



Personal Reflections

11/1/2018

Dear IMSA Family,

As I stated in a previous Personal Reflection, during the coming months, I would like to highlight one of our Academy priorities during each Reflection. Today, I'm highlighting our International Strategy.

Yet, I cannot jump straight into my topic today. The terror-filled event of the past few days, the deadliest attack on Jews in US history where 11 of our fellow human beings were murdered at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, has torpedoed any sense of safety that we might have held. I write "we" because as I stated in my Personal Reflection on [February 1, 2017](#) :

The words of Martin Niemöller, the Protestant pastor best remembered for the following quotation, continue to ring in my ears,

*First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out-
Because I was not a Socialist.*

*Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out-
Because I was not a Trade Unionist.*

*Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out-
Because I was not a Jew.*

Then they came for me-and there was no one left to speak for me.

Over the past few days, I have struggled with how to give voice to the dead. I cannot. I can only ask you, request of you, beg you, to read their names out loud:

- Joyce Fienberg, 75,
- Richard Gottfried, 65
- Rose Mallinger, 98
- Jerry Rabinowitz, 66
- Cecil Rosenthal and David Rosenthal, 59 and 54
- Bernice Simon and Sylvan Simon, 84 and 86
- Daniel Stein, 71
- Melvin Wax, 88
- Irving Younger, 69

I don't know about you, but I can never read a list of names like this without tearing up. Here are a couple of articles and segments highlighting their lives:

- [The Lives Lost in the Pittsburgh Synagogue Shooting](#) - The Washington Post
- [11 People Were Gunned Down at a Pittsburgh Synagogue. Here are their stories.](#) - CNN
- [Look at What Anti-Semitism Has Done](#) - Acronym, Madison Hahamy '19



Personal Reflections

11/1/2018

According to a recent [article](#), "Jews make up only about 2 percent of the U.S. population, but in annual FBI data they repeatedly account for more than half of the Americans targeted by hate crimes committed due to religious bias."

Appropriately, many of us are consumed by the latest violence against our Jewish brothers, yet, I would be remiss to ignore that several days prior to the terror in Pittsburgh, there was another horrific event against our Black brethren. Two elderly Black persons, Maurice Stallard, 69 and Vickie Lee Jones, 67 (yes, read their names out loud) were shot dead at a Kroger supermarket in Louisville, Kentucky last week by a white supremacist. Here are two articles with details of what happened:

- [Kroger Shooting Suspect Tried to Enter Black Church Before Killing 2 in Kentucky, Police Say](#) - The New York Times
- [When White Supremacists Target the Black Elderly](#) - New York Magazine

Maurice's 12 year-old grandson witnessed his grandfather's murder. My grandson, Malachi is 8 years old. I cannot begin to imagine how his life would be affected if he saw me being shot to death.

While I realize that anti-Semitism and other prejudice and discrimination based on religious beliefs, race, sexual orientation, etc. has diverse origins and may be rooted in a complex context of ignorance, I ask you as the IMSA family to learn from each other, listen, question, and refuse to fight each other. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stated in his Letter from Birmingham, "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny." Together, as a family, we may (re)discover that our lives are intertwined, our path to surviving is linked, our freedom can only be achieved together for I cannot be truly free until all are free. Our liberty is linked to each other's safety. And while these ideals are within sight, just around the corner, they can be attained only through our being stronger together, resilient within ourselves, and kinder toward one another. I invite you to join me in making IMSA a refuge for all.

International Strategy

A new priority for this year is to develop and implement an International Strategy that will assist us to meet our [IMSA Impact and Outcomes](#) statement that reads, "By 2022, IMSA is a recognized global leader and catalyst in equity and excellence in STEM teaching and learning, innovation and entrepreneurship." In any given week, I receive invitations for IMSA to participate in international science conferences, requests to host an international delegation, or present at an international conference. Examples of each include the following: In a few weeks, I will join Dr. Eric Smith and three IMSA students at the Japanese Student Science Fair; in September, we hosted 10 students and two teachers from Miaoli County, Taiwan in a joint program with Northern Illinois University; and last summer, Dr. Adrienne Coleman



Personal Reflections

11/1/2018

presented her research on diversifying STEM education at the International Symposium on the Future of STEAM conference in Athens, Greece. In addition, several IMSA staff will be going to China and Malaysia this month. And others will be going to Singapore, Taipei, Taiwan, and Dubai. Developing an International Strategy can offer IMSA criteria by which we can decide which invitations to accept, which opportunities to pursue, and which to decline.

Another reason to develop an International Strategy is IMSA's newly approved law. Governor Rauner signed the IMSA Bill SB 2939 into law on Friday, August 17, permitting enrollment of students who have completed the 8th grade as well as non-Illinois students who will pay tuition, room and board and fees. We are developing an International Strategy to encompass recruitment of non-Illinois students, more specifically international students. Our current draft of the strategy includes three components-establishing IMSA's international presence, leveraging the demand for the work being done by our Outreach Division (Professional Field Services), and beginning the recruitment of international students. Part of our strategy is to conduct a marketing study to document IMSA's attractiveness to international populations, both high school age sectors and educators interested in learning from IMSA.

There are several important items that you should know about recruiting international students to IMSA. One, bringing non-Illinois students to IMSA was a strategy identified by a Presidential Committee on Fiscal Sustainability that I established in 2015. In fact, previous administrations and Board members at IMSA have considered bringing international students to IMSA since the 1990's. Two, IMSA is committed and has stated on the record that we will continue to enroll 650 Illinois students as we have done over the past 32 years. Finally, while we are pursuing enrolling tuition-paying non-Illinois students, we see some exciting and significant learning opportunities for our Illinois students learning side by side with non-Illinois students. For example, our students and parents often comment on how diverse IMSA is, how students' learning experiences are richer because they are seeing problem solving from diverse perspectives, and how students develop lifelong friends with people from the other side of the state. How much more will this be true when Illinois students get an education sitting next to someone from the other side of the world? They will now develop lifelong friends with people from the other side of the world! If you're curious about the number of non-Illinois students that we expect to enroll, the tuition rates that we expect to charge, how we plan to pay for new residence halls, see our [frequently asked questions web page](#). The bottom line about our international efforts have to do with securing the resources for new residence halls since our current halls are over 30 years old and are in great need of repair.

I have much more to write about our new IMSA law and our international strategy. However, we are just commencing this journey. If you would like to be our thought partner, whether you are a parent, student, or alumni, please send an email to IMSAInternational@imsa.edu. IMSA staff, including faculty, are encouraged to continue to share their interest in this initiative through their Cabinet member.



Personal Reflections

11/1/2018

Finally, I want to leave you with one additional resource for information on IMSA. At each Board of Trustees meeting, I give a "[Report of the President](#)" that includes information about Academy activities and progress that we are making to meet our strategic goals.

Respectfully,

José M. Torres, PhD
President