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ACDIS at Illinois to host symposium on “The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II: The Massacre of Nanjing” honoring Illinois Alumnae Minnie Vautrin and Iris Chang

Urbana, IL—As acting president of Ginling College, Minnie Vautrin (Illinois Class of 1912) sheltered more than 10,000 Chinese women from rape and deadly violence during the Nanjing Massacre. The Program in Arms Control & Domestic and International Security (ACDIS) at Illinois will host a symposium recalling the history of the Sino-Japanese war and honoring Vautrin. *The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II: The Massacre of Nanjing* will be held on December 16, 2017, at the Levis Faculty Center, Room 300, 919 West Illinois Street, Urbana.

On the 80th anniversary of the fall of Nanjing (Nanking), the symposium will recall the mass atrocities committed in the then Chinese capital by the Japanese Army during the Second Sino-Japanese War, through the journal entries of Illinois alumna Minnie Vautrin and the book “The Rape of Nanking” by alumna Iris Chang (Illinois Class of 1989). The speakers include scholarly experts on the massacre as well as the parents of Iris Chang.

“The symposium will portray two outstanding alumnae who have profoundly touched the lives of many through their undeterred courage in face of adversity,” says ACDIS director Cliff Singer. “Vautrin and Chang are superb examples for our students, staff, and faculty at Illinois. It is inspiring and humbling to learn from them how much just one individual upholding her values can do for others.”

Matthias Perdekamp, ACDIS faculty and symposium organizer notes, “Minnie Vautrin saved more than 10,000 girls and women and very well might be the leading humanitarian to graduate from Illinois since its inception in 1867. Iris Chang is the courageous journalist who triggered the contemporary discussion of the long-ignored mass atrocities during the Sino-Japanese War. This process seems very important for reaching reconciliation and lasting peace in East Asia.”

The symposium is free and open to the public. The program details, travel information, and digital copies of Minnie Vautrin’s diary may be found on the symposium website: <http://go.illinois.edu/Nanjing>.

The symposium has been generously co-sponsored by the [Office of the Provost](#), [Consulate-General of the People's Republic of China in Chicago](#), [Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies](#), [Department of Physics](#), [Program in Jewish Culture and Society](#), [School of Journalism](#), [University Laboratory High School](#), and [Women and Gender in Global Perspectives Program](#).



About Minnie Vautrin (from her Wikipedia article + biographer Dr. Hua-Ling Hu)

Wilhelmina "Minnie" Vautrin (September 27, 1886 – May 14, 1941) was an American missionary, diarist, educator and president of Ginling College. Vautrin graduated from Illinois State Normal University in 1907 and served as mathematics teacher at LeRoy High School, IL. In 1912, she graduated as the salutatorian with a BA in rom UIUC. She joined the Foreign Christian Missionary Society as a missionary to China. During a furlough from China, Vautrin obtained a master's degree in education from Columbia University in 1919. She remained a missionary in China for 28 years. In 1937 she stayed behind as acting president of Ginling college, as Japanese troops approached the city of Nanjing and American citizens were evacuated from the capital. Under her determined leadership the campus was prepared as a refuge for young women and girls. During the mass atrocities following the capture of Nanjing on December 13th, 1937, Vautrin sheltered more than 10,000 women and girls on the Ginling campus and protected them from abduction by Japanese troops through her personal interventions, often directly confronting and negotiating with marauding bands of soldiers.

After the war, Vautrin was posthumously awarded the Emblem of the Blue Jade by the Chinese government for her sacrifices during the Nanjing Massacre. Her work saving the lives of Chinese civilians during the massacre is recounted in the biographical book, *American Goddess at the Rape of Nanking*, written by historian Dr. Hua-Ling Hu. In the 2007 documentary film *Nanking*, Vautrin was portrayed by actress Mariel Hemingway, who recited excerpts from Vautrin's diary.

About Iris Chang (from <http://www.irischang.net/about/>)

Iris Chang was born in Princeton, New Jersey, daughter of immigrant parents, Professors Shau-Jin and Ying-Ying Chang and grew up in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, where she earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Illinois in 1989. She worked briefly as a reporter for the *Associated Press* and the *Chicago Tribune* before completing a graduate degree in writing from the Johns Hopkins University and launching her career as a full-time author and lecturer. Iris Chang was married to Brett Douglas in 1991, and their son Christopher was born in 2002. Iris Chang died on November 9, 2004.

In her international bestseller, *The Rape of Nanking*, Chang examined one of the most tragic chapters of World War II: the mass execution of soldiers and the slaughter, rape, and torture of tens of thousands of Chinese civilians by Japanese soldiers in the then capital of China. Stories about Chang's grandparents' harrowing escape were part of her family legacy and prompted her to embark on this ambitious project, for which she interviewed elderly survivors of the massacre and discovered thousands of rare documents in four different languages. Published by Basic Books on December 1997 (the 60th anniversary of the massacre) and in the paperback by Penguin in 1998, *The Rape of Nanking*- the first, full-length English-language narrative of the atrocity to reach a wide audience- remained on the *New York Times* bestseller list for several months, became a *New York Times* Notable Book, and was cited by *Bookman Review Syndicate* as one of the best books of 1997.

About ACDIS

The Program in Arms Control & Domestic and International Security (ACDIS) is an interdisciplinary venture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign that facilitates objective research, academics, and outreach about international security issues within the academic and policymaking communities. ACDIS successfully integrates insights generated by scholars from engineering, natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities to produce comprehensive analyses that do not reduce security issues to singular and simplifying explanations. International security challenges are approached as complex phenomena that can only be understood through examination of multiple causes and impacts. Learn more about ACDIS: <http://acdis.illinois.edu/>.