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DOWNTOWN LIBRARY HOSTS TRAVELING EXHIBIT - JAN KARSKI, HUMANITY'S HERO

Media Release

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Downtown Central Library Hosts Traveling Exhibit - Jan Karski, Humanity's Hero

Polish Resistance Figure, Holocaust Witness Celebrated at 2014 Centennial of His Birth

The World Knew: Jan Karski's Mission for Humanity, a new exhibit is on view at the downtown Central Library, 1 Lafayette Square, now through Sunday, November 16. The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library is collaborating with the Permanent Chair of Polish Culture at Canisius College, Kosciuszko Foundation – WNY Division, the Polish Legacy Project, Daemen College, the Holocaust Resource Center of Buffalo, and the Jewish Community Center to present the exhibition which is free and open to the public during regular Library operating hours: Monday – Wednesday, Friday and Saturday 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m., Thursday 8:30 a.m.-8 p.m., and Sundays 12 noon to 5 p.m.

The story of Polish-born diplomat and "citizen of the world" Jan Karski (1914-2000) is not well known today, remarkably, but he carried out one of the most monumental missions attempted in World War II – a cross-continental trek to inform Western leaders in 1942 that the Holocaust was underway. Planned by the Underground, the largest anti-Nazi resistance movement in occupied Europe, Karski was smuggled into the Warsaw Ghetto and the vast Nazi system of industrialized slaughter to directly bear witness, then report on what he had seen to the top leaders of the Allies. Along the way, he was captured, tortured, nearly executed, and managed daring escapes that allowed his message and evidence to be carried to the West. He presented his dramatic report in 1943 to the British Foreign Secretary, U.S. Secretary of War, bishops, journalists, and President Roosevelt. However, many were skeptical that even the Nazis would attempt to murder an entire people. The war, and the killing, continued. Karski stayed in the U.S., eventually becoming a U.S. citizen, a professor of history and politics at Georgetown University, and an author. In his later life, he received many awards for his courage and was a controversial speaker on the callousness of the Allies toward the fate of the Jews in Europe. He posthumously received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Obama in 2012.

In conjunction with the exhibit, there will be several free programs including:

-Saturday, October 18, 12:30 p.m.: Book Talk by Wanda Urbanska, Director of the Jan Karski Educational Foundation, on Karski's recently re-published memoir, *The Story of a Secret State*.

-Sunday, October 26, 2 p.m.: Film and discussion, *The Labyrinth: The Testimony of Martin Kolodziej*, a documentary on the haunting artwork of an Auschwitz survivor.

-Sunday, November 9, 2 p.m.: Film and discussion, *Irena Sendler: In the Name of Their Mothers*, the story of a group of young Polish women who saved thousands of Jewish children.

For further information on these activities, please call 858-8900 or visit the Library's website at: www.BuffaloLib.org.

The exhibit *The World Knew: Jan Karski's Mission for Humanity* was prepared by the Polish History Museum in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Jan Karski Educational Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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