



## Bryces share commitment to spreading understanding

By Marsha Shoemaker

Scott and Lynn Bryce's commitment to educating others about the lessons of the Holocaust was born during World War II in New York City. In that setting, the anguish of Jewish friends and newsreel images made indelible impressions on two young people who would later become partners in spreading understanding.

The spirited, intellectual legacy of professors Bryce – the culmination of their commitment – came to life in the mid-1980s with a single course in Holocaust studies. By 1995 the effort had grown into the SCSU Center for Holocaust and Genocide Education.

The center opened with support of a \$56,000 grant from the Regis Foundation; yearly grants from foundation leaders who believed in the significance of the Bryces' dedication and accomplishments kept it going. From 12-15 Holocaust-related courses in art, English, mass communications, and other disciplines enlightened hundreds of students each year.

In addition to courses, the center has supported speakers, art exhibits and other cultural and educational experiences for community and campus students. Another significant activity has been the sponsorship of 18 faculty and staff representatives to three-week courses at Yad Vashem International School for Holocaust Studies in Jerusalem.

As retired faculty, the Bryces continued as part-time directors of the center until this past year. Their contributions as founders of the center will be acknowledged on April 12 when renowned lecturer Ervin Staub, professor of psychology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, will speak on the prevention of genocide and other collective violence.

Because of the Bryces' longtime commitment to illuminating the haunting lessons of the Holocaust, the ripple effect of their work will continue. "The gift to us was our own students – how open they were to this study," said Scott Bryce.

### Lessons of the Holocaust

In spring 1989, the Bryces – English professor Lynn and mass communications professor Scott – initiated a workshop titled "Literature and Issues of the Holocaust," two weeks of intense daily classroom sessions followed by a trip to Holocaust sites in Germany and Poland.

The intensity of the experience led Lynn to write this poem that attempts to convey the metamorphosis 44 SCSU students underwent when they were surrounded by the tortured ghosts of this chamber of horrors.

#### AMERICAN STUDENTS AT AUSCHWITZ

I followed the men and women  
they were becoming  
under the gates which read  
*Arbeit Macht Frei* (Work makes free)  
they were bold,  
healthy, clean,  
well dressed, even stylish.  
They had studied  
and they knew where they were going.  
Heavy with silence  
tense with anticipation,  
leaving their student selves behind,  
they walked forward into the past  
into remembering,  
and I followed  
holding in my arms  
the childhoods  
to which they'd  
not had time to say goodbye.

