

Ingeborg Syllm-Rapoport, 102, finally awarded Ph.D. that Nazis denied her
by [Jaleesa Jones](#) in the [July 8, 2015](#) issue

When Ingeborg Syllm-Rapoport first submitted her doctoral thesis on diphtheria in 1938, she was barred from completing her oral defense under Hitler's Nuremberg Race Laws, which disenfranchised citizens with Jewish ancestry.

The retired, 102-year-old neonatologist got another chance when officials at the University Clinic in Hamburg-Eppendorf learned of the discriminatory case and formally invited her to finish her Ph.D.

Syllm-Rapoport, whose vision is now declining, worked with friends to mine online research and prepare for the examination.

"I was very excited during the exam and could have done better, if I had been just a little younger," Syllm-Rapoport told NBC News.

But the Berlin resident was apparently still sharp enough to defend her work successfully. She received her official certificate in Hamburg on June 9, surrounded by friends, family, and former students.

"I am happy and proud, but this is not about me," Syllm-Rapoport said. "This is in commemoration of those who did not make it this far." —*USA Today*

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