

MR. BEN FERENCZ

Professor of International Law and former Nuremberg Prosecutor

Ben Ferencz, born in Transylvania in 1920, attended public schools in New York. He won a scholarship to Harvard Law School where he worked as a researcher for a professor doing a book on war crimes. He received his degree in 1943 and promptly joined the US army as a private in the artillery. He was awarded five battle stars for not being killed or wounded at Normandy Beach and every major campaign in Europe. As the war was ending, he was transferred to General Patton's HQ to serve as a war crimes investigator. He entered many Nazi concentration camps as they were liberated. The horrors made an indelible impression. He returned home and was promptly recruited by General Telford Taylor to return to Germany to help in the additional war crimes trials. He was appointed Chief Prosecutor in what was aptly described as the biggest murder trial in history - the "Einsatzgruppen case". All 22 defendants, including six SS Generals, were convicted of murdering over a million innocent men, women and children. 13 defendants were sentenced to death. Ferencz was then 27 years old and it was his first case.

Almost all of his life since then has been spent trying to obtain compensation for victims and trying to prevent illegal war-making. He became a self-appointed personal lobbyist for peace, with countless lectures, publications and speeches in many universities and countries. For several years he was an Adjunct Professor at Pace Law School where he taught "The International Law of Peace". He lives in New Rochelle, New York, and has been married to his wife, Gertrude, for over 62 years. They have four grown children. His son Donald, an international lawyer, is following his father's footsteps.