

State of South Dakota

EIGHTY-FOURTH SESSION
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 2009

645Q0829

SENATE COMMEMORATION NO. 29

Introduced by: Senators Adelstein, Haverly, Howie, Kloucek, Miles, Novstrup (Al), Schmidt, and Tieszen and Representatives Dreyer, Gosch, Kopp, Lust, McLaughlin, Sly, and Verchio

A LEGISLATIVE COMMEMORATION, Honoring Jack Van Der Geest who passed away on March 5, 2009.

WHEREAS, Governor Rounds declared March 3, 2009, as "Jack Van Der Geest Day" in South Dakota, commemorating the sixty-fifth anniversary of Jack's escape from Buchenwald Concentration Camp; he was one of only seven who escaped the camp; and

WHEREAS, Jack Van Der Geest and his parents were patriots of Free Holland, serving in the underground fight against Nazi Germany. After his escape from Buchenwald Concentration Camp, Jack served in the United States Army and Air Force in both the European Theater and in the Pacific; and

WHEREAS, Jack had kept silent about the horror of the concentration camp until he learned of a movement to deny the Shoah (Holocaust) and the murder of six million Jewish men, women, and children. Knowing the truth, he forced himself to break that silence, relive the horror, and write the book *Was God on Vacation* that has been a best seller all over the world; and

WHEREAS, Jack taught about the Holocaust by speaking in schools and universities in all parts of South Dakota and elsewhere, as well as through presentations in venues too numerous to list, thus proving the motto "Those who know only their own generation remain always a child." He continually celebrated, by his forceful personality, love for all peoples of all faiths and the free life of his beloved state and nation:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT COMMEMORATED, by the Eighty-fourth Legislature of the State of South Dakota, that the Legislature offers its condolences to the wife and children of Jack Van Der Geest, a survivor of the Holocaust, and commits itself to honor his memory by strengthening freedom of expression, true equality, and respect for all persons in this state and this nation.