

Sonia was a Holocaust survivor, a poet, an educator and a human rights activist. Born in Krakow, Poland, she and her late sister, Blanca, survived the Krakow Ghetto and five Nazi camps, including Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen. Sonia was the co-founder and Education Director of The Holocaust Center, Boston North.

Through her everyday actions, her written and spoken word, she encouraged and inspired her audiences. Sonia hoped for a world “where there are no more victims nor victimizers and, above all, no more bystanders.”

Sonia, who began writing poetry at age twelve, remained undaunted by a Nazi edict banning Jews from owning pencils or paper. She simply continued writing in her head. Day after day in the concentration camps, Sonia memorized the words of a young girl coming of age in a senseless, brutal society.

It was not until she reached the Displaced Persons camps in 1945, however, that Sonia had the luxury to write down her words. 40 years later, she found the courage to reread her poignant testimony, and recognized that her unique experience harbors universal lessons for today. In her reconstructed diary, Sonia dared to resurrect her memories of the Holocaust solely because she believed in people’s capacity for good.

For more than 30 years, she spoke to thousands of students about the dangers of bystander behavior, the nature of hatred, and the power of the individual to create positive change.

Sonia received the Doctor of Humane letters Honoris Causa from Salem State College and has been recognized with numerous international awards, including the ADL Interfaith Award, Recognition by the United States Congress, Hadassah Myrtle Wreath Award, B’nai B’rith Woman of the Year, Facing History and Ourselves Humanity Award, and many more.

She served as a Presidential Appointee to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Council, and was most recently honored as “A Woman of Courage” by Temple Ner Tamid of Peabody and the Holocaust Center Boston North.

She wrote *The Poetry of Sonia Schreiber Weitz* and the memoir, *I Promised I Would Tell*. Sonia was proud to help organize the Holocaust Legacy Partner Project of the Holocaust Center Boston North. This project assures that survivors’ testimonies will be shared with current and future generations.

As Sonia often remarked, “Who better to speak about light after darkness than me?” And as a student who read her memoir wrote, “If she can make it then I can too.”

Sonia was married to long-time Peabody physician, Mark Weitz. Her children Don Weitz, Sandy Weitz, and Andi Vilnai and husband Nachman, grandchildren Tal and wife Rona, Raz, and Dar Vilnai, family, friends, and professional associates will remember a woman of valor, strength, determination, and immense love.