



*Samuel Harris*

Class of 1954

Samuel Harris, a founder of the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, was four years old in Deblin, Poland, when he and his family were rounded up for deportation. Harris survived 3 1/2 years in the Deblin and Czestochowa concentration camps. After the war he lived in orphanages and a foster home until in 1948 he was adopted by a Northbrook couple, Dr. Ellis and Harriet Harris. At New Trier Harris was elected sophomore class president and was active in the drama club, student council, wrestling and swimming teams and numerous other activities. After graduation from New Trier and Grinnell College he became a successful insurance executive who rarely spoke about his Holocaust experiences. After hearing a Holocaust denier, Harris was motivated to educate others. He speaks in schools, churches and to community groups throughout the country. He frequently appears on radio and television. He wrote a book, "Sammy, Child Survivor of the Holocaust," which has been translated into Polish and Spanish. Harris was a driving force behind the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center in Skokie, which opened in 2009 with a keynote address by former President Bill Clinton. He has received the State of Illinois Human Rights Award for Distinguished Leadership as well as the Grinnell College Alumni Award for Distinguished Achievement, and *Chicago Magazine* named Harris one of the six Chicagoans of the Year in 2009.

