



Joseph Rubinstein

July 18, 2022

Joe Rubinstein, Oldest Holocaust Survivor in Colorado, Passes Away at the Age of 101

Love Life. Love God. Love each other. That's all there is."— Joe Rubinstein

I cannot imagine a world without Joe, but thankfully his life, legacy, and lessons will live on through the example he set for us all. Joe gave us an inspirational map on how to deal with adversity."

Holocaust survivor Joe Rubinstein passed away peacefully in Loveland, Colorado, on July 18, 2022. Joe was the oldest known Holocaust survivor in the state.

Icek Jakub Rubinsztein "Joe Rubinstein" was born on September 16, 1920 in Radom, Poland. After Germany invaded Poland, Joe and his family were sent to the Radom Ghetto in 1941.

Two weeks later, Joe was taken from the ghetto and sent to several concentration camps. Joe never saw his family again. His widowed mother, Reska, his older brother, Dawid, Joe's identical twin, Chaim, his younger brother, Abram, and younger sister, Laja, were all believed murdered at the Treblinka Death camp following the "liquidation" of the Radom Ghetto in 1942.

“It is my deepest prayer,” said Nancy Sprowell Geise, author of the award-winning book about his life, *Auschwitz #34207: The Joe Rubinstein Story*, “that at this moment Joe is in the loving embrace of his beloved family. Although he survived decades without them, they never were far from his thoughts and heart. Even at the age of 101, Joe could not speak of them without weeping.”

Throughout his life, Joe defied the odds. He went on, not only to survive several of the most notorious Nazi concentration camps, including over two years at Auschwitz/Birkenau, but to live a long, productive, and joy-filled life. Immigrating to the United States in 1949, with his new bride, Irene, Joe would become one of New York City’s leading shoe designers, working for such iconic companies as Korkease Shoes, Inc., Herbert Levine Shoes, Nina Shoe, Gelbrow Shoe Corporation, and later in California for Sbicca of California and Cherokee.

Joe’s philosophy of living so long: “Eat right, exercise every day and help each other. That’s what I did.”

Geise said, “For nearly 70 years Joe never told anyone about his story because he did not think anything good come of it. Since the book about his life was published, Joe was so touched by the many letters and feedback he got from people around the world telling him that if he found a way to live a joy-filled life after losing all he did, then they knew they could find a way to face their troubles.”

Geise is grateful that Joe finally decided to tell his story so that his family of origin will never be forgotten. “He became a voice for those who did not survive the Holocaust, those who did not survive to share their stories.”

“He was an inspiration to so many,” Geise said. “He will continue to be an

inspiration for future generations about not giving in to despair and not turning to darkness. Instead, Joe saw the best in people. He lived into the idea of how we each have a choice in how we respond to adversity. Joe chose joy.”

Joe is survived by his wife, Irene, of 74 years, a son, daughter-in-law, three grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

On his 100th birthday, the City of Fort Collins, Colorado, declared the day “Joe Rubinstein Day.”

Geise said, "Joe told me in one of the last conversations I had with him, that every day he thanks God that he is alive, but that now he is ready to go home.

I believe that Joe is home now, in the loving embrace of his family. His once tears of sorrow have been replaced with tears of pure joy. Tears that Joe will never want wiped away.”

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Tribute Wall

“ I read Joe’s story for the first time several years ago, afterwards contacting the author & sending a message through her to Joe, about how deeply his story had touched & affected me. I had a visceral need to let him know that someone who had read his story, but never met him, felt such love for him & empathy over what he endured. I had to let him know that there were people, strangers across the globe, who—after learning of his experiences—were so happy & grateful that he survived to tell his story. He responded through Ms Geise with warmth, wisdom, & hope, which still held some undertones of fear that maybe his story wasn’t enough or perhaps could never be understood. Over the next year or two, I communicated with the author about Joe & shared a couple of messages with him through her. On his 100th birthday, I lovingly & happily crafted a handmade card for him & mailed it to him. At one point, the author & I had discussed the possibility of Joe speaking at the university where I was working at the time; unfortunately, that plan wasn’t pursued because of my own busy schedule & my leaving the university soon afterwards. This has always weighed heavily on me when I recall now how much I wished to bring that plan to fruition at the time, but reading Joe’s obituary today—the first time I have read it since his passing—& recalling his words & his advice for generations after him, I have a newfound comfort realizing that I have, & can continue, to facilitate others hearing his story simply by sharing it myself. I can tell people I know & people I meet about the book of his Holocaust experience, share & relate my own small, personal communications with Joe via Ms. Geise & the beautiful impression they have & left on me. In this way, I do not need to feel heavy for not having been able to organize any speaking event, but I can feel good knowing that I have not let Joe down or other survivors like him, by educating others, even the most casual settings, & keeping his memory alive along with the awareness & memory of all that transpired during WWII; the atrocities that must not be forgotten, so as never to be repeated, & the beautiful lives, like Joe’s, that continued afterwards & inspired so much hope, amazement, love, & gratitude in the 21st century. In remembrance of Joe, & all victims & survivors of the Holocaust,

your stories will never be forgotten.

Love,

Christina M. -California, United States

Christina M - August 21, 2024 at 07:33 AM



“ *Joseph Rubinstein*

October 25, 2022 at 06:14 PM