



Paul Winkler Leaves Legacy of Caring

It's going to be hard to imagine a day at DOE without Dr. Paul B. Winkler somewhere on the scene. Paul recently announced his decision to retire, effective May 20, 2016.

"I have known Paul for 25 years, and I can say firsthand that his contributions to our work here at DOE and his place in the Department's history and culture have been unparalleled," said Commissioner of Education David C. Hespe. "We owe Dr. Winkler all the praise and gratitude we can muster, and we wish him the best in his retirement."

Paul, who will turn 80 in November, has built a 58-year career in education, with 42 of those years devoted to Holocaust / genocide education. He held several positions in local school districts and within DOE before he began coordinating activities of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education as its executive director since 1975, almost 20 years before the commission and the teaching of Holocaust and genocide in the public schools was formally required by law.

Paul has an active interest in DOE activities and for many years had co-chaired our Global Village Team, which offered events to celebrate the diversity of our staff and culture. He is also a strong supporter of current internal activities and events, such as DOE Day, that help bring staff together in a spirit of good will and camaraderie.

"I want you to know that your impact on my life and on our work aimed at reducing and combating prejudice has been appreciated," wrote Paul in a letter to all staff. "I cannot thank you enough for your friendship, support and good wishes."

Paul Winkler Career Highlights

- 1958: Begins his career as a classroom teacher in Abington, Pennsylvania.
- 1966: Accepts his first New Jersey assignment as elementary principal and pupil personnel services director in Collingswood.
- 1969: Joins the Department of Education to direct a state-run teacher training center.
- 1975: Named executive director of the New Jersey Council on Holocaust Education.
- 1978: Named deputy assistant commissioner in DOE's Division of School Programs and Special Education.
- 1986: Hired as superintendent of the Lower Camden County Regional High School District.
- 1994: Named executive director of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education
- 2012: Publishes *Teaching the Unspeakable – The New Jersey Story of Holocaust / Genocide Education*.

Colleagues Tell How Paul Winkler Touched Their Lives and Careers

Friend. Mentor. Grandfather figure. To those who know him well, Paul Winkler is all these things and more. Some special people both in and outside DOE who worked closely with Paul offered comments on the occasion of his retirement. Here's what they had to say:

What an honor it has been to work for Dr. Paul B. Winkler. I am indeed fortunate to have had the privilege of sharing Paul's expertise, work ethic and commitment. For the past 19 years, Paul has been my boss, my mentor, a family friend, and a grandfather like figure to my children. He has left a remarkable legacy behind; one that will remain with the department for years to come. His dedication to the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education remains a lasting tribute to his professionalism. Paul is an educator, a leader, an advocate, a shoulder to lean on, a visionary, a confidant and indeed a friend.

I guess that using your talents and leaving a legacy is something we all desire to do and Paul Winkler has succeeded in doing so.

I will miss you Paul - Thank you for being a great boss and a great friend.

Judy Baker, NJ Holocaust Commission

I am honored to join my voice to the chorus of praise for my colleague and friend Dr. Paul Winkler.

We have worked together for decades honoring the memory of the victims of the Holocaust, caring for the survivors and educating future generations of students. Paul is a doer. He empowers others to do their work and he shares credit with all. I have seen how other State Commissions work and many are driven by competition and rivalry. Paul has fostered an atmosphere of cooperation and friendship. He greets everyone with a smile and a good word. I cherish his embrace but it is more than friendship that I honor. Paul is so competent that he makes it seem effortless. His commitments run deep; they are integral to his soul, the essence of his public career. His human touch is unfailing. He is a teacher and a teacher's teacher, appreciating and respecting all that it takes to succeed in the classroom.

On a personal level I had a privilege of teaching his granddaughter and seeing how his best qualities have been transmitted from generation to the generation.

Paul, my friend, we honor you for your achievements, for all that you are. You can take pride in your achievements and we respect not only the quality of your work but its humanity.

Thank you!

Dr. Michael Berenbaum, professor, American Jewish University

I first met Dr. Paul Winkler in the late seventies when he was an Assistant Commissioner at DOE. In October of 1982 I had the opportunity to work with Paul as he became the Executive Director of the NJ Commission on Holocaust Education.

Paul Winkler has done so much during the years he spent as Executive Director of the Commission. He guided this new Commission to many heights. Various curriculum on genocides was developed, connections made and working with so many groups in NJ.

He made it possible to have legislation passed to make Holocaust/Genocide Education mandatory for all students from kindergarten to grade twelve. Under his direction resource centers were created at colleges and universities. The list goes on and on.

Paul it was pleasure and honor to work with you all these years. You have left a legacy to the state of New Jersey.

Wishing you all the best in your retirement.

Much love for years to come.

Maud Dahme, child survivor of the Holocaust, NJ Holocaust Commission member

I have been privileged to know Paul from the moment I began as director of Chhange. He lives the mission of our center: he is the first to ensure opportunity, inclusion and respect for everyone, most of all, for our children. He stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the survivors and educators across New Jersey, combating hate and discrimination, responding to administrators, parents, and legislators with his wisdom, passion and tireless energy. He is a giant in this field and in life, his gentleness matched by his fierceness in pursuing what is best for the education of our children.

Paul has been my mentor, my role model for 16 years, so I have been privileged to watch him in action. I have learned from him that a soft voice, a smile, and a sense of humor pair well with determination, knowledge and courage in winning over those who do not understand the need to study the Holocaust, those whose actions do not treat everyone fairly. In those difficult moments when I must stand up to ensure the dignity of others, Paul's words and actions come to mind. Paul is and always will be an Upstander, using his heart, mind and hands to teach us all. My most heart-felt thanks and love to Dr. Paul Winkler, for all his dedication and hard work with me, Chhange, and our network of centers and educators across the State.

**Dale Daniels, Executive Director, Center for Holocaust,
Human Rights & Genocide Education (Chhange),
Brookdale Community College**

Paul Winkler served in many leadership positions in the Department of Education. I met Paul in 1979 when he hired me to be the state consultant for speech and language services in the Division of Special Education. Paul was a leader in every sense of the word. Our mission was to serve the “boys and girls” as he referred to them and to create educational programs of quality for students with disabilities by working together with schools and families. He cared deeply about the “boys and girls” and he cared deeply about the people who worked for and with him. He fostered communication, collaboration, and respect and always supported growth and learning. He was responsible for implementing the first preschool programs for students with disabilities, the first IEPs as well as a state wide system of professional learning and so much more. He was forward thinking and always looking for the newest idea in how to meet the needs of students with disabilities. He wanted us all to be happy, and treat each other with kindness—a theme for his whole life. Paul has the unique ability to say complicated things in simple ways that are deeply meaningful and often lessons for life. What he established still is at the DOE, in the legacy of leadership and the many people he touched who continue to benefit from his wisdom, guidance and friendship.

**Barbara Gantwerk, former assistant commissioner Division
of Student Services, NJDOE**

I met Paul in the spring of 1983 when Prof. Ronald Kopcho, Chairman of the Liberal Arts Division at Mercer County College, suggested that I attend the next meeting of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education. He thought I would enjoy meeting Dr. Paul Winkler.

I entered a room abuzz with pre-gathering activity with some trepidation and took my seat in the row designated for guests behind the Commission's conference table. Within a few minutes, Paul greeted me as if we had known each other forever, and I realized that I was entering a most meaningful phase of my life. As I watched Paul in action that day, I saw a man with an infinite ability to make everyone feel at ease, a man whose passion to reduce prejudice, bias and bigotry was as inspirational as it was contagious. When I joined the band of his disciples and admirers, I found out that his sincere concern for everyone made him the Pied Piper of all collaborators in our enterprise, an ever-growing number of Holocaust Genocide Center workers throughout New Jersey, as well as hundreds of teachers who came under his spell. They responded by teaching what they had learned, i.e. "to think with their minds, hearts and hands".

The years of working with Paul were magical. Each academic year before my retirement in 1997, he supported my efforts to broaden the circle of outreach programs to students, teachers and community groups and encouraged me write a family memoir. Upon my retirement, he enabled me to continue teaching and participating in Commission-related activities.

However, being a mentor did not half cover Paul's role in the lives of all who crossed his path. I will never forget his nightly telephone calls for an update on my seriously ill husband's condition, so he could share it with friends, relieving me of the burden of fielding more inquiries at the end of a stressful day. He would also find time to visit Jerry in critical care and wheel him around in rehab. What is more, he made it all feel so simple.

I join countless others whose lives were profoundly enhanced by Paul's wisdom, knowledge, sensitivity and kindness. We are all beneficiaries of his guidance. Above all, we will cherish his friendship forever.

Dr. Vera Goodkin, child survivor of the Holocaust, retired professor and New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education associate

Paul has represented the heart and soul of the Department of Education for many years. He demonstrated every day that he was fully committed to helping people and treating all students fairly and justly. In this way he has lived the core mission of the department. Many of us who thought we knew what commitment and drive were before working with Paul, soon realized that we didn't have a clue. He demonstrated clearly what a determined person could do – change the world!

From his leadership of the Holocaust Commission, Paul was able to touch every facet of the Department and thousands of schools throughout the state- from curriculum and instruction, to professional development across subjects and grades. He was able to extend his good works far from our offices across our state, country and world. Most importantly, I want Paul to know how grateful I am for his being such a great and caring friend to all of us. He has touched all of our lives and made them better.

Commissioner of Education David C. Hespe

Paul Winkler is a giant in Holocaust education, not only here in NJ but nationally. Because of him we, our children and our children's children will always remember.

Governor Thomas H. Kean

Paul has been such a fine catalyst for Holocaust education in the state. For the states school districts he is the face of Holocaust education.

Paul's entire career as an educator has been excellent but his work on Holocaust and genocide education stands out. It has been a joy for me to work with, support and learn from Paul as the chairman of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education.

Paul is responsible for spreading the lessons of the Holocaust all over the state during the last forty two years. Indeed, the states program is the best in the world. It has been the model for Holocaust education all over the United States and the world. Paul made it happen because of his timeless work and wonderful support with the people he meets.

As good an educator as Paul is, you will never meet a finer person. I do not know a more positive, caring and supportive person.

Paul, you have done so much for me and my family and been so kind, that these words cannot adequately express my love, gratitude and respect for you.

Thank you, my friend.

Phillip Kirschner, chairman of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education

For more than 40 years, Dr. Paul Winkler has led New Jersey's pioneering efforts in the field of Holocaust/genocide education. Dr. Winkler worked tirelessly in support of the legislation mandating Holocaust education in the public schools of New Jersey and in the development of Holocaust/genocide curriculum materials. Considering the emotionally-wrenching nature of the subject matter with which Dr. Winkler dealt, his accomplishments and his persistence over the past four decades are truly astonishing. New Jersey will continue to reap the benefits of Dr. Winkler's outstanding work for many years in the future.

Murray Laulicht, former chairperson of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education