

****Press Release****

JHSFC Article for *New Jewish Voice*
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Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County Announces 2017 Connecticut National History Day Winners

By Joan Kranz

What do Helmuth James von Moltke, a German lawyer during World War II and Mordechai Anielewicz, the principal leader of the armed Jewish resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto, have in common? Both are heroes who paid with their lives and are the subjects of the winning entries in the 2017 Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County Connecticut National History Day Contest.



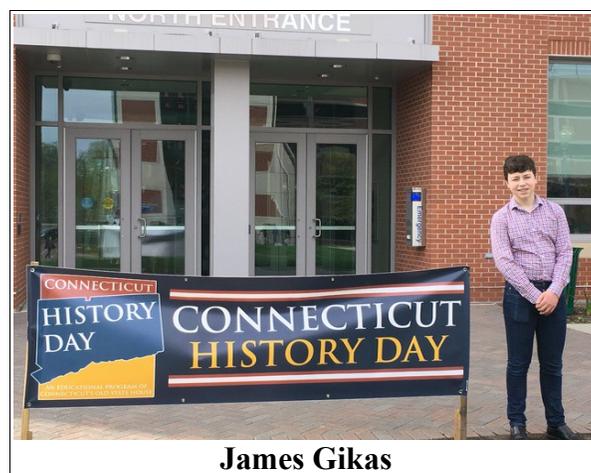
Claire Faulkner

Claire Faulkner, a senior at the Journalism and Media Academy Magnet High School in Hartford created a documentary about Helmuth James von Moltke, a distant relative. Her research helped her gain a perspective on what it was like to be a German citizen before and during the war and to understand why Helmuth James felt such a desperate need to take a stand against Hitler and the Nazi Party.

Claire was the first in her school to have ever competed in National History Day. Her efforts earned her not only the JHSFC Special State Prize for the outstanding entry that best incorporates Jewish History, heritage and/or a Jewish personality, but also two national awards at the University of Maryland. One prize was for the Senior Outstanding Entry in World War II History; the other for the Senior Outstanding Connecticut Entry.

Claire's experience enabled her to improve her video production skills while learning more about her family history and sharing a remarkable story that not too many people were aware of.

Staples High School Senior, James Gikas of Westport is the recipient of the JHSFC Fairfield County Special Connecticut National History Day Prize. In his award winning Senior Individual Performance, "Let Us Not Go Like Sheep to the Slaughter: The Jewish Resistance Movement During the Holocaust," James personified Mordechai Anielewicz, leader of the Jewish Combat Organization which was instrumental in engineering the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. While visiting the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, James was especially captivated by the tragic, largely unheard stories of Jewish resistance to the Nazis during the Holocaust. Using his performance skills and intense research, James wrote and movingly presented the efforts made by the resistance, "however tragic or ineffective they may have seemed (they) served as a beacon of hope, giving Jews across Nazi-occupied Europe the will to survive."



James Gikas

In addition to his experience performing, James is also an accomplished violinist. He spent the summer at the Boston University Tanglewood Institute which is recognized nationally as a premier summer training program for aspiring young musicians.

Both prize winning entries can be viewed at the JHSFC Archives. Complete details are available on the Jewish Historical Society website (jhsfc-ct.org).

The Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County is a beneficiary agency of United Jewish Federation of Greater Stamford, New Canaan and Darien.