



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: February 22, 2023
To: Local Educational Agency Leads
Route To: Principals, Teachers, and Guidance Councilors
From: New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education

Resources Available for Schools: Morris Katz – The Presidential Collection

The Orthodox Jewish Chamber of Commerce (OJCC) is offering a free program, the Morris Katz Presidential Collection, that can help school districts meet educational goals of understanding the history of U.S. presidents. The collection of presidential portraits, which can be used in history and art curriculums, is available through virtual and print media.

Background

Morris Katz, a Holocaust survivor, focused on his art after arriving in America in 1949. His work is featured in many museums, including the Smithsonian. Following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, Katz began The Presidential Collection project. For six years, he painted portraits of each president, beginning with George Washington and concluding with the last president of his lifetime, George H.W. Bush, spending an average of 200 hours on each portrait.

These paintings can serve as a gateway to classroom lessons, whether they focus on a specific president in terms of American history, a conversation about art, or one from the perspective of a Holocaust survivor and patriot who began a new life as an artist. In the months ahead, we aim to add curriculum-based features to the collection, which will be available to teachers.

Key steps/actions

For details about the collection, please visit the [OJCC website](#) or the “Survivor Stories” section of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education [website](#) for a Booklet about the Collection, a Collage of the Presidential Collection, an Executive Summary and Information for Teachers.

Contact information

For more information, contact at Art@MorrisKatz.org.

c: Members, State Board of Education
NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group