

ירשה

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# HERITAGE

The Journal of THE JEWISH ARCHIVES & HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF EDMONTON & NORTHERN ALBERTA

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## 2011 Maccabi Games

Springfield, Mass. 2011. Goalie: Jordan Sosnov. Front row L-R: Samuel Bobroff, Teyvn Shadlyn, Levi Sonego, Noah Lew. Back row L-R: Josh Dogor, Matan Tzur, Jack Sorokin, Aiden Raff. Photo courtesy of Lisa Miller.

**Congratulations** to JAHSENA Board Member Netta Phillet, who also received the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal this Spring! Since 2006, Netta has been the Executive Director of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education & Action after serving as Treasurer and Vice-President. Netta is active in different capacities at Beth Shalom Synagogue and the Women's League for Conservative Judaism, locally and internationally, is a life-member of Hadassah-WIZO and was a founding member of the Phoenix Multifaith Society for Harmony. For 30 years she has been a sister in the Arab/Jewish Women's Peace Coalition. Much of the focus of her volunteer life is inter/intra faith dialogue and the place of women in religious ritual and observance. Mazel Tov on this prestigious award!





## From your President

MICHAEL PAULL

June, 2023

I have now been President of JAHSENA for six months, and I have enjoyed learning about what we do. The more I learn, the more I realize how important JAHSENA is to the Edmonton Jewish community.

I have learned that our day-to-day duties involve collecting, organizing, categorizing, cataloging, and preserving our Jewish history and sharing this information with our members.

In addition, we need to fundraise, apply for grants, expand membership and to create awareness of JAHSENA in the greater community.

Gerry Emas has joined our Oral History team. He is donating his time and skill to filming our Oral histories to enhance our audio collection. Karen Hering and her volunteers are getting closer to completing our book catalogue so we can have the collection online for public access. Cory Felber is still

working with us and the Chevra Kadisha to continually update and maintain the names of everyone buried at the Jewish Cemetery. She is the reason there is a plot location catalogue at the cemetery.

Debby Shoctor continues to volunteer on a regular basis assisting Carly with archiving. Even though Colleen Paull has retired, she has not stepped away entirely and comes in periodically.

Carly Heffner, our Archivist is starting to understand that the job is a never ending, diverse, exciting, challenging journey that has so many potential possibilities that we can talk for hours about all the things that should be done, can be done, and will be done. We are planning what we can accomplish for the months ahead.

We have started planning our October AGM and discussing this year's speaker. I am excited for our members to come and see what we have been doing and seeing our plans to keep JAHSENA a vital part of our community.

Lastly, a big thank you to Victor and Irene at Poster Tech for our incredible banners. Having them at our Doors Open exhibit was a fantastic addition.

### JAHSENA Recent Acquisitions

Judy Goldsand has donated items from her own personal collection, including a couple DVDs and an Edmonton Hadassah WIZO Council "Bits of Broadway" program from March 17, 1963.

Adam Cantor donated two boxes belonging to his late father, Paul Cantor z'l, including a collection of documents, photographs, and scrapbooks.

Cory Felber has donated two boxes of papers, photos, and newspaper clippings relating to her family and various other

Jewish organizations. Included in her donation, is several articles, photos, and personal correspondence from her father's experiences in WWII.

Marcia Bercov donated Negev Gala Programs and a Camp BB Staff photograph.

A collection of papers, photos and newspaper clippings belonging to the late Rabbi Louis Ginsburg, donated by the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta (JHSSA).

*Kindly contact our office if you have any questions about donating items.*

# HERITAGE

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of Edmonton and  
Northern Alberta

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## Archivist's Report

CARLY HEFFNER

JAHSENA has been keeping me busy with reference requests, grant writing, and processing donations in addition to the day-to-day admin work. I am excited to be part of this year's annual Open Doors Historic Festival with a display and program presentation at our offices on July 3rd, 5th and 7th.

Recently, we had our first U of A co-op student Paula Kirman, who was with us for three weeks in May. In that time, she provided assistance in various tasks including policy development, records management, and library tech ser-

vices. It was great having her here!

I recently attended the Archives Society of Alberta 2023 Conference. The presentations were very informative with the best part being meeting other Archivists from all over the province. There were tutorials on how to manage materials with heavy subject matter as well as how to make additions and revisions to Alberta on Record. ASA is a great organization, always lending support to us when needed.

Over the last six months it has become more and more evident how incredible our collection is. We have one of the biggest Jewish archives and libraries in Western Canada. Colleen, Debby and Karen have created systems and maintained our collection in a sophisticated way, making my job easy and allowing me to seize opportunities for outreach, future programming and creating better accessi-

bility. It is plain to see what a treasure JAHSENA is. We have the content, and now with the pandemic being mostly behind us, it's time to come together and enjoy it!

There are a number of exciting plans for workshops and programs in archiving personal collections, genealogy, and research which we hope to make available for the 2023/2024 year. I am excited to teach learning tools and organize speakers that will allow our collection to be more accessible for research, personal enrichment, and enjoyment.

If you have any friends or family members who are interested in genealogy, research, and Jewish history, please let them know about us! We would love to have them!

### Donation Cards

JAHSENA has donation cards with historic pictures on them available for purchase. Mark your simchas by making a donation to JAHSENA. Contact the office for more details at 780-489-2809.

We have received the following donations:

### GET WELL

To Howard Davidow from the President, Board and Staff of JAHSENA, Michael and Colleen Paull.

To Michael Paull for a speedy recovery from Michael & Stephanie Hendin, Blair & Rivie Bondar, Linda Silverman, and Abe and Karen Hering.

### MAZEL TOV

To Debby Shoctor, Gillian Horwitz, and Netta Phillet for receiving the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal, from Abe and Karen Hering.

To Howard Sniderman for receiving the Distinguished Service Award from Abe and Karen Hering.

To Norman Hanson on his special birthday from Abe and Karen Hering.

### SYMPATHY

To Cantor David Mannes and Sandra Gitter-Mannes and family on the loss of their Mother, Grandmother and Great Grandmother Sherry Mannes, from Michael and Colleen Paull.

To Judy Goldsand on the passing of her husband Dr. George Goldsand, z'l from Linda Moss Hilford and Bonny Moss Golub, and Michael and Colleen Paull.

To Farrel Shadlyn and Lisa Miller and family on the death of their mother, grandmother, and great grandmother, Member Rosalie Rubin Shadlyn z'l, from Debby and Marshall Shoctor and Family, and Michael and Colleen Paull.

# Building our Jewish Youth through Maccabi

by Lisa Miller



Lisa Miller

In 2003, my cousin Michael took a girls soccer team to the Maccabi Games in St. Louis Missouri. Michael's daughter, my daughter and Gaby Sonogo's

daughter all played soccer on the team. I attended to cheer on the team and at some point during those games I looked at Gaby and said "you know we'll be doing this all over again in a few years time, when our sons are age eligible."

That time was 2011. Michael retired and I stepped up as Delegate Head (DH) to organize a boys' team for soccer. We found some other kids, including a contingent from Winnipeg, and off to Springfield, Mass., we went. Springfield has a Jewish community similar to Edmonton, of about 5,000 Jewish population.

Yet they had a campus with a JCC, day school and two synagogues nearby and a seniors' home. It was an aging community, and so many of our kids billeted with families who didn't have kids participating, but rather were grandparents. They couldn't do enough for our kids (eat more, wash their smelly uniforms) and take them everywhere. On the field, or in the gyms, our kids played hard, but it wasn't until the final day of competition when the boys' soccer team didn't qualify for playoffs, and turned to the alternate sport, track – that they really excelled. One of our older boys was so good in track events, he was told he should apply for a scholarship.

In 2012 we travelled to Memphis, Tennessee, site of the very first JCC Maccabi games, 30 years earlier. Again, soccer was the sport of choice, and we had a boys' team and a couple of girls also signed up. At these games, if you don't have enough athletes to form your own team, they as-

sign you to a "mixed" team, made up of kids from several of the smaller communities. One of our athletes was just recovering from an emergency appendectomy. He couldn't suit up but came for the experience. The JCC Maccabi games are an athletic event – but they're so much more. There is a day of "caring and sharing" in the community. There are medals for *Ruchmanus* (sportsmanship on or off the field of play), and of course many social events for the kids. It's quite an eye opener for our Edmonton delegation to be with 1,000-1,500 Jewish kids from the US, Mexico, Israel and sometimes other countries as well.

In 2013 we traveled to Austin, Texas, a city often compared to Edmonton -- State capital, big university, river meandering through the city. This year we formed an Alberta team, which comprised of a boys soccer team of players from Edmonton and Calgary, and a young woman



Memphis, Tennessee, 2012. Front row L-R: Samuel Bobroff, Tevyn Shadlyn, Jake Kondor and assist. coach Sean Sonogo. Second row L-R: Jack Sorokin, Jordan Sosnov, Aiden Raff, ?, Levi Sonogo, Daniel Barker Rothschild, Michaela Friedland, Gaby Sonogo, coach, Deb Sonogo, Chaperone, Lisa Miller, Delegate head. Back row L-R: Matan Tzur and Josh Dogor. Photo courtesy of Lisa Miller.



Austin, Tex. 2013. Front row L-R: Aiden Raff, Lydia Samis, Riley Shadlyn (Toronto, but my nephew and played for the Edmonton team), Berard twins, Tamir and Doron from Calgary. Middle row L-R: Deb Sonogo, Chaperone, Jordan Sosnov, Daniel Likver (Calgary), Tevyn Shadlyn, Levi Sonogo, Lisa Miller, delegate head. Back row L-R: Gaby Sonogo, Coach, Jack Sorokin, Matan Tzur, Sean Sonogo, Asst. Coach. Photo courtesy of Lisa Miller.

who played tennis. The boys often came to cheer on Lydia in her tennis matches, while she cheered on the soccer team. These games were noteworthy for the heat. Soccer games were broken into four quarters rather than two halves to allow the kids to hydrate. Four of our boys billeted with a local newspaper columnist, who took a real liking to our kids. He showed up at all their games, even wrote a story in the Austin newspaper complete with a photo of my son, Tevyn with his head in a bucket of ice, trying to cool down after a soccer game.

We traveled to motor city, Detroit in 2014. The Jewish community there is based in the suburb of West Bloomfield, the JCC is there, and the kids were billeted there. That year we introduced Artsfest to our teens and had two participants to go along with our Alberta athletes. The JCCA movement realized that not all teens are athletically inclined and may prefer the arts. In our case, we had a young woman sign up for dance, which entailed a series of workshops, ending with a final show with

the other arts fields such as musical theatre and rock band. Artsfest allows kids older than 16 take part, and my son Tevyn was now too old for sports, so he signed up for cooking, where he made everything from knishes to pizza to Challah. His soccer friends dropped by after a game, just as the pizza was coming out of the oven.

In summation – did our Edmonton and Alberta kids finish first in their sports endeavours at any of these games – no. But coming from two relatively small prairie cities, did they gain an appreciation for these larger Jewish communities, and what they have to offer? I think so. I think that their participation broadened their awareness of being a Jew and of *tzedakah* (giving back). For me, it was wonderful to see our kids



Detroit, MI, 2014. L-R: Noah Campbell (soccer), Karin Vaisbein (dance artfest) Lydia Samis (tennis) Levi Sonogo (soccer) Tevyn Shadlyn (culinary, artsfest), Lisa, Delegate head. Photo courtesy of Lisa Miller.

respectful of their billets, in fact often the billets were the highlights of their trips. It was also gratifying to see some of our Jewish youth, who are not active in our community, step up and become more involved here upon their return to Edmonton.

## Maccabi Games 2023

by Marit Abrams



Marit Abrams

As summer approaches, Team Alberta is excited to be participating in two locations of the 2023 Maccabi games. There is a group of eight going to Israel, chaperoned by Chloe Soibelman, who will have a week full of sports followed by a

tour of the country, and I am taking 11 teens to Fort Lauderdale, Florida. For those who don't already know, the Maccabi Games are an Olympic-style sporting event held in the U.S. every year. It is not just about the sports, there are other activities, including Teen Time for those in-between games, run by Schlichtot from Israel, an evening planned by the teen's host family, as well as a JCC Cares Project, which is a volunteer project at the Games designed to remind the participants of the importance of giving back to the community that is opening their doors to thousands of people. A special part of this year's

games is that Maccabi is bringing a Delegation from the Ukraine, and our volleyball girls are lucky to have some of these girls on their team! It's exciting that this program is growing and becoming better-known in our community, as it is a great opportunity. I'm excited that for many of our participants this is their first Maccabi games. This should be a great experience for everyone, and the countdown is on. If you know a teen who might be interested in this program next year, keep an eye out in the Fall for our advertisements as limited spots fill up quickly!

# My Maccabi Years

by Alexa Steiner



Alexa Steiner

My own Maccabi journey began in 2003, when I was part of the 16U Girls' soccer team that Michael Paul took to compete in St. Louis, Missouri. The following year, I played volleyball in Rockville, Maryland, and then in 2005 I played soccer again in Minneapolis, Minnesota. My experience as a Maccabi athlete was incredible – I will never forget the feeling of marching into the opening ceremonies, carrying a Canadian flag, alongside some of my childhood best friends. I saw the most Jews I had ever seen in one place, and I experienced one of the greatest feelings of belonging and peoplehood that one could experience in a lifetime. In 2011, I got to revisit the Maccabi magic when I helped coach a U16 Boys' soccer team from Edmonton at the Games in Springfield, Massachusetts.

I was lucky enough to experience that Maccabi magic five more times as a volunteer Delegation Head from 2014 to 2018.

## 2014 - Detroit

I was living in Calgary, and had been chatting with Lisa Miller, who was the Edmonton Delegation Head at the time, about potentially reviving the program there. With the support of the Calgary JCC, I ended up taking a boys' soccer team down to Detroit that summer – the first delegation that Calgary had sent in

almost 20 years. The boys won a medal, which was awesome and unexpected for a tiny delegation!

## 2015 - Fort Lauderdale

I was back in Edmonton, and riding off the fun that was 2014 in Detroit. I took over the program from Lisa Miller, and took six teens down to Fort Lauderdale, Florida for the Maccabi Games & Artsfest, alongside chaperone Ben Feldman. Two soccer players, one swimmer, a volleyball player, a dancer, and a culinary artist traveled from Edmonton that year. The community in Fort Lauderdale knows how to host, and that summer did not disappoint. From a giant party/evening event at the Hard Rock hotel to escaping the classic south Florida mid-afternoon downpours – a lot of fun was had all around.



Jamie Sonego and Alexa Steiner, Stamford, CT c. 2016. Photo courtesy of Alexa Steiner.



Miami, FL c. 2017. Photo courtesy of Alexa Steiner.

### 2016 - Stamford

In 2016, I worked with the JCC in Calgary to combine the two cities to be the Alberta Delegation. It made sense that our two small communities would join forces and share the experience of sending teens to Maccabi. That summer, 12 athletes and artists from Calgary and Edmonton traveled to Stamford, Connecticut with me and two other chaperones, Joel Zimmerman and Jamie Sonego. The community in Stamford is small and mighty, and our teens had incredible host families that summer – many of whom stayed in touch for years following, and a couple who still send me holiday cards. The warmth of that Jewish community was tangible, and our kids came home with the best stories of late-night snacks and trips into Manhattan during free time on the weekend.

### 2017 - Miami

The 2017 Maccabi Games & Artsfest were held in Miami, Florida. Continuing on as the Alberta Delegation, 13 teens had the opportunity to participate that summer in the sport or art of their choice, chaperoned by me, Jamie Sonego

and Daniel Birnbaum. One of the more memorable experiences of the week was the Artsfest final showcase – Edmonton had five artists participate in the showcase, from improv to musical theatre, our artists stole the show.

### 2018 - Orange County

In 2018, we took the 16 teens down to Orange County, California early, for a special pre-weekend for our little Alberta Delegation. Jamie Sonego, Joel Zimmerman and Barry Pechet helped chaperone the delegation that year. Maccabi typically starts on a Sunday, so we traveled on Friday for a weekend filled with kayaking & paddle boarding, exploring Laguna Beach, Havdalah, a boat cruise, and more. The week of Maccabi kicked off on Sunday with an incredible opening ceremony at Santa Ana Stadium and continued with competitions, workshops, a beach party at Newport Dunes, and a closing party at the beautiful Jewish Community Center in Irvine. The OC Jewish community created an incredible experience for the 2000+ teens there that year.

Throughout my five years as a volunteer Delegation Head, over 40 Jewish kids from Alberta participated in this global experience, had the chance to meet life-long friends (as did I), stayed with incredible host families, and got a sense of Jewish peoplehood in multiple unique communities. This program, a truly global Jewish experience, is extremely valuable for teens from small communities like Edmonton and Calgary. The week-long event provides an opportunity for youth to get a glimpse into the larger Jewish world, and feel a sense of belonging, fun, camaraderie and Jewish citizenship. There really is nothing quite like standing with 2000+ Jewish people at the JCC Maccabi opening ceremonies with the sound of Hatikvah blasting through a stadium.

I have made lifelong friends through my Maccabi experiences and cherish the memories I have of being an athlete, a coach, and a Delegation Head. JCC Maccabi is a unique and vital part of Jewish Youth Programming in Edmonton that will hopefully be a program offered in our community for many years to come.



Orange County, CA c. 2018. Photo courtesy of Alexa Steiner.



Sean Sonego (centre) was one of three captains of the Canada U16 boys soccer team and the only player from Alberta who had made the Canadian Maccabiah team in 2009. His team ended up losing to Israel in the semi-finals. Sonego photo.

## Pan Am Maccabi Games 2003

by Michael Paull

In 2003 I took my first group of kids to the Maccabi games in St. Louis. I had an interesting time as the delegation head. I had the opportunity in the same year to see what it was like to be an athletic participant with the Pan Am Maccabi games in Santiago Chile.

I have played soccer for many years and in my mid 40's felt that the goalie was the safest place for me to play. My understanding is that a soccer field is 105x68 meters in dimension, the average number of shots on net are 6-10 per game and the surface is a very soft and flexible bit of grass.

Not really reading all about the games as it was stated for seniors, I was asked to be the goalie for the Canadian team. The game was not soccer but futsal.

The field is 40x20 meters, with the average number of shots between 30-40 per game. The playing surface is on a hard synthetic ground, that will take off your skin if you fall on it. To add to my innocence, "seniors" meant over the age of 18 and to top off the adventure, I had never played futsal before.

There were only four teams involved: Chile, Mexico, Argentina, and Canada. The average age was 25, and this was a favorite sport for these countries.

The experience was amazing for the Canadians. To be part of an international sporting event with powerhouse countries competing was a real honor for me to be a part of. We came in a



Michael Paull, front middle, played goalie for the Canadian Team, the only Edmontonian, in Santiago, Chile c. 2003. Photo courtesy of Michael Paull.

very respectable 4th place, and we gave the fans a lot to cheer and laugh about as well.

Who knew Jewish adults could play soccer (futsal) so well?

## Maccabi Memories: Israel 2005

by Ariana Shadlyn



Ariana Shadlyn

I remember standing on the painted line at centre field receiving our bronze medals alongside my teammates, and in front of friends, family, fans, and my mother and father. The best way to describe the feeling I had that day was a combination of incredible pride mixed with exhaustion, and a bit of humble defeat.

Sure, we "won" bronze, but the way that came about was because Team USA and Team Mexico were the only other competitors, and they played for gold and silver!

First held in Israel in 1932, the Maccabi Games are known to some as the "Jewish Olympics." The Maccabi Games are one of the largest sporting tournaments in the world gauged by the number of competitors and are open to Jewish athletes from around the world, and Israeli athletes of any religion.

Playing soccer for Team Canada in 2005, the 17th Maccabiah Games in Israel, was an incredible summer experience that left a lasting mark on my life. The sheer magnitude of the games and events was unlike any sporting competition I had ever experienced. The privilege and honour I felt representing my country in an international tournament filled every playing moment with unparalleled excitement and pride – I was also the only player representing Western Canada, which of course filled my cowboy boots with joy!

Stepping onto the pitch, clad in red and white, I felt an overwhelming sense of

*Continued on page 12*

# The Toby and Saul Reichert Annual Holocaust Lecture Series

by Dr. Eric Schloss



Dr. Eric Schloss

The annual Toby and Saul Reichert Holocaust lecture series, endowed by the Reicherts and sponsored by The Wirth Institute of Austrian and Central European studies at the University of Alberta was instituted in 2003. The genesis of this important lecture series is unusual and surprising. Around 2002, a local retired ophthalmologist, Dr. Bill Pearce, came to see me in my office and said that he wanted to see the formation of a Holocaust lecture series with a particular focus on students, whom he felt had no knowledge of the Holocaust. My first thought was, "Why have we not already thought about this?" I told him that I thought it was a very good idea, but that we would likely require a sponsor. Later that afternoon he came back and told me he had found a sponsor, The Wirth Institute! I went to visit the director, Dr. Franz Szabo, a professor of history and a colleague of Dr. Tova Yedlin and was reassured that they had a solid interest in sponsoring such a series. Dr. Szabo was eventually succeeded by U. of A. history professor Dr. Joseph Patrouch, who along with his wife Dr. Felice Lifshitz (also a U. of A. professor of History and Women's Studies, and Past-President of Temple Beth Ora), have frequently given informative talks on Jewish topics to the Edmonton Jewish Community.

The lecture series ended up appropriately being named in honour of its generous donors Toby and Saul Reichert. Saul was the only one of his family to survive the Holocaust and endured the Lodz Ghetto and Auschwitz-Birkenau, eventually arriving in Edmonton on the Canadian Jewish Orphan Project in January 1948. He subsequently became a successful restaurateur and businessman in Edmonton and was married to Toby for 65 years until she passed away in 2021. They were also blessed with four talented daughters. Saul was the honoree of the Jewish National Fund (JNF) in Edmonton at his Negev Dinner in 1990. At Dr. Pearce's insistence, Dr. Rudolf Vrba was invited to be the inaugural speaker in this series, which was hosted by Toby and Saul at their popular Teddy's restaurant.

Dr. Rudolf Vrba (1924-2006), whose original name was Walter Rosenberg, was deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp from his native Slovakia as a teenager in 1942. In both Auschwitz and Birkenau, he worked in a special slave labour unit, handling the property of those who had been gassed (the unit was known as "Kanada") where he learned a great deal about the layout and activities in the camp. Seeing the massive collection of personal effects and valuables of victims, he was convinced there was a major economic factor involved, intended to benefit Germany and the Reich. Dr. Vrba also committed to memory all the convoys of Jews and their numbers that he had witnessed

arriving in Auschwitz, and their fate. Eventually, along with fellow Slovak inmate Alfred Wetzlar, they escaped Auschwitz in early April 1944 and managed to reach their native Slovakia, where they presented their evidence to the Slovakian Jewish Council.



Toby and Saul Reichert - Public Domain.

The 33-page Vrba/Wetzlar report on Slovakia (originally printed in German) became a historic first, containing first-hand knowledge of the detailed activities and atrocities in Auschwitz. The report was also translated into Hungarian, however Jewish representatives in Hungary such as Rudolf Kasztner and Joel Brand did not act immediately on the information, leading to the ensuing mass deportation of Hungarian Jews who perished in Auschwitz. The Pope and the U.S. government eventually had access to the report, which led to the eventual slow down of the activities at Auschwitz, but it took some time. The report was eventually accepted by Admiral Horthy, the Hungarian leader, leading to a slowdown in deportations, but they resumed after the complete Nazi takeover.

Vrba has been credited with saving approximately 200,000 Hungarian Jewish lives, but he was greatly disappointed that the Vrba/Wetzlar report (Auschwitz protocols) was not immediately acted on in Hungary. He had thought that once the true information was provided, the deportations would cease, but later it was evident that although the information became known to many, including the Vatican and allied countries, it was not universally or completely believed. Dr. Vrba finished the war fighting as a decorated partisan in the Czechoslovakian underground.

Dr. Rudolf Vrba died in Vancouver in 2006, just a few years after giving the first Toby and Saul Reichert Holocaust lecture in Edmonton. His legacy here has been perpetuated, particularly with a gift from Dr. Bill Pearce, who was responsible for establishing the Rudolf Vrba Holocaust Library in the Wirth Institute located in the Arts Building, University of Alberta. It and the JAHSENA collection of Holocaust materials are the only collections of their kind in Edmonton.

Jan T. Gross, a prominent US historian, wrote the book, "*Neighbours*" regarding a tragic slaughter of Jewish civilians in the small Polish town of Jedwabne in July 1941. He was the featured speaker at the Reichert Holocaust Lecture in 2007 and engendered anger from many members of the Edmonton Polish community. Dr. Gross was also highly criticized by the Polish government for stressing the complicity of the Polish people in the Holocaust.

Subsequently, University of Ottawa history professor, Jan Grabowski, has also engendered criticism from the Polish community and the Polish embassy in Ottawa in addition to more recent prob-

lems with the nationalist government in Poland. He gave the Reichert Holocaust Lecture in 2018 on Polish antisemitism and collaboration during the Holocaust. Professor Grabowski, whose father was a Holocaust survivor, was given the Yad Vashem International Book Prize in 2014 for, "*Hunt for the Jews: Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland*". The book was first published in Poland in 2011 and a revised and updated English language edition was provided in 2013. In 2016 a revised expanded edition was published in Hebrew by Yad Vashem. His main research and scholarship has been on the collaboration and participation of Polish citizens in the Holocaust.

The Polish government sued him for libel to stop further studies into the role Polish collaborators played in murdering Jews for the Nazis. He and a Polish sociologist, Barbara Engelking, were sued for their sixteen hundred page 2-volume study entitled, "*Night without End: The Fate of Jews in Selected Countries of Occupied Poland*". It examined nine areas of occupied Poland during the second world war where they discovered thousands of Jews who went into hiding and were betrayed or murdered by their Polish neighbours. The Polish government in recent years established a popular law to challenge research critical of Polish citizens' alleged participation in the killing of Jews by Nazi Germany. Poland's parliament voted in 2018 to make it illegal to blame the country for Holocaust crimes. This has engendered a great deal of controversy.

Grabowski maintains that the great majority of Jews in hiding in Poland during the Holocaust perished because of betrayal. They were denounced, seized, tied up, and delivered by local citizens to the Polish police or the German gendar-

merie. His claim that the Poles were responsible for the deaths, directly or indirectly of more than 200,000



Dr. Rudolf Vrba - Public Domain.

Jews has been criticized by others but he subsequently wrote that the exact number has not been able to be precisely determined. However, he believes that 60 to 90 percent of the 200,000 were due to acts by Poles. Dr. Grabowski has been boycotted by the Polish Canadian community and Polish groups have attempted to have him fired from his academic position, and he has even faced death threats. Polish scholars and scientists in 2017, through the Polish League Against Defamation, protested his work. Outside of Poland he has been supported by at least 180 Holocaust historians and historians of modern European history in addition to full support from the University of Ottawa.

The many other renowned Holocaust scholars who have given the Toby and Saul Reichert Holocaust Lecture include Christopher Browning, Dr. Michael Marrus, Dr. Deborah Dwork, Gerhardt Weinberg, Omar Bartov, Norman Naimark, Robert Paxton, Susan Zuccotti, Dr. Robert Jan Van Pelt, Mark Roseman, Dr. John Paul Himka and Wolf Gruner. The most recent lecture was given virtually on November 13, 2022, by Dr. Justin Cammy of Smith College Massachusetts, an Ottawa native, who translated the book, "*From the Vilna Ghetto to Nuremberg: Memoir and Testimony*", by the greatest Yiddish poet of the Holocaust,

Abraham Sutzkever. Edmontonian Paul Kagan had written a detailed memoir of the Vilna Ghetto where his entire family perished and he and his son Dr. Leon Kagan, a member of the Reichert Lecture Committee, attended an emotional reunion at Vilna in 1993 on the 50th anniversary of the liquidation of the ghetto.

Drs Dwork and Van Pelt collaborated on the complete history of Auschwitz in 1996 entitled "*Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present*," which won the National Jewish Book Award in the US. They subsequently collaborated on further books: "*Holocaust: A History*" (2002), and another volume in 2009 entitled, "*Flight from the Reich: Refugee Jews 1933-1946*." Prominent Canadian Holocaust scholar, Dr. Adara Goldberg, now at Clark University in New Jersey edited an anthology entitled, "*Agency in the Holocaust: Essays in Honour of Deborah Dwork*" (June 2020). Dr. Van Pelt, originally from the Netherlands, has served as a professor at the University of Waterloo, Ontario and is a Holocaust and architectural historian. He is a world-wide expert on the architecture of the Auschwitz concentration camp which he described in detail at his Reichert Lecture in 2014. With the aid of Dr. Michael Marrus (1941-2022) they were instrumental in the rebuilding and restoration of the Auschwitz-Birkenau campsite.

Another featured speaker in the Reichert Annual Holocaust Lecture series (2010) was Doris Bergen, who grew up in central Alberta and received her MA in modern European history in 1984 from the University of Alberta. She is of Mennonite background but developed an early interest in the Holocaust, focusing on issues such as religion, gender, and ethnicity. After receiving her PhD at the University of North Carolina, she became a professor

at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana where she specialized in 20th century German history with an emphasis on the Nazi era and the Holocaust. Dr. Bergen also had a research fellowship in 1997 at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Holocaust Institute at Northwestern University.

Although her focus was on the Jewish history of the Holocaust, she also became interested in other genocidal narratives involving the disabled, the Roma plus the additional involvement of Soviet prisoners of war and Polish civilians. In 2003 she published her first major book entitled, "*War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust*." She came to the University of Toronto in 2007 and was named Professor of Holocaust Studies, which is the only endowed chair in Canada in Holocaust history. Doris has won academic and human rights awards and became a member of the advisory committee for advanced Holocaust studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. In 2014 she was also named to the Canadian National Holocaust Monument design team led by Rabbi Daniel Friedman of Edmonton. The monument, designed by Daniel Libeskind, was awarded the 2018 American Institute of Architects Design Award. Dr. Bergen has contributed to other major books and articles on the Holocaust and in 1917 collaborated with well-known Canadian photographer Edward Burtynsky producing "*Chai*", a book featuring images from Holocaust sites in Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Lithuania, and Hungary. At times she had also advised the Reichert Annual Holocaust Lecture committee on recommended speakers for the series. Her book, "*The Holocaust: A New History*" was published in 2009.

An original member of the Reichert Holocaust lecture committee, Dr. John-Paul Himka, taught Holocaust history for many years at the



Professor Jan Grabowski  
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University of Alberta. He is of Ukrainian background, a native of Detroit, and received his PhD in history from the University of Michigan in 1977, after which he then came to the University of Alberta, becoming a full professor in 1992. His eventual retirement from the U of A was in 2014. He was the recipient of many teaching awards and received the J. Gordin Kaplan award for research excellence and was also co-editor of the Encyclopedia of the Ukraine for three volumes published at the University of Alberta through the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies. He gave lectures for many years on the Holocaust and much of his research was also focused on this area.

Dr. Himka in 1996 wrote an article entitled, "*Krakivs'ki Visti and the Jews, 1943: A Contribution to the History of the Ukrainian-Jewish Relations During the Second World War*." The article, published in the Journal of Ukrainian Studies, was based on earlier Ukrainian and language versions presented in 1991 in Kyiv and 1993 in Jerusalem at Ukrainian-Jewish relations conferences. He had studied much of the material his father-in-law had placed in the provincial archives. Dr. Himka also wrote articles on major antisemitic events taking place at this time including a chapter entitled, "*Ethnicity and the Reporting of Mass Murder; Krakivs'ki Visti*



Dr. John Paul Himka -  
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the *NKVD Murders of 1941 and the Vinnytsia Exhumation.* Examining how the Krakow nationalist newspaper reported on

two cases of mass violence by the Soviets. he wrote that the newspaper, *'Ethnicized Perpetrators and Victims'*, deliberately and misleadingly describing mainly Jewish identity to the former and the victims as almost exclusively Ukrainian.

After his retirement from the U of A in 2014, Dr. John Paul Himka, retained his major interest in Ukrainian nationalism and its culpability in the Holo-

caust, although he did state it was controversial. This led to his book, published in 2021, entitled, *"Ukrainian Nationalists and the Holocaust: OUN and UPA's Participation in the Destruction of Ukrainian Jewry 1941-1944."* He provided the annual Reichert Holocaust Lecture at the University of Alberta on this subject, October 29th, 2021. The two groups referred to were the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and its armed wing the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), who sought to secure a homeland for ethnic Ukrainians, focused on Volhynia and Galicia in eastern Poland and Bukovina in northern Romania. In 1939 Volhynia and Galicia came under Soviet control, followed by northern Bukovina a year later. Therefore, once WWII started, Ukrainian Nationalists and the Nazis shared a common enemy, the Soviet Union.

Dr. Himka stated that Ukrainian Nationalist's Nazi associations were obscured until relatively recently, as their own written history omitted accounts of their participation in the Holocaust and downplayed the connection with the Germans. Other Holocaust scholars also had minimized the role other nationalist forces played in the Holocaust, indicating that victim testimonies were essential to the narrative of the Holodomor famine of 1932-33. Professor Himka pointed out that Ukrainian scholars ignored similar sources when examining the history of the OUN and the UPA.

The Reichert Holocaust Lecture series is proud of its major contribution to Holocaust education in Edmonton and hopes to continue this necessary project indefinitely.

## Maccabi Memories

*Continued from page 8*

unity and camaraderie with my teammates. The spirited cheers from the crowd, championed by our red-faced and sweat-drenched Canadian family members enduring the 40-degree heat, amplified the intensity of each match and motivated us through our games. I've never experienced heat like that in my life, and I'm impressed we played two full halves of multiple round-robin games. We competed in tough matches against Team USA and Team Mexico, demonstrating our skills, agility, resilience, and unwavering teamwork. Although our hard work didn't end with a win, my team and I showed up to our medal ceremony proud of our efforts, and with huge smiles on our faces.

What I gained from my Maccabi experience goes beyond goals and final

scores. Through my experience, I discovered my own strength to go on my own to a new city and try out for a team where I knew no one; I found the ability and drive to run in the heat for 90+ mins a day; I forged bonds with fellow teammates and other athletes that cut through language and cultural barriers (some of whom I remain friends today); I got a piercing that my mother has still not forgiven me for; and I participated in various mitzvot to honour Israel.

It's been nearly 20 years since my experience playing in the Maccabi Games, and every now and then I think about how cool it was to be in Israel at age 15 playing soccer. I think I might have another Maccabi Games in

me -- here's looking ahead to the 2025 Maccabiah Games!



Team Canada, Maccabi Israel, 2005. Photo courtesy of Ariana Shadlyn.



Team Canada, Maccabi Israel, 2005. Photo courtesy of Ariana Shadlyn.