

**Remarks by Ronald D. Liebowitz,
president of Middlebury College,
May 2, 2008, on the occasion of the fifth anniversary
of the Rohatyn Center for International Affairs
and presentation of the first Rohatyn Global Citizenship Award**

We're here this afternoon to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Rohatyn Center for International Affairs and to present the first Elizabeth and Felix Rohatyn Global Citizenship Award. I'd like to begin by thanking Felix Rohatyn for his many years of dedicated service to Middlebury College. This is Felix's last visit to campus as a member of the Middlebury College Board of Trustees. He served on the board from 1969 through 1981 and again from 2005 to the present day.

We often say that, through a rigorous education in the liberal arts, Middlebury prepares its students to be citizens of the world. Felix Rohatyn, a member of the Middlebury Class of 1949, is a model of the global citizen that we are talking about. Born in Vienna, Austria, he attended school in France before he and his family escaped to the U.S. from Nazi-occupied Europe. At Middlebury, Felix majored in physics, but his liberal arts education prepared him to excel in many different fields. He built his career in business with the investment banking firm Lazard Freres & Co., becoming a partner in 1961.

In the 1970s, Felix saved New York City from financial disaster, when, as chairman of the Municipal Assistance Corporation of the State of New York, he managed the negotiations that gave city the funding it needed to emerge from bankruptcy.

Felix retired from Lazard Freres in 1997 to accept an appointment as U.S. ambassador to France, a position he held until the end of 2002.

He is married to Elizabeth Fly Rohatyn, who also has had a long career in public service, with a particular focus on education and the role of libraries in French and American life.

In 2002 the Rohatyns established the Rohatyn Center for International Affairs, which facilitates programs that bring the world to our campus and extend the College's global reach. Each year the Rohatyn Center offers a packed schedule of internationally focused symposia, lectures, and presentations. The Rohatyns have played a critical role in connecting the College to global leaders. Just this past month, for example, the Rohatyn Center hosted the president of Save the Children, as well as two U.S. assistant secretaries of State and Defense. Its working paper series regularly features the work of prominent scholars and policymakers.

The center's partnership with Princeton, Columbia, and the University of Texas has made many of its lectures available to a much larger audience through the online University Channel. Anyone with a computer and Internet connection can now listen online or download audio and video podcasts of presentations by academics, researchers, and policymakers. Through the University Channel, the Rohatyn Center and Middlebury College have an important presence on YouTube, Facebook, and iTunes.

Middlebury students funded by the Rohatyn Center's research grant program have traveled to Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, and Europe to conduct original research. Twenty-three projects have been funded since 2003, and three more students will begin research abroad this June. This

summer's projects range from an examination of the cult status of Eva Peron and its importance for the current generation of Argentines to research on the impact of rulings dealing with human rights on the South African Constitutional Court to an exploration of Hieronymous Bosch's triptych of St. Anthony as a healing altarpiece. Next week 31 seniors from majors that cross the curriculum will present their research in the annual International Thesis Forum.

Felix's name and sterling reputation have opened doors for Middlebury in so many ways. His support has been the catalyst for all that has been accomplished at the Rohatyn Center. Thanks to his interest and support, the Rohatyn Center has helped to put the College on the global map and allowed us to envision Middlebury as the global liberal arts college for the 21st century.

Like the Rohatyns, the man whose memory we honor today, Varian Fry, was a citizen of the world. An editor, journalist, and teacher, Fry wrote about foreign affairs for several journals in the 1930s, but it was a trip to Germany in 1935 that changed the course of his life. There, he witnessed Nazi storm troopers beating Jews on the streets of Berlin, and he began a campaign to alert Americans to the dangers of fascism and the brutal treatment of Jews and other minorities in Nazi Germany.

In 1940, Fry and a group of other journalists, religious leaders, and activists formed the Emergency Rescue Committee to assist people fleeing from Nazi persecution. When the committee needed someone to go to Marseilles and help refugees who were trying to escape from Vichy France, Varian Fry

volunteered for the job. He arrived in Marseilles on August 15, 1940, with a list of 200 stranded refugees and \$3,000 taped to his leg.

Felix will tell you the story of what happened next during the year Varian Fry spent in Marseilles before he was expelled from France.

[After Ambassador Rohatyn spoke and after Mrs. Fry accepted the award, President Liebowitz closed with the following remarks.]

Thank you, Annette and Felix. We are proud to honor Varian Fry, his courage and his commitment, and it is particularly fitting that we are able to do so today—Holocaust Remembrance Day or Yom HaShoah as it is called in Hebrew. To ensure Varian Fry is long remembered, we have planted a tree just north of this building in recognition of his service to humanity. I encourage you to visit the site as you leave the building and walk toward Proctor Hall.