

Introduction and Presentation of the Raoul  
Wallenberg Medal  
to the Honorable Helen Suzman (**Pronounce:  
Soosman**)  
by James J. Duderstadt  
Wallenberg Lecture and Reception  
Wednesday, September 26, 1992  
8:00 p.m., Rackham Auditorium

**Schedule:**

Welcome by Susan Lipschutz (2 minutes)  
Introduction to the Program (background on  
Wallenberg, history of award) by Prof. Irene  
Butter (5 minutes)  
Introduction of JJD by Susan Lipschutz  
Introduction of Mrs. Suzman by JJD and  
presentation of the Medal (7 minutes)  
Lecture by Mrs. Suzman with Q&A  
Reception @ Assembly Hall, 4th floor

**Introduction:**

*"After fighting like this, the only thing sure to survive  
is hatred."* These are the words of veteran soldier

David Hackworth in this week's Newsweek magazine (9/14/92). He is referring to the Bosnian conflict.

Author Aleska Dijilas (**Pronounce: Dyellus**), a fellow of the Russian Research Center at Harvard University, reminds us in this week's New Republic (9/21/92) that Nobel prize winner Ivo Andric (**Pronounce: Eevo Andritch**) wrote in 1920: "*the storms of hatred lie in opaque depths.*" (The Bridge on the Drina). Andric (**Andritch**) knew that Bosnia could not survive the collapse of Yugoslavia. His was an early and prescient warning.

Senseless violence and hatred has reportedly resulted in the "displacement" of as many as 2 million Bosnians. Many have escaped. Many have died, after months of violence and human rights violations. Listen to these apartheid-like restrictions on non-Serbs from the small town of Celinac:

*They are forbidden to: meet in cafes, restaurants, or other public places, bathe or swim in certain rivers, hunt or fish, move to another town without authorization, carry a weapon, drive or travel by car, gather in groups of more than three men, contact relatives from outside Celinac, use means of communications other than the post office phone,*

*wear uniforms (military, police or forest guard), sell real estate or exchange homes without approval.*

This story is receiving worldwide attention. Months went by before the world began to listen. Like the accounts of so many other atrocities, it will occupy the headlines for a time, then fade from view.

The rise of Neo-Nazism, nationalism, hate crimes, hate speech, and our own failure as a global community to do little more than act as traffic cop to atrocity is the dirty little secret of nations. It is easy to look the other way. For accountability would demand scrutiny. And the closer to the surface that bigotry and hatred rise, the more frightening they become.

But it is also true that a great flame can follow a little spark. The power of one individual can make all the difference. Helen Suzman is such an individual. Her life's work is a repudiation of the status quo, a challenge to those who would turn the other cheek to their sisters and brothers who are tormented in every corner of the world.

Helen Suzman was a senior member of the all-white South African House of Assembly, representing

Houghton, a suburb of Johannesburg, until her decision to retire in 1989. She had served in Parliament since first elected in 1953. Her parents were both Jews who emigrated from Lithuania at the turn of the century.

After entering University at age 16, Ms. Suzman received a Bachelor's degree in Commerce in 1941 from the University of Witwatersrand (**Pronounce: Vitvatersrand**). Before entering politics in 1953, she was a part-time lecturer in Economics and Economic History at Witwatersrand (**Vitvatersrand**).

Mrs. Suzman has received eighteen honorary degrees, including the degree of Honorary Doctor of Civil Law from Oxford University in 1973. She has been nominated for the Nobel Prize for Peace three separate times. She has also received the United Nations' Human Rights Award, the Berlin Senate's Moses Mendelssohn Award, and been named Honorary Dame Commander of the British Empire.

During her first terms in Parliament, Mrs. Suzman worked with other United Party representatives to control the growing power of Hendrik Verwoerd (**Pronounce: FairVort**), the foremost proponent of Apartheid laws. In 1961, like-

minded politicians joined Mrs. Suzman in forming the more liberal Progressive Party. The election that followed left Mrs. Suzman as the lone voice of the party in Parliament until 1974 when five other Progressive Party members joined her. Mrs. Suzman was the only female representative in the body for the first 27 years of service.

Honorable Member Suzman has repeatedly tangled with former Prime Minister P.W. Botha and other members of the Nationalist Party on the floor of Parliament, never failing to meet their constant attempts at intimidation head on. In response to a thinly veiled threat from Botha, Suzman replied, "I am not frightened of you. I never have and never will be. I think nothing of you."

Since 1960, Mrs. Suzman has regularly visited detainees in South Africa in an attempt to monitor and prevent police abuse. When allowed, she visited now freed African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela during his nearly three decades of detention. When asked about her persistence in the face of the seemingly intractable system of apartheid fostered by her political opponents, Mrs. Suzman has said:

"The most soul destroying thing one can do in South Africa today is to live here and do nothing about the situation...and do nothing about the injustice around us."

It is this commitment -- **the commitment to do something** -- that sets apart women and men like Helen Suzman. She is an individual who is saving lives in the face of intimidation and extraordinary personal sacrifice.

For Helen Suzman, passivity has never been an option. Her home is a place where unemployment, poverty, violence, and despair surround its children from the day they are born. Her home is a place where only 8.4 percent of nearly 400,000 South Africans entering the job market found employment in the five years preceding October, 1991 (cit. Development Bank of South Africa), a number very roughly equivalent to our own unemployment rate in the United States. She is immersed in struggle. And she meets it head on.

Tonight we honor Helen Suzman and we honor the memory and humanitarian efforts of Raoul Wallenberg. But let us also use this occasion to recommit ourselves to an aggressive, relentless

pursuit of human rights. Individuals like Helen Suzman don't pay attention to headlines. Atrocities and inhumanity continue, long after the media moves to other stories. Let us allow her efforts to be a lesson to each of us, so that we do not ever forget the fact that in some corner of the world, at this moment in time, someone is suffering at the hands of a bigot, their dignity lost.

Mrs. Suzman, you inspire so many all over the world. On behalf of the Wallenberg Endowment and the University of Michigan community, it is my great privilege and honor to present to you the Raoul Wallenberg Medal.