

RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Office of Marketing and Communications
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**AUTHOR TO SPEAK AT RAMAPO COLLEGE ON RECENT BOOK ABOUT
AMERICAN HEIRESS WHO RESISTED NAZIS**

(MAHWAH, NJ) – Sheila Isenberg, an acclaimed writer and educator, will speak at Ramapo College of New Jersey in April under the auspices of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies and History Club.

Isenberg will give a talk about her new book, “Muriel’s War: An American Heiress in the Nazi Resistance,” published in December 2010 by Palgrave-Macmillan.

It tells the story of a courageous woman who left a life of privilege for a world of danger and international espionage. Born into a wealthy meatpacking dynasty in Chicago and educated at Wellesley, raven-haired beauty Muriel Gardiner renounced her family's materialistic lifestyle and as a young woman left the United States. First studying at Oxford, then attending the University of Vienna medical school, Muriel befriended Anna Freud and studied the fledgling science of psychoanalysis just as the dark clouds of Hitler's war were moving across Europe. During this tumultuous time, she married twice, had a daughter and, in Vienna, fell in love with a leader of the Austrian underground... When Germany finally annexed Austria in March of 1938, Muriel began to help Jews and anti-fascists escape, smuggling forged documents across borders and risking her own life. Eventually, she left Europe for New York—but using her wealth and vast network of connections, continued to rescue many still trapped behind enemy lines.

Here, for the first time this electrifying woman who impressed everyone she met with her intelligence and powerful personality, receives her due. An American heiress turned resistance hero, Muriel went on to become an eminent psychoanalyst, and was a founder of the International Rescue Committee. Drawing from Gardiner's unpublished writings and interviews with those who knew her best, Sheila Isenberg offers Muriel's astonishing story of moral courage and humanistic zeal. With all its twists and turns, this inspiring account reveals a heroic woman who lives on as a legend of her time.

Sheila Isenberg last visited Ramapo College to present a talk, “The Intellectual as Hero: Varian Fry and his Feat of Rescue,” in conjunction with the showing of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s traveling exhibition, *Varian Fry, Assignment: Rescue, 1940-1941* at Ramapo College.

Isenberg’s last book, *A Hero of Our Own*, a biography of Varian Fry published in 2001 by Random House, was named a notable book by *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and is a

featured book on the official web site of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. She is also the author of *Women Who Love Men Who Kill* (Simon & Schuster 1991); co-author with the late William M. Kunstler of *My Life as a Radical Lawyer* (Carol Publishing 1994); and collaborator with Tracey Brown on *The Life and Times of Ron Brown*, (William Morrow, 1998). Isenberg's books have been translated into other languages, and she appears frequently in the national media, most recently on "Good Morning America." She has been interviewed on CNN, NPR, "20/20," "The Today Show," many other cable and network programs, and in dozens of newspapers and magazines in the U.S. and internationally.

Born in New York City, Isenberg was educated at the City University of New York. She earned a B.A. in English from Brooklyn College and studied in the graduate English Department of Hunter College. She has been a reporter and a press secretary, and is now adjunct lecturer of journalism and English at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. She lives in Woodstock with her husband, a college instructor and union president.

Isenberg will speak on Tuesday, April 12, 1-2 p.m. in the Alumni Lounge (SC 138), Robert A. Scott Student Center. The presentation is free and open to the public. For more information or to reserve a seat, please call 201.684.7409.

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Ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as fourth in the Best Regional Universities North category, Ramapo College of New Jersey offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include nursing and social work, and as courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels. The College also offers four graduate programs and articulated programs with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, New York Chiropractic College, New York University College of Dentistry, SUNY State College of Optometry and New York College of Podiatric Medicine.

Undergraduate students choose to concentrate their studies in one of five schools with more than 700 course offerings and 40 academic programs. Ramapo College boasts an average student/faculty ratio of 18:1 and average class size of 23, affording students the opportunity to develop close ties to the College's exceptional faculty.