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**Traveling Exhibition from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to Open at
Ramapo College September 1**

(MAHWAH, NJ) – A traveling exhibition from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “Varian Fry, Assignment: Rescue, 1940-1941,” will be on display at Ramapo College from September 1 through October 8 in the Pascal Gallery, Berrie Center for Performing and Visual Arts.

The exhibition is sponsored by Ramapo College’s Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies in cooperation with the Berrie Center Art Galleries and the Committee to Honor Varian Fry (Ridgewood). The exhibition and all events associated with it are free and open to the public.

“Varian Fry, Assignment: Rescue, 1940-1941” tells the story of an unlikely hero from Ridgewood, New Jersey who became the first American, and one of only three, to be designated “Righteous Among the Nations,” an award from Yad Vashem, Israel’s national Holocaust memorial, that honors non-Jews who risked their lives during the Holocaust to save Jews from extermination by the Nazis.

Fry was instrumental in rescuing some 2,000 persons from Nazi oppression. Although Fry’s original assignment on behalf of the Emergency Rescue Committee (now the International Rescue Committee) was to bring a group of 200 refugee artists and intellectuals out of Nazi-controlled Europe, he unilaterally widened his mission upon his arrival in Marseilles when he recognized how many more people needed his help. As a result, he was responsible for saving not only the likes of Marc Chagall, Marcel Duchamp, Andre Breton, Max Ernst, and Hannah Arendt, but also a large number of ordinary Jews who were in immediate danger of Nazi persecution.

Fry ignored repeated entreaties from the American government to return to the United States. In September 1941, the Vichy French government finally ousted him for “protecting Jews and anti-Nazis.” Although most of the recognition Fry received was posthumous, shortly before his premature death in 1967 he was inducted into France’s Legion of Honor.

Born in New York City on October 15, 1907, Fry was raised as the only child of Arthur and Lillian Mackey Fry in Ridgewood, New Jersey. His father worked on Wall Street; his mother had been a public school teacher. His parents sent him to the Hotchkiss School, though he was not happy there and completed his secondary education at the Riverdale

Country School in the Bronx. He attended Harvard University, from which he graduated during the depths of the Great Depression.

A reception for “Varian Fry, Assignment: Rescue, 1940-1941” will be held Wednesday, September 15, from 6 to 8 p.m. Dr. Mordecai Paldiel, former director of Yad Vashem’s Department of the Righteous, will give a speech about Fry’s humanitarian mission in France at 7 p.m. Gallery hours are Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 1-5 p.m. and Wednesday from 1-7 p.m.

Several additional programs have been scheduled in conjunction with the exhibition. They include: **Monday, September 27**, 7:15 p.m. -- Rosemary Sullivan, professor of English at University of Toronto and Fellow, Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, "Lives on the Line: Varian Fry and the Artists He Saved at the Villa Air-Bel" and **Monday, October 4**, 7:15 p.m.—Sheila Isenberg, author and professor of English at Marist College, Poughkeepsie, New York, "The Intellectual as Hero: Varian Fry and his Feat of Rescue."

For more information call Dr. Michael A. Riff, director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, at 201-684-7409.

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