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## Federal Cross of Merit Awarded to Holocaust Survivor Leslie Schwartz

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Bavarian Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs, Dr. Ludwig Spaenle (left) with Mr. Leslie Schwartz and wife (© StMUK) In recognition of his contribution to the recollection of the Holocaust, Holocaust Survivor Leslie Schwartz was awarded the Federal Cross of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany. The New Yorker of Hungarian descent was honored for his courageous work in favor of the common good on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 in Munich.

Leslie Schwartz was born into a traditional Jewish family in Northeastern Hungary in 1930. In 1944, he and his family were deported to the concentration camp in Auschwitz. He was the only family member who survived Auschwitz, and he was brought to the forced labor camp at Dachau when he was 14 years old. Although he was suffering from life-threatening injuries, he still survived the "Poinger Todeszug", a horrific train journey concentration camp victims were forced to take to yet another prison. After the war's end in 1946 he left Germany to immigrate to the United States. He worked for an insurance company first, and then in 1972 he went into business for himself, establishing a printing company in New York. His autobiography, *Living Through Hell*, was published in 2010.

Since 1984 Schwartz has visited Germany regularly. In July 2010 he visited the memorial of the Jewish victims in Poing and the concentration camp memorial at Dachau for the first time. It was then that he met Max Mannheimer, a fellow Holocaust survivor who encouraged Schwartz to share his memories with the younger generation. Since then, Leslie Schwartz has dedicated himself to Holocaust remembrance in Germany as well as in the United States in many ways. During the last several years, he has given talks to students in schools, to young people at youth organizations, in juvenile detention homes and in book stores. Schwartz has also visited schools, synagogues and Jewish organizations in New York and Florida and told about his experiences. Through his work, he has conveyed an accurate picture of Germany and of the ways in which contemporary German youths deal with the trauma of the Holocaust. His work has earned him gratitude and esteem for his role as a transatlantic mediator. By his brave work and his unflinching engagement he has courageously contributed to a better mutual understanding between Germany and the United States and the recollection of the Holocaust for the current and coming generations.

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**New York**

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**Leslie Schwartz**

