



HONORARY DEGREE CITATION

Noemi Ban

DOCTOR OF HUMANE LETTERS

Noemi Ban, you have dedicated your adult life to teaching some of the most profound human truths: how to return love for hate; kindness for cruelty; compassion and understanding for bigotry and ignorance. For decades you have courageously shown how the unbearable experience of the Holocaust can indeed be borne by sharing your story, bearing witness, and encouraging others to confront hatred and intolerance in whatever form it appears.

Despite the horrific experiences you and your family endured at the hands of the Nazis, despite the fact that nearly all of your "dear ones" perished at Auschwitz, you never surrendered to hate or became its prisoner. In the years since, your indomitable spirit has transformed your experience into a gift of love and understanding to share with others.

You have said that your family was full of teachers; that if someone was not a teacher, they married one. You did them all one better after the war by marrying a teacher and then becoming one yourself. When the face of tyranny reemerged with the Soviet occupation of Hungary, your young family bravely left the last vestiges of home for the promise of freedom in America. And there you were finally able to fulfill your dream of being a teacher. After working by day in a factory and learning English at night, you earned your American teaching credentials and taught for 23 years, winning numerous statewide teaching awards.

After you retired to Bellingham, you decided to share your story with a wider audience, co-founding the Northwest Center for Holocaust, Genocide and Ethnocide Education at Western's Woodring College of Education. For more than two decades you have lectured to hundreds of audiences, and your memoir *Sharing is Healing: A Holocaust Survivor's Story*, has not only educated countless young readers about the Holocaust, but inspired them to speak up in the presence of prejudice, cruelty and bullying.

Your extraordinary service during this second act of your teaching career has been rightly recognized with numerous accolades, including the Golden Apple Teaching Award, the Award for Excellence in Holocaust Education, and the Daughters of the American Revolution Americanism Award.

For bearing witness to the unfathomable events of the Holocaust, for your tireless commitment to healing through sharing, and for educating youth in Bellingham and across the country, Western Washington University is proud to confer upon you the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*.

DATED this 23rd day of March, 2013

Bruce Shepard

Bruce Shepard, President



Peggy A. Zoro

Peggy A Zoro, Chair, Board of Trustees