

Executive Proclamation
State of South Dakota
Office of the Governor

Whereas, Sixty-six years ago, Jack Van Der Geest was one of eight known individuals fortunate enough to escape the horrors of the Buchenwald Concentration Camp; and,

Whereas, There are survivors that were liberated at the end of the war, but Jack is the only escapee from Buchenwald still living, and Rapid City, South Dakota, is proud to call him a resident; and,

Whereas, Jack has a copy of his own death certificate, which is on file at Buchenwald, and a picture of it appears in the 2002 edition of his book entitled, *Was God on Vacation?*; and,

Whereas, It is fitting and proper as governor to recognize the residents of our state that have had a significant impact on the lives of our citizens through the sharing of his story and his commitment to freedom:

Now, Therefore, I, M. Michael Rounds, Governor of the state of South Dakota, do hereby proclaim March 3, 2009, as

JACK VAN DER GEEST DAY

in South Dakota.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the state of South Dakota, in Pierre, the Capital City, this Twentieth Day of February in the Year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Nine.



M. Michael Rounds

M. Michael Rounds, Governor

Attest:

Chris Nelson

Chris Nelson, Secretary of State

Executive Proclamation

Rapid City, South Dakota
Office of the Mayor & City Council

- Whereas:** It is right and proper to give special recognition to our outstanding citizens; and
- Whereas:** March 3, 2009 marks the sixty-sixth anniversary of the miraculous escape of Jack van der Geest from Buchenwald concentration camp.
- Whereas:** During World War II, Buchenwald held an estimated 238,980 prisoners. Jack van der Geest survived the death camp of the Holocaust by hiding beneath the dead bodies of other prisoners. He is the only living person of the eight known escapees, who can speak to the unbelievable strength and faith of the people who endured the unspeakable actions of the Holocaust; and
- Whereas:** Today we honor Jack van der Geest on this the sixty-sixth anniversary of his reported death at Buchenwald. We are proud that Jack now calls Rapid City, South Dakota his home and that he is able to share his powerful experiences with us. As Americans we must never forget the terrible hardships and injustice of Buchenwald and stand together to make certain that it never again exists.

Now Therefore I, Alan Hanks, Mayor of Rapid City, South Dakota on behalf of the City Council of Rapid City, hereby proclaim March 3, 2009 as Jack van der Geest Day in Rapid City, South Dakota in honor of this most worthy citizen.

Alan Hanks, Mayor
Rapid City, South Dakota

