Schiff), and finally to its destruction during the Holocaust.

In his second book, about Jewish life in the Rhön, Imhof focused on 20 rural Jewish villages scattered throughout the region. “My desire was to make people aware of the importance of Jewish communities in the Rhön villages for the economic, social, and political development of our era,” he says. “Even in [the 1600s] they had new commercial ideas, and in the 19th century they were the motor of modernism in our area—in the countryside especially. They brought a new economy, they were engaged in the development of transportation infrastructure and school systems, they were in the

parliament and political groups of the villages, they were founders of sporting clubs and banking movements.”

The Rhön book became the basis for a traveling exhibition that began in the small town of Tann, where there had been a thriving Jewish community prior to the Nazi time. Later, in 2014, Imhof created another exhibition, this one chronicling 200 years of emancipation of the Jews in the Fulda region. It was shown at Fulda’s Vonderau Museum and at 15 or more schools across the area. The two exhibitions, now combined into one, are still touring the region.

In 2016, based on his own research and discoveries, Imhof installed a school memorial plaque dedicated to Jewish students from Freiherr-vom-Stein-Gymnasium who were murdered by the Nazis. Prompted by the headmaster, he discovered that of the 615 pupils who attended the school between 1870 and 1936, 104 were killed by Nazis while another 250 survived because they escaped. The fate of the rest is unknown.

The plaque includes where and when the children were born, when they attended school, when and in which concentration camps they died, as well as short biographies about their lives. “We gave them their names [back] when we mounted the plaque at a prominent place in the school,” he says.

For Imhof—who has built relationships with the Anne Frank Educational Centre in Frankfurt as well as other organizations dedicated to fighting racism and anti-Semitism, and who is continually working to strengthen ties between Fulda and learning institutions in Israel—the work is never-ending.

“We must not be discouraged and [must] keep teaching about the crimes committed against the Jews. We must fight against the danger of repression, oblivion, and denial,” he says. “We do this step by step, and the small steps [take] the longest, but they also show results. What we need in our schools and societies is to implant the spirit of humanity, human rights, and solidarity. The respect for each other and the responsibility for these values must be ingrained in our society and in our schools.”

Nominated by: Gaby Goldberg, Beth Shemesh, Israel; Margarita Karasik, Jerusalem, Israel; Roman Melamed & Bella Gusman, Fulda, Germany; Linda Weiland, Fulda, Germany

Awardee

EGON KRÜGER

Pasewalk, Mecklenburg-West Pomerania

“I feel like I’m gathering mosaic stones to build a great building...”

Egon Krüger’s interest in Jewish history began as a boy growing up in the late 1940s on the Baltic Sea island of Rügen, where his father’s friend, a Jewish spa owner named Adalbert Bela Kaba-Klein, would visit their home and tell stories about his survival under Nazi rule during World War II. Krüger’s parents, both farmers, had been friends with many Jewish shop owners in their village before the war, “so they actually knew life with Jewish citizens,” Krüger recalls.

Many years later, in 1962, he made an “accidental discovery” that reminded him of those stories and sparked his curiosity. By that time, he had earned his degree in chemistry and biology at the University of Greifswald and had become a high school teacher in the Mecklenburg-West Pomeranian town of Pasewalk, close to the Polish border.

His discovery was a memorial stone dedicated to Paul Behrendt, a former civic leader and iron foundry owner whose Jewish family played a prominent role in Pasewalk’s 19th-century development. “The school director told me one should be interested in local history but one should also deal with Jewish history,” says Krüger, who felt inspired to investigate further. What he found amounted to a revelation and led to a life-long passion.

Prior to 1812, only two Jews had lived in Pasewalk, but an 1812 edict from the Prussian king allowed more Jews to settle there.

The population quickly grew. By 1830, more than 100 Jews inhabited the town. In 1834 they built a synagogue, and shortly after that a Jewish cemetery. By the mid-19th century, some 300 Jews lived in Pasewalk, constituting more than 5 percent of its population and making it the second-most populous Jewish community in Pomerania. “Jews had equal rights, they were recognized citizens, and they made major contributions here as traders, doctors, lawyers, factory owners, and [in] other professions. They played an important role in the economy,” Krüger says.

Hardly any of this history was known to the town’s current inhabitants. He set out to learn more. “Once I started the research, I established contact with Jews all over the world. My work grew, and as I noticed how thankful people were for my discoveries, it gave me the motivation to carry on.”

Krüger proceeded to meticulously document the lives of Pasewalk’s former Jewish citizens. He also gave school lectures, wrote articles, hosted Jewish family reunions, and led tours through Jewish Pasewalk. Meanwhile, he developed a growing network of relationships with relatives of the town’s prewar inhabitants.

“My work raised the public interest and started people thinking about the past because they simply hadn’t known anything before,” Krüger says. “When I lead tours with students, I always notice how great their interest is. They’re so focused on listening to these stories, I could hear a needle drop. And I see that as a very positive thing.”

Since his retirement in 2002 from the

department of medicine at the University of Greifswald, a position he took in 1985, he has devoted himself with even greater urgency to uncovering the past and educating the public about contributions made by Pasewalk's former Jewish citizens. Now 81 years old, Krüger says his greatest motivation is to complete this work "before it's forgotten by the next generation. If we don't do it now, while there's still the possibility to speak to eyewitnesses and talk to the people of that time, then everything is lost."

He has worked tirelessly to personally commemorate the lives of Jews from Pasewalk who perished in the Holocaust, helping install all 78 of the *Stolpersteine* (small memorial plaques commonly called stumbling stones) that today exist on the town's streets.

He has also written two books about Pasewalk's Jews. *Jewish Life in Pasewalk (Jüdisches Leben in Pasewalk)*, a detailed chronicle of family histories and the fates of Pasewalk's Jews and their descendants, was published in 2009. *The History of the Jewish Citizens in Pasewalk (Zur Geschichte der jüdischen Bürger in Pasewalk)*, published in 2017, includes a wealth of pictures, documents, letters, advertisements, and other archive material. It paints a complete historical portrait of the town's Jewish legacy.

In 2005, at a ceremony to install stumbling stones for the Behrendt family, Krüger welcomed more than 30 of the family's worldwide descendants to Pasewalk, and his research was critical in helping one of Paul Behrendt's granddaughters complete her family's biography.

Despite living in the former East Germany where right-wing extremism is on the rise—and where some residents have shown open hostility to his work, even showing up at some of his lectures in an attempt to intimidate him—Krüger shrugs off the threats. "I'm so well-known in Pasewalk that even those people who are among the right-wing extremists would never dare do anything to me. I can even talk with them," he says. "There was one event in a neighboring town

where I spoke at local parliament about the stumbling stones, and a right-wing politician asked me, 'If I donate a stumbling stone, can I also get a statement for the tax authorities?' I said, 'Yes, of course you can,' and everyone was astonished that this conversation took place at all."

On Kristallnacht, Pasewalk's century-old synagogue was burned to the ground and the cemetery destroyed. The last Pasewalk Jews were deported to concentration camps on February 12, 1940, marking the end of the town's Jewish community. Today the cemetery has only its surrounding walls intact, with no gravestones. In 1988, on the 50th anniversary of Kristallnacht, Krüger helped the town install a plaque to commemorate where the synagogue once stood. In November 2018, with the support of the local church and the mayor, Krüger also led the town in unveiling a memorial stone on the site.

"Dr. Krüger's work is invaluable in helping to educate the postwar generation of young Germans about the history of Jews in Germany," says Irene Black, another of Paul Behrendt's granddaughters. Currently, Krüger is preparing further collections of Pasewalk Jewish family trees for publication. He also continues to write and publish new articles regularly, as driven as ever to tell the family stories that haven't yet been told, and to educate the next generation.

"As long as my health allows, I will continue to do this. I thoroughly enjoy the work and I get so much from it because I'm able to involve local people in these projects. I feel no pressure, it's all voluntary—it is my passion. I feel like I'm gathering mosaic stones to build a great building, and I'm still in the process of building it. There's no end to this kind of work because you can always keep adding smaller stones."

Nominated by: Irene Black, Surrey, UK; Hava Jalon, Ashrat, Israel; Rosemarie Pal-liser, Aigues Mortes, France; Gabriel Ronen, Azor, Israel; Uri Rosenan, Yehud, Israel



Awardee
**HILDE SCHRAMM &
THE RETURN FOUNDATION**
Berlin

“I think you have to speak out, but you also have to act.”

Hilde Schramm has always been about action. Supporting, educating, advocating, serving, encouraging, and certainly, giving back. She is an activist in the truest sense of the word. Her 82 years have been spent not just raising issues but also having an impact to create change. She has been a professor, author, political party leader, and legislator. She founded a project to fight racism and intolerance in Brandenburg. She has written and taught about preventing right-wing extremism in schools. She helped organize a non-profit association to support projects in Greece after the Greek financial crisis. And she currently shares her home with Syrian and Afghan refugees.

It’s no surprise, really, that when Schramm inherited three valuable paintings in 1992 that she suspected had been stolen from Jewish families during the Nazi era, she didn’t keep them or even simply give them away. First, she conducted an exhaustive search for the original owners. When they couldn’t be traced, she sold the paintings and used the money to start the Return Foundation for the Promotion of Jewish Women in the Arts and Sciences (*Zurückgeben: Stiftung zur Förderung jüdischer Frauen in Kunst & Wissenschaft*). Then she used the foundation as a platform to raise awareness about the huge amount of property that had been stolen from Jewish families from 1933 to 1945 and, in many cases, still remains in the possession of Germans today.

A quarter-century later, the foundation has enabled more than 150 Jewish women living in Germany to pursue unique, creative projects that have raised public consciousness about the country’s Jewish legacy and its ongoing impacts. Thanks to Schramm and her colleagues’ efforts,

grants have been awarded to Jewish women in Germany who came from across the globe—South America and Russia, Israel and the United States—to complete projects ranging from the rediscovery of Jewish artists to the production of children’s theater, the research of family ancestry, and the creation of exhibitions, dance shows, books, and films. The foundation’s jury consists entirely of women, and everyone at the foundation serves as a volunteer. Since 1994, the foundation has awarded 500,000 euros in grants. The grants have ranged from 300 to 11,000 euros apiece, based on each particular project.

For Schramm, the paintings that started it all were never something she could keep. She had lived with the knowledge that her father, during his time in the SS, had obtained art, furniture, and other possessions stolen from Jews. As the daughter of Albert Speer, Hitler’s chief architect and later his armaments minister, she had long ago confronted and examined her father’s role in the war. She was only 3 years old when the war began, and by the time she was a teenager he had been convicted at Nuremberg and was serving a 20-year prison sentence at Spandau. Unlike some others of her generation, she had not concealed this difficult legacy but publicly acknowledged it. Her life was much different than his, and she did not want to benefit from this inheritance, which came to her when her mother died.

“I didn’t want to keep the paintings,” Schramm recalls. “If I sold them, then I felt I would be in the line of the profiteers.” So she gathered together a handful of trusted, politically engaged women friends at her Berlin home to discuss what she should do. “My friends were feminists—they cared for the rights and equality of women,” she says. Their decision resulted in the formation of the Return Foundation, with Schramm and three friends as directors.

“When we started, profiting off the exclusion

and deportation of Jews was not a public topic in Germany,” Schramm says. “We tried to make it one.” The Return Foundation was the country’s first to highlight the fate of Jewish art stolen by the Nazis—a subject that has since received global attention through court cases, books, and Hollywood films.

“It wasn’t just art, but chairs, carpets, lamps, household goods of all kinds,” she says. “Those auctions had taken place in many towns and villages, but there was no documentation or research about it. We saw it as a black hole. It was our intention to make people aware that many families profited and owned objects that actually don’t belong to them—and to encourage them to look into their family history and come to a conclusion. We wanted by our own example to build awareness about the widespread advantages people took from the exclusion and murder of the Jews.”

Schramm’s path to the project was neither short nor direct. Born in Berlin in 1936 as Hilde Speer, she grew up aware and shocked, “as many in my generation were aware and shocked,” about the Holocaust but without a sense of what she could do about it. After the war, Schramm moved to her mother’s hometown of Heidelberg where she attended a grade school originally founded by Elisabeth von Thadden, a heroic resistance fighter executed by the Nazis. She had a Jewish teacher, Dora Lux, whom she adored. Lux had survived in Berlin during the war and strongly influenced Schramm’s understanding of the past. Even as a teenager Schramm sought to become a politician “to build up a more democratic, more tolerant, more multicultural society.”

An exchange year at Hastings High School, on the Hudson River just outside New York City, further influenced her thinking about inequality in education. “I wanted to change the education in Germany because it was unfair,” she says. Schramm married, had children, and earned several degrees—including a PhD in education—en route to becoming an education professor. She also played an active role in the peace, women’s, and other social movements in Berlin in the 1980s. She became a politician with the Green Party and served as a member of the Berlin Parliament for two terms in the 1990s, including a term as the chamber’s vice president in 1989-90.

Schramm later founded and directed the Regional Employment Office for Foreigners in Brandenburg (*Regionale Arbeitsstelle für*

Ausländerfragen), which works to combat right-wing extremism and racism. She was awarded the Moses Mendelssohn Prize in 2004 for her work fostering multicultural tolerance, and she has published articles aimed at helping teachers combat fascism in schools. In 2012, Schramm published *My Teacher, Dr. Dora Lux 1882-1959* (*Meine Lehrerin, Dr. Dora Lux 1882-1959*), a tightly researched biography. In addition to being a Jew who survived the Holocaust, Lux was one of the earliest female high school graduates in Germany and became a pioneer in women’s studies.

Schramm still plays an important role in the Return Foundation, says Sharon Adler, current chair of the foundation’s board. And her spirit and philosophy pervade the organization’s work at a time when right-wing extremism is on the rise. “Hilde Schramm’s decades of work have had a lasting and positive effect on the lives and activities of innumerable people, especially women,” Adler says. “This zest for action and the tireless advocacy seem to be more necessary than ever.”

At 82, Schramm still leads by example, demonstrating her deep commitment to helping those who face persecution by hosting several refugees—from Syria and from Afghanistan—in her Berlin home. “I [have been] sharing the same bathroom and kitchen with refugees since 2015. They’re young people. I am trying to help them get along well in Germany,” she says. “And I know Jewish people here in Germany who are doing the same. I think you have to speak out, but you also have to act. You can influence your surroundings.”

Schramm worries about the rise of extremists in Germany today, but she also feels that democratic values are well implanted in German society. “We always thought of the danger that anti-Semitism and right-wing extremism would come back,” she says. “There is a danger...we all know about it. I’ve been working in eastern Germany against right-wing extremism, violence against foreigners, and anti-Semitism.”

An important part of that work involves learning from the past. “You always had to ask, ‘How could it happen?’ and the question never ended,” she says. “It will never end until I die. I am a citizen who cares for Jewish history, as many others do and many others should.”

Nominated by: Jani Pietsch, Berlin, Germany; Merle Stöver, Berlin, Germany

Distinguished Service Award

BENIGNA SCHÖNHAGEN

Augsburg, Bavaria

“You have to defend democracy, which gives you the right to be different.”

When Benigna Schönhagen was hired in 2001 as the director of the Jewish Cultural Museum of Augsburg-Swabia (*Jüdisches Kulturmuseum Augsburg Schwaben*), she was surprised to discover that while the museum showcased Jewish ritual objects, it ignored the story of the vibrant Jewish community that once lived there. “It didn’t deal with local Jewish history and the history of actual Jewish citizens, and I thought, ‘I need to change that,’” Schönhagen recalls.

Under her leadership, the museum launched an array of ambitious projects aimed at bringing that history to life. “For me it was very important to show Jewish people the history of the city, but also to show the people of Augsburg how important the Jewish part of their history was—and to give them back the idea that it is a part of their own history,” she says.

The museum opened a permanent exhibit in 2006 documenting the Jews of Augsburg from the early 13th century to today. The exhibit includes the fascinating history of the surrounding Jewish villages (*Judenorte*), where Jews settled and Jewish culture thrived during their expulsion from Augsburg—a period that began in the Middle Ages and didn’t officially end until 1861.

“We tried to show the relationship between the city and the rural Jewish communities, and to connect all these remembrance sites in the surrounding area,” Schönhagen says. Her research helped document an extraordinary network of rural synagogues, cemeteries, ritual baths, and former Jewish homes, weaving a literal path through the region’s Jewish history.

This was just one element of Schönhagen’s impassioned, yearslong commitment to reviving Augsburg’s Jewish heritage. Between 2001 and 2016 she directed the Lifelines (*Lebenslinien*)

program, which annually invited one former Jewish resident to Augsburg during commemorations of Kristallnacht. The visitors shared their family histories with the community in an intimate theater setting and led weeklong discussions and workshops with high school students that were recorded and turned into DVDs. Schönhagen even secured funding to produce a series of books about each visitor’s family story. Each book required in-depth interviews and research that Schönhagen singlehandedly carried out ahead of the annual gathering.

“The idea was that they not only spoke about their experience of persecution but also told the story of their family to show that there were Jews before 1933 and how they had lived, and what life was like after having emigrated,” she says. One of the program’s participants, Liese Fischer (née Einstein, no relation to the scientist), from Silver Spring, Md., came from the Kriegshaber neighborhood of Augsburg, and her father had been one of six brothers who were all cattle dealers. “You can’t imagine how many people in Augsburg came to meet Fischer because [the Einstein family] was not forgotten,” Schönhagen says.

The Lifelines visits were rewarding for the families, she says. “Getting to know the young people who were interested in their story, who wanted to hear the story—that was the most important thing for the invitees. Each of them wanted to give a mission to the young people, to say ‘Be careful, be open.’”

Another major achievement for Schönhagen was establishing memory posts (*Erinnerungsbänder*) outside homes where Jews in the Augsburg region once lived. “At first we wanted to install stumbling stones (*Stolpersteine*), but then we said, ‘Stones in the pavement are not enough; we want the people of Augsburg to [know the] biographies of those people who were persecuted during the Nazi time,’” she says.

In 2004, Schönhagen produced a publication of the remembrance sites, and in 2010 she helped

install information plaques at the entrance to local Jewish cemeteries that had no former acknowledgment.

In 2013, she created a website and exhibition about synagogues in the region, which has traveled to Munich, Bamberg, and Würzburg and which in 2018 made its 17th stop in Stuttgart. “We tried to show that the synagogue is also a historical document and that you can learn a lot about the history of Jews when you look at the architecture of the synagogues,” she says.

Schönhagen also helped the city organize a ceremony with Augsburg’s Jewish community to honor the 100th anniversary of the town synagogue in 2017. The event included 99 former Augsburg Jews and their descendants, and the so-named Augsburg Reunion became the first gathering in which second-, third-, and even fourth-generation relatives of Augsburg’s Jews came together from around the world. New family members introduced themselves to one another as they made tours to local cemeteries and the homes where their ancestors had lived. “You cannot imagine how moving it was,” Schönhagen says.

As a child growing up in Koblenz on the Rhine in the 1950s and ’60s, Schönhagen didn’t know any Jewish people. Raised by observant Protestant parents, she knew “only Jews from the Bible.” One of her grandfathers was a pastor, and her family openly discussed the Nazi era and the history of Jews in Koblenz. Still, she says, “it was something abstract for me.... Then I studied history and there were no Jews in my whole study at the university—no lesson or seminar dealing with Jewish history.”

She wrote her PhD thesis at the University of Stuttgart about the history of Tübingen during the Nazi time. It involved tracking down descendants of former Tübingen Jews. “I was blown away by these encounters. I got to know people who spoke such wonderful German, with such a wide horizon of thinking, so open-minded, and I got interested in their culture and history.”

Rather than becoming a teacher as she had originally planned, Schönhagen began to work as a curator, creating historical exhibitions. She dealt with World War II and Jewish history while curating in Stuttgart, then took a job in 1993 in the small Baden-Württemberg town of Laupheim, which had the state’s largest Jewish community in the 19th century. The town sought a new concept for its regional museum, but a Jewish theme wasn’t being considered. “For me it was an aim to show them that Jewish history was a part of their own history,” Schönhagen recalls.

“When I came to Laupheim, I always had the feeling that a part of the city was missing. They resisted, even the mayor resisted, [because] families that were part of the Nazi past were still living there. But I thought it was important to show why, and under which conditions, the coexistence was good.” Eventually her idea was accepted and Schönhagen created what became the Museum of the History of Jews and Christians (*Museum zur Geschichte von Christen und Juden*), a large institution run with full city support.

Later, when she became director of the Jewish Cultural Museum of Augsburg-Swabia, Schönhagen was able to focus on the ancient Jewish presence in the town and its surroundings, where Jews had led in textile development in the 19th century and where the Jewish population reached about 1,000 prior to World War II.

It is the human contact Schönhagen has cultivated with survivors and their descendants that made her such an important figure in the culture of Jewish remembrance. With a goal of building tolerance and mutual understanding, she has worked with Augsburg’s Christian community and the Society of German Jewish Cooperation (*Gesellschaft für Christlich-Jüdische Zusammenarbeit*) to organize events like the Teaching House (*Lehrhaus*), which brought Jews and Christians together to discuss religion and the biographies of the prophets. “You can show so many common ideas, but only when you also clearly describe the differences, and it’s important to do it openly,” says Schönhagen, who additionally helped a young cantor start a choir in which Jews and Christians today sing synagogal music side by side.

For Schönhagen, “It is the stories behind the story—the individual biographies behind the disaster—that fascinate me. We see growing anti-Semitism in Germany today, and I think it’s very important with these museums to give people the possibility to see, through biographies, what it meant as Jews who were part of the society [were] pulled out and expelled. You have to defend democracy, which gives you the right to be different. It’s really important to work on it, to show what happened.”

Nominated by: Diane Castiglione, Gaithersburg, MD, USA; Bettina Kaplan, Berkeley, CA, USA; Yoram and Ofra Millo, Jerusalem, Israel; Diane Peyser, Springfield, NJ, USA; Henry Stern, New York, NY, USA; George Sturm, Englewood, NJ, USA

Awards Jury

DAVID ELLENSON is Chancellor Emeritus and former President (2001-2013 and 2018) of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. He is also the former Director of the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies as well as Professor Emeritus of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies at Brandeis University. He has written extensively on the origins and development of Orthodox Judaism in Germany during the Nineteenth Century, Orthodox legal writings on conversion in Israel, North America, and Europe during the modern era, the relationship between religion and state in Israel, the history of modern Jewish religious movements, and American Jewish life. For two decades Ellenson served as head of the Louchheim School of Judaic Studies, the undergraduate program in Jewish Studies at the University of Southern California conducted under the aegis of HUC-JIR. In the Spring of 2015, New York University appointed him as Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Skirball Department of Judaic Studies.

KAREN S. FRANKLIN co-founded the Obermayer German Jewish History Awards with Arthur S. Obermayer and currently serves as president of the awards jury. She is Director of Family Research at the Leo Baeck Institute. She was formerly Director of the Judaica Museum in Riverdale, New York, for 20 years and a guest curator at the Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust. Mrs. Franklin has served as chair of the Council of American Jewish Museums, president of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies, as well as co-chair of the Board of Governors of JewishGen, the Jewish genealogy web site. A past chair of the Memorial Museums Committee of ICOM (the International Council of Museums), she was awarded the 2012 ICOM-US Service Citation for her work in Holocaust-era property restitution. The citation is the highest honor of ICOM-US.

HANNO LOEWY is the Director of the Jewish Museum Hohenems in Austria. The founding director of the Fritz Bauer Institute, he was guest curator for the permanent exhibitions of the Jewish Museum Frankfurt am Main and Berlin. Dr. Loewy was president of the Association of European Jewish Museums from 2011 to 2017. His many publications cover subjects including the history of photography, film and modern aesthetics, Jewish history and culture and contemporary Jewish politics, and the impact of the Holocaust on literature and film, most recent: *Jukebox. Jewkbox! A Jewish Century on Shellac and Vinyl* (2014) and *Endstation Sehnsucht. Eine Reise durch Jerushaljim-Jerusalem-Al Quds* (together with Hannes Sulzenbacher, 2015).

FRANK MECKLENBURG is Chief Archivist and Director of Research at the Leo Baeck Institute (LBI) New York, where he has worked since 1984. He heads the LBI Archives branch at the Jewish Museum in Berlin and is in charge of DigiBaeck, the digital archives project at LBI. He has been an active participant in the annual conference of Jewish Studies and German Studies and is working on a series of articles concerning the history of Jews in Central Europe during the 20th century from a post-Cold War, post-East-West perspective. Born in Berlin, he immigrated to the U.S. in 1981, the same year he received his Ph.D. from the Technische Universität Berlin in modern German history.

SARA NACHAMA became the executive founding director of the Berlin branch of Touro College and University Systems (New York, NY) in October 2003. It is the only Jewish American College in Germany offering bachelor and master programs. Since 2005, she is a vice president and rector of Touro College Berlin. She is on the board of Jewish Community in Berlin, where she is responsible for the Culture and Adult Education Centre. She is a board member of Berlin's Christian-Jewish Association. She also serves on the Board of Trustees of the Jewish Hospital in Berlin. In 2014 she was awarded a Federal Cross of Merit for her voluntary community services.

HENRY OBERMAYER is a son of Dr. Arthur S. Obermayer, founder of the Obermayer German Jewish History Awards. He is a psychologist and a community builder in the San Francisco area. A faculty member in the Intensive English Program at the University of Rostock in 1988, Mr. Obermayer has returned many times to Germany since then for both professional and personal reasons.

RALF WIELAND has been President of the Berlin House of Representatives since October 2011. He was born in Wilhelmshaven in 1956 and did an apprenticeship as a shipping agent. After his vocational training, he worked as an expeditor and as the branch manager of a shipping company. After working as an assistant to the executive staff of Berlin's Senate Department for Construction and Housing, he headed Berlin's agency for construction waste management from 1996 to 1997. In 1997 he moved to the Senate Department for Urban Development, the Environment and Technology and was a division head there until 1999. From 1999 to 2004 he was the party manager for the Social Democratic Party in Berlin. Wieland has been a member of the Berlin House of Representatives since 1999, where he headed the Budget Committee for many years. Responsible for the deliberations on Berlin's annual Budget Act and for monitoring the government's implementation of the Budget Act, it is one of the legislature's most important committees.

Past Award Winners

Winners of past awards originate from almost all states and from both urban and rural Germany. Ranging in age from their 30s to their 80s, they come from very diverse backgrounds. Yet they have in common a love of history, a great curiosity for what was, and a dedication to tolerance and social justice.

Hans-Dieter Arntz: Euskirchen, North Rhine-Westphalia, 2009

Wolfgang Batterman:
Petershagen, North Rhine-Westphalia, 2012

Hans Jürgen Beck: Bad Kissingen, Bavaria, 2013

Klaus Beer: Leonberg, Baden-Württemberg, 2013

Lothar Bembenek: Wiesbaden, Hesse, 2004

Jörg Berkemann: Berlin, 2017

Hans-Eberhard Berkemann:
Bad Sobernheim, Rhineland-Palatinate, 2003

Gisela Blume: Fürth, Bavaria, 2000

Günter Boll: Steinenstadt, Baden-Württemberg, 2002

Karl & Hannah Britz:
Blodersweier, Baden-Württemberg, 2018

Angelika Brosig: Schopfloch, Bavaria, 2010

Johannes Bruno: Speyer, Rhineland-Palatinate, 2007

Gerhard Buck: Idstein-Walsdorf, Hesse, 2008

Gisela Bunge: Gardlegen, Saxony-Anhalt, 2002

Irene Corbach: Cologne, North Rhine-Westphalia, 2003

Lothar Czoßek: Elsterau, Saxony-Anhalt, 2013

Walter Demandt and Almut Holler: Norden and Hage,
Lower Saxony, 2016

Gunter Demnig: Cologne, North Rhine-Westphalia, 2005

Klaus Dietermann: Netphen, North Rhine-Westphalia, 2009

Heinrich Dittmar: Alsfeld, Hesse, 2003

Olaf Ditzel: Vacha, Thuringia, 2002

Michael Dorhs: Hofgeismar, Hesse, 2009

Pascale Eberhard: Wawern, Rhineland-Palatinate, 2015

Klaus-Dieter Ehmke: Berlin, 2004

Rolf Emmerich: Laupheim, Baden-Württemberg, 2012

Johann Fleischmann: Mülhausen, Bavaria, 2006

Thilo Figaj: Lorsch, Hesse, 2017

Inge Franken: Berlin, 2007

Peter Franz: Weimar, Thuringia, 2016

Helmut Gabeli: Haigerloch, Baden-Württemberg, 2010

Bernhard Gelderblom: Hameln, Lower Saxony, 2009

Marlis Glaser: Attenweiler, Baden-Württemberg, 2015

Barbara Greve: Gilsberg, Hesse, 2010

GröschlerHaus (Volker Landig & Hartmut Peters):
Jever, Lower Saxony, 2017

Johannes Grötecke: Bad Wildungen, Hesse, 2014

Joachim Hahn: Plochingen, Baden-Württemberg, 2000

Guenter Heidt: Konz, Rhineland-Palatinate, 2006

Michael Heitz: Eppingen/Kraichgau, Baden-Württemberg, 2011

Detlev Herbst: Uslar, Lower Saxony, 2015

Heinz Högerle: Rexingen, Baden-Württemberg, 2011

Rolf Hofmann: Stuttgart, Baden-Württemberg, 2006

Frowald Gil Hüttenmeister:
Stuttgart, Baden-Württemberg, 2014

Elmar Ittenbach: Thalfang, Rhineland-Palatinate, 2016

Gerhard Jochem: Nuremberg, Bavaria, 2003

The Joseph Group: Berlin, 2018

Kurt-Willi Julius: Vöhl, Hesse, 2006

Ottmar Kagerer: Berlin, 2000

Cordula Kappner: Hassfurt, Bavaria, 2004

Jörg Kaps: Arnstadt, Thuringia, 2015

Wolfram Kastner: Munich, Bavaria, 2005

Rolf Kilian Kießling: Forchheim, Bavaria, 2013

Fritz Kilhau: Zwingenberg, Hesse, 2012

Monica Kingreen: Windecken, Hesse, 2002

Ernst & Brigitte Klein: Volksmarsen, Hesse, 2009

Hans-Peter Klein: Melsungen, Hesse, 2014

Manfred Kluge: Vlotho, North Rhine-Westphalia, 2008

Peter Körner: Johannesberg/Aschaffenburg, Bavaria, 2011

Robert Kraus: Ettenheim, Baden-Württemberg, 2005

Robert Kreibitz: Berlin, 2006

Heidemarie Kugler-Weimann:
Lübeck, Schleswig-Holstein, 2010

Silvester Lechner: Elchingen, Bavaria, 2014

Ina Lorenz: Hamburg, 2017

Dorothee Lottmann-Kaeseler: Wiesbaden, Hesse, 2004

Harald Roth & Volker Mall:
Herrenberg, Baden-Württemberg, 2018

Charlotte Mayenberger:
Bad Buchau, Baden-Württemberg, 2008

Lars Menk: Berlin, 2007

Horst Moog: Hamm-Sieg, Rhineland-Palatinate, 2018

Josef Motschmann: Staffelstein, Bavaria, 2002

Hanno Müller: Fernwald-Steinbach, Hesse, 2013

Christa Niclasen: Berlin, 2012

Heinrich Nuhn: Rotenburg an der Fulda, Hesse, 2005

Walter Ott: Münsingen-Buttenhausen, Baden-Württemberg, 2010
Carla & Erika Pick: Borken, North Rhine-Westphalia, 2003
Projekt Jüdisches Leben in Frankfurt, Angelika Rieber: Frankfurt, Hesse, 2017
Steffen Pross: Ludwigsburg, Baden-Württemberg, 2014
Elisabeth Quirbach and Hans Schulz: Braunschweig, Baden-Württemberg, 2016
Johanna Rau: Kalbach, Hesse, 2008
Christian Repkewitz: Altenburg, Thuringia, 2015
Fritz Reuter: Worms, Rhineland-Palatinate, 2008
Susanne Rieger: Nuremberg, Bavaria, 2003
Gernot Römer: Augsburg, Bavaria, 2000
Werner Schäfer: Frankenthal, Rhineland-Palatinate, 2016
Ernst Schäll: Laupheim, Baden-Württemberg, 2007
Moritz Schmid: Ichenhausen, Bavaria, 2000
Rolf Schmitt: Bruchsal, Baden-Württemberg, 2017
Heinrich Schreiner: Mainz, Rhineland-Palatinate, 2002
Werner Schubert: Weisswasser, Saxony, 2012
Jürgen Sielemann: Hamburg, 2004
Karl-Heinz Stadler: Vöhl, Hesse, 2006
Brigitta Stammer: Göttingen, Lower Saxony, 2011
Barbara Staudacher: Rexingen, Baden-Württemberg, 2011
Brunhilde Stürmer: Niederrissen, Rhineland-Palatinate, 2018
Sibylle Tiedemann: Berlin, 2011
Helmut Urbschat: Vlotho, North Rhine-Westphalia, 2008
Ilse Vogel: Üchtelhausen, Bavaria, 2005
Christiane Walesch-Schneller: Breisach am Rhein, Baden-Württemberg, 2004
Wilfried Weinke: Hamburg, 2007

Distinguished Service Award

Honors those who do not qualify for our regular awards but whose contributions deserve recognition.

Nils Busch-Petersen: Berlin, 2016
Margot Friedländer: Berlin, 2018
Reinhard Führer: Berlin, 2016
Wolfgang Haney: Berlin, 2015
Charlotte Knobloch: Munich, Bavaria, 2014
Leipziger Synagochor: Leipzig, Saxony, 2017
Renata Stih & Frieder Schnock: Berlin, 2015

Sponsors

OBERMAYER FOUNDATION

The Obermayer Foundation directs and sponsors projects in various parts of the world. Along with founding the Obermayer German Jewish History Awards, the foundation helped establish and continues to support the Creglingen Jewish Museum in Baden-Württemberg. It has also supported programs related to international affairs and economics in Israel and the former Soviet Union, economic justice in the United States, and U.S. national policy related to small business development. The foundation was established by Dr. Arthur S. Obermayer (deceased), a highly accomplished American entrepreneur, scientist, activist, and philanthropist, and his wife, Dr. Judith H. Obermayer. Judith currently serves as the foundation president and is assisted by the couple's three children, Henry Obermayer, Joel Obermayer, and Marjorie Raven, who serve as directors. More detailed information can be found on the foundation website at www.obermayer.us.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF BERLIN

President Ralf Wieland sponsors these awards. For many years through this event, the Parliament has been commemorating the German Holocaust Memorial Day of January 27, the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz Concentration Camp. The decision was made in the year 2000 to have this event as its principal observance.

LEO BAECK INSTITUTE

The Leo Baeck Institute (LBI) is devoted to the history of German-speaking Jews. Its 80,000-volume library and extensive archival and art collections represent the most significant repository of primary source material and scholarship on the Jewish communities of Central Europe over the past five centuries. LBI became a co-sponsor in 2014.

GERMAN JEWISH SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP OF JEWISHGEN

This Internet-based organization has almost 2,000 daily participants who are involved in German-Jewish genealogy. It has been operating since 1998 through its discussion group and web site at www.jewishgen.org/gersig.

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