

# The Planned Giving Newsletter of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

# Generations



Legacy of Light Guardians Nat and Merryl Shaffir, Silver Spring, Maryland

“We want the Museum to continue being the voice for those who have none.”

—Nat Shaffir

Photo: Iliana Razuman

## From Generation to Generation

Nat Shaffir is keenly aware of the challenges of preserving Holocaust memory today and in the future. “I’m 81 years old and I’m one of the youngest survivors,” he said frankly. As he knows all too well, survivors and eyewitnesses of the Holocaust will not always be able to share their first-hand testimony themselves. That’s why Nat tells his story tirelessly to as many people as he can. “If five people in a group of 20 or 30 listen to me, I feel I’ve done a good job.”

As a Museum volunteer since 2010, Nat gives tours to police officers in the Law Enforcement and Society program, which teaches participants about their counterparts’ complicity in the Holocaust. He also speaks to school groups in and outside the Museum, recognizing the importance of educating young people and making the Holocaust relevant for them.

Deeply concerned about increasing Holocaust denial and the persistent

threat of genocide, Nat and his wife, Merryl, recently decided to take their support of the Museum to the next level. They set up a charitable gift annuity that benefits the Museum while providing a reliable source of income for life.

“We’re very committed to the Museum and feel that it’s important to support it in any way we can,” said Merryl, who works in the kosher catering industry in the metro DC area. “We want the Museum to continue being the voice for those who have none,” added Nat, who had no voice as a young boy growing up in Romania in the 1930s and ’40s.

Nat and his immediate family survived the Holocaust in the Iasi ghetto. His father performed forced labor laying new railroad tracks, while his mother cared for Nat and his two sisters. The Russians liberated the ghetto in the spring of 1945, and Nat’s family eventually immigrated to Israel.

Of the 33 family members who during the war had remained in Hungary, where Nat’s parents had grown up, only one survived after being deported to Auschwitz.

Nat is as committed to being an avid runner as he is to Holocaust education—running six miles a day, six days per week—something that gives him the mental fortitude to continue sharing his story. He started running marathons at age 65 and has competed in 12 of them. “Running gives me so much more strength to speak out and make sure things like this don’t happen again.”

Having lost so many loved ones during the Holocaust, Nat is extremely proud of his five children and 12 grandchildren, two of whom currently volunteer at the Museum. Together, he and Merryl are passing on their commitment both to the Museum and to Holocaust memory to the next generation.

## From the Director of Planned Giving and Endowments

Since our last issue of *Generations*, Congress enacted the *Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017*. Now that tax reform is a reality, you may be wondering what the new tax law means for you.

Generally speaking, there are a number of ways the new law positively impacts charitable giving:

1. The charitable income tax deduction was preserved, and the amount deductible—as a percent of a person's adjusted gross income—was increased for those making gifts of cash.
2. The tax benefits of giving from retirement plans and giving appreciated securities have not changed and will be more important than ever before.
3. Fewer people will be subject to the estate tax. This means you may find you will have more funds available for gifts to both loved ones and special charitable interests through your estate.

The law also did not change the rules for gifts that feature income for life and current tax benefits. Much has been discussed about how new higher standard deduction amounts will affect some people's ability to itemize deductions, particularly those who live in higher tax states.

For people who would like to boost their total deductions into the new itemizing level and support the Museum at the same time, consider funding a charitable gift annuity. For additional information on the benefits of this type of gift, please see the article on charitable gift annuities on page 3.

Everyone's personal tax circumstances are unique, so it is always wise to check with your advisors about the new tax law and how it affects you. We stand ready to help answer any questions about giving options you may be considering.

*George E. Hellman*

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George E. Hellman

## Family Philanthropy: Passing on Philanthropic Values to Successive Generations

Over the past seven decades, Holocaust survivors have bravely told their stories, bearing witness for their children, their grandchildren, and the world. Today the number of living members of the eyewitness generation diminishes each day. Soon it will be our task alone to ensure that their voices are never silenced, and their lessons are imparted to future generations.

How do we make sure that Holocaust memory remains a relevant, transformative force in perpetuity? We must reach out to our children—and our children's children—and share the values and ideals that are meaningful to us. We must encourage them to follow in our footsteps to safeguard truth and fulfill the promise of **Never Again**.

If you are a Legacy of Light Society member, we encourage you to share with your family your personal motivation for supporting the Museum. Tell them why you chose to make forever ensuring the Museum's ability to fulfill its sacred mission a part of your legacy.

And if you have a family foundation, involve the next generation as soon as possible. Whether you're the founding generation of your family's philanthropy or you're carrying on the legacy of your parents or grandparents, it's critical to help the next generation understand your family's history and values.

While everyone brings their own principles and personality to the role, each person is more likely to be invested in and care about the work if it is evident how their foundation connects with family history. We encourage multi-generational family members to visit the Museum together.

If you would like more information, please contact George E. Hellman at 202.488.6591 or [ghellman@ushmm.org](mailto:ghellman@ushmm.org).



From left: Eliana, Dan, Jen, Claire, and Dora Mendelson

## 25th Anniversary Mendelson Legacy Challenge Surpasses Goal

**THE MUSEUM'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY MENDELSON LEGACY CHALLENGE**—its third such legacy challenge—successfully concluded on February 15, 2018, with 139 outright and planned gifts (totalling \$37 million) directed to the Museum's endowment having been either received or identified and confirmed. These gifts enabled the Museum to qualify for the full \$1 million in matching funds. "The Museum has had an enduring impact on our family, and we wanted to make sure that we made an impact on the Museum," said Jen and Dan Mendelson, the Chevy Chase, Maryland, donors who sponsored the Legacy Challenge. "We are thrilled that the Museum is now part of our family's legacy through our own commitment to the endowment."

## In Memoriam

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum mourns the passing of the following Legacy of Light Society members:

Bernard Aptaker	Peter Kaufmann	Peggy Ogden
Inge Bailin	Rolland G. Lamensdorf	Lawrence G. Siegel
Dr. Carole Ruth Harris	Jacqueline Ludel	
Janet Hennessey	Linda Z. Oberlender	

# Supporting the Museum with Charitable Gift Annuities: Give and *Increase* Your Spendable Income

For many years, charitable gift annuities have been a special way for supporters to give to the Museum's endowment while also enjoying an additional source of retirement income and attractive tax benefits.

To establish your gift annuity, you simply transfer cash or other appropriate assets to the Museum. You and/or someone you name, such as your spouse, will then receive lifetime payments that never change in amount or frequency, regardless of changes in the economy.

The payment rate is determined at the time the gift annuity is funded and is based on the age(s) of the person or people receiving the payments when the gift annuity is created.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What can be used to fund a gift annuity?**

**A:** Many different assets can be used to fund a gift annuity to benefit the Museum's endowment. For instance, you may want to consider using:

1. **Cash or the proceeds** from the maturity of bonds, certificates of deposit, or other investments.

2. **Stocks or mutual funds that are worth more than you paid for them but yield little or no income.** Giving such assets can provide additional tax benefits. Because capital gains tax is not due at the time you fund a gift annuity for yourself and/or another person, this can be an effective way to make a gift while increasing your spendable income.

3. **Required withdrawals from retirement plans.** A gift annuity can offer a way to set aside more of these withdrawn funds to provide future income while reducing taxes that would otherwise be due.

**Q: Do I have to start receiving the payments now?**

**A:** No, under the terms of what is known as a "deferred gift annuity," you can fund a gift annuity today and receive payments starting at a future date of your choosing (a minimum one-year deferral period is required). This can be especially attractive because rates are typically higher when payments are delayed for a period of time.

**Q: Can I establish more than one gift annuity with the Museum?**

**A:** Yes. A number of our supporters have been so pleased with their annuities that they have chosen to create additional annuities over time. This can be a compelling option, as rates increase with age.

**Q: Will a gift annuity be part of my estate?**

**A:** Not generally. If payments are made to you only, none of the assets used to fund your gift annuity are included in your probate or taxable estate.

## NEW GIFT ANNUITY RATES JUST ANNOUNCED

As this issue of *Generations* went to press, the American Council on Gift Annuities released new higher rates that will apply to most gift annuities, **effective July 1, 2018**; these new rates reflect the first increase in over six years.

To learn more about the benefits of gift annuities for you and the Museum or to receive a personalized illustration, please contact a member of the Museum's Planned Giving and Endowments Team.

## Highlights of the New Tax Law

- The amount of charitable gifts of cash you are allowed to deduct was increased from 50% to 60% of one's adjusted gross income (AGI). Any unused deduction may be carried forward to provide savings for up to five succeeding years, offering tax savings in as many as six years for a single gift.
- The standard deduction was doubled and will result in decreased taxes for many Americans, leaving more income from which to make charitable gifts.
- There was no change in benefits associated with gifts of securities and certain other property, gifts that feature income, and gifts made directly from IRAs for those over age 70½.
- Fewer people will be subject to federal estate taxes than ever before.
- For higher-income taxpayers, a requirement that they partially reduce their itemized deductions in the past was repealed.

If we can help you or your advisors with the charitable aspects of your plans, please contact a member of our Planned Giving and Endowments Team (see the next panel for details).

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

## BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum  
Planned Giving and Endowments  
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW  
Washington, DC 20024-2126



# Meet Our Planned Giving and Endowments Team

The Museum's Planned Giving and Endowments Team is a group of dedicated professionals who have a passion for the Museum's vital work, as well as for helping you make securing its future a part of your personal legacy.

For more information on ways to accomplish this, please contact the appropriate staff member.



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The purpose of this publication is to provide general gift, estate, and financial planning information. It is not intended as legal, accounting, or other professional advice. For assistance in planning charitable gifts with tax and other financial implications, the services of appropriate advisors should be obtained. Consult an attorney for advice if your plans require revision of a will or other legal document. Deductions vary based on applicable federal discount rates, which can change on a monthly basis. Some opportunities may not be available in all states. © Copyright 2018 by Sharpe Group. All Rights Reserved. All photos courtesy of US Holocaust Memorial Museum except as otherwise noted. Portrait of George E. Hellman courtesy of Carl Cox.

# Legacy of Light Society

The Legacy of Light Society recognizes individuals who have made a commitment to secure the Museum's future and its timeless cause by including the Museum in their estate plans. Individuals who direct any type of gift to the Museum's endowment are recognized as **Legacy of Light Guardians**.

**YES, I/We have already included the Museum in my/our will or other estate plans.** Please enroll me/us as a member of the **Legacy of Light Society** and send information about the benefits of being a **Legacy of Light Guardian**.

I/We would like to receive complimentary materials about:

- Giving Through My Will
- Giving Through Charitable Remainder Trusts
- Giving Through Life Insurance
- Legacy Giving Through My Family Foundation
- Giving Through Gift Annuities

Please send me payment and tax benefit information based on the following amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ and the birthdate(s) \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (second individual optional).

I'm/We're ready to safeguard truth for future generations. I/We would like to receive more information about the Museum's endowment, and how to support the comprehensive campaign with a gift that will help secure the future impact of the Museum and can also help enhance my/our financial security today.

I/We would consider including the Museum in my/our estate plans.

I am/We are interested in making a contribution to the Museum's Annual Fund.

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Name (please print)

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E-mail (optional)

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

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*This information will be kept strictly confidential.*

*The Museum's Federal Employer Identification Number is 52-1309391*

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MUSEUM

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You can help keep Holocaust memory alive.  
VISIT [ushmm.org/campaign](http://ushmm.org/campaign) to learn more.

## Museum Receives Extraordinary Bequest

Holocaust survivor and Houston, Texas, real estate developer, **Bernard Aptaker**, passed away in 2015, having named the Museum as a beneficiary of a significant portion of his residuary estate.

Mr. Aptaker was born in Zakrzówek, Poland, and grew up in a warm, observant household. During the Holocaust, he and his family endured life in a Jewish ghetto; being betrayed by a sympathetic Polish farmer who initially hid them; labor camps; the murder of one of his brothers and his mother in Auschwitz; and a 50-mile death march with his father and other brother from Flossenbürg to Dachau—from where they were liberated by the Americans in April 1945.

Following liberation, Mr. Aptaker's ability to speak more than six languages enabled him to work with US intelligence units for two years in Europe to identify and capture German war criminals. He immigrated to New York in 1947, and years later relocated to Houston, where he launched what became an exceptionally successful real estate development business. Although the emotional scars left by his concentration camp experiences forever shaped his views of humanity—leading to his choice not to marry or to father children—Mr. Aptaker was always blessed with an extremely kind heart and generous soul.

The Museum recently received much larger than anticipated distributions from Mr. Aptaker's estate totaling over \$30 million for its endowment. This exceptional support of the Museum's vital work of remembrance and teaching in perpetuity reflected his passion for philanthropy, particularly in fostering religious tolerance and understanding.



**Bernard Aptaker** Photo: Courtesy, Holocaust Museum Houston