

Gordon College community mourns the death of Holocaust survivor Sonia Weitz

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Photos



File Photo by Nicole Goodhue Boyd

Sonia Weitz.

By Anonymous

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Sonia Weitz was only 11 years old when she and her family were herded into the death camps of Nazi Germany nearly 65 years ago. Of the 84 members of her family sent, she and her sister Blanca were the sole survivors. Eventually, the two young women made their way to Peabody, Mass.

Weitz, a poet, author and friend of Gordon College, died Wednesday, June 23, from cancer. For 29 years in a row — most recently last October — she returned to offer students a glimpse of her experiences in what became known on campus as both a powerful and personal annual lecture. The Holocaust survivor of five different Nazi death camps, including the infamous Auschwitz in her native land of Poland, spoke frequently about her experiences throughout the region and often included readings of her poetry.

“Year after year Sonia Weitz’ story left a profound impact upon Gordon students,” said Dr. Marvin Wilson, professor of biblical and theological studies. “In a world again confronted with genocide, the lessons Sonia drew from the Holocaust years must not be forgotten and the thousands who heard her story were deeply affected by her courage.”

Each time she came to campus, Weitz recalled her times in Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, and other death camps, reflecting on how those experiences shaped her life and the lives of countless others. Three years ago, the college presented Weitz with a certificate of honor to commend her long history of sharing her story with Gordon College students.

The author of “I Promised I Would Tell,” Weitz was also the co-founder of the Boston North Holocaust Center in Peabody. She was awarded the State of Israel New Life Award and was recognized by the U.S. Congress as well as named “Woman of the Year” by B’nai B’rith — one of the world’s largest and oldest Jewish human rights, community action and humanitarian organizations. Appointed by former President George W. Bush, Weitz served on the United States Holocaust Memorial Council for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum — America’s national institution for the documentation, study, and interpretation of Holocaust history.

“The world has lost an important voice for justice but we are confident her legacy is far reaching,” said Gordon President R. Judson Carlberg. “Though we mourn with her family and friends, we — like anyone who met her — know how privileged we were to know her. We are grateful for the enormous impact Sonia had on our community.”

A video podcast of her 2008 visit to Gordon is available [here](#).

Submitted by Gordon College.

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