

PHILIP MARKOWICZ (1924-2017)



Philip Markowicz, 93, died at Hospice of Northwest Ohio in Perrysburg, Ohio on November 8, 2017, after battling cancer for the past year. He was a resident of Sylvania, Ohio and Aventura, Florida. Mr. Markowicz, the founder of Phil's TV and Appliance, was also a renowned author and lecturer on the Holocaust and Judaism.

Mr. Markowicz was born in Przerab, a village in Poland, in 1924, the son of a District Rabbi, a follower of the Gur Chassidic sect. He attended the Przedborz Yeshiva, but the Nazi invasion of Poland closed this institution, preventing his progression to ordination as a rabbi. Nevertheless, before World War II broke out he already was known as a Bible and Talmud prodigy. As a teenager through the first years of World War II he was confined in the Lodz Ghetto working as a slave laborer under Nazi rule. He spent almost all of his nonworking time in intensive study of many of the classic works of history, philosophy and political thought, complementing his orthodox religious studies. When the Ghetto was dismantled, Mr. Markowicz was deported by the Nazis to the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp. Soon realizing that remaining there meant certain death, he sneaked into an outside work detail, thus avoiding the gas chambers and crematoria. Together with his brother,

Henry, he survived a series of slave labor concentration camps, disease, beatings, and starvation, culminating in a death march, until he was liberated by the American forces in the spring of 1945. He weighed a skeletal 87 pounds on his 5'10" frame and was wracked with typhus and tuberculosis. Other than himself and his brother, his entire family perished in the Holocaust. After a few months in the hospital, Mr. Markowicz was sent to a Displaced Persons camp in Germany where he was elected to the governing council, met and married his wife, Ruth Fajerman Markowicz, another Holocaust survivor, and had a son, longtime Toledo physician Dr. Allen Markowicz. Theirs was the first marriage and the first birth in the camp. After five long years, the family was permitted to immigrate to the United States. Upon arriving in Toledo, Ohio, in 1950, Mr. Markowicz successfully found employment, often working two and even three jobs at a time while studying the newly burgeoning field of television and related electronics. In less than a decade he and his wife, Ruth, established a successful business, Phil's TV and Appliance, and had two daughters, Sylvia and Diane, in addition to their son, and were living a comfortable middle class American life.

Mr. Markowicz eventually resumed his study of Torah (Bible) when his business success allowed him a comfortable early retirement. His insights will soon be available as the inaugural monograph published in a new series by the University of Toledo Press under the imprint of the Center for Religious Understanding, tentatively titled *A Holocaust Survivor Rescues God in the Bible*. His well-received memoir, *My Three Lives*, is in its second edition. A musical oratorio inspired by Mr. Markowicz's life and philosophical writings, *Tikvah*, (translation: Hope) by award winning composer

Burton Beerman, has been performed at the Toledo Museum of Art, in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, at Bowling Green State University, at the Detroit Holocaust Memorial Museum, in North Carolina, at the Jewish Theater of the South in Atlanta, and was part of the Martin Luther King Memorial Week ceremonies in Atlanta in 2006. He was a featured interviewee on the award winning documentary *Bearing Witness: The Voices of Our Survivors* that has been broadcast many times on WGTE and elsewhere.

Mr. Markowicz was a sought after speaker and spoke on the Holocaust and on Torah at various venues, including Universities, secondary schools, religious institutions, seminars, Public Television, and other events. He was often invited to lead religious services, read from the Torah and its accompanying Haftorah (readings from the prophets), and present explanatory sermons. He was a former president of the Tarbut Society, one of the Torah study groups in which he has participated. He was a member of Congregation B'nai Israel in Sylvania, Ohio, and the Aventura Turnberry Jewish Center Synagogue in Aventura, Florida.

Nevertheless, he was most proud of and devoted to his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren to whom he was both a warm, loving, and sage presence in their lives. He is survived by his loving family; in addition to his son, Dr. Allen (Hindea) Markowicz of Ottawa Hills, Ohio, he is survived by his daughter, Sylvia Neil and her husband Daniel Fischel of Chicago, Illinois; grandchildren, Cantor Andrea Rae Markowicz of Evanston, Illinois, Nina (Mitchell) Friedman of Wilmette, Illinois, David (Laura) Neil of Upper Nyack, New York, Dr. Daniel (Yael) Markowicz of West Harrison, New York, Steven (Jana) Markowicz of New York, New York, Deanna Neil of Los Angeles, California; great-grandchildren, Micah

Friedman, Elijah Neil, Aiton Friedman, Miles Neil, Gavin Markowicz, Henry Neil, Samantha Markowicz, and Idina Markowicz, as well as his Fischel step-grandchildren, Joseph, Matthew (Jacqueline), Sarah and step-great-granddaughter, Hannah. After the death of his beloved wife, Ruth Fajerman Markowicz, he shared the affection and companionship of Martha (Jo Jo) Fruchtman and her extended family, particularly Julie and George Yakumithis and daughters Marilyn and Sofia. In addition to his wife Ruth, he was preceded in death by his daughter, Diane Markowicz; his brother, Henry Markowicz, and the rest of his family in the Holocaust.

Funeral Services will be held on Friday, November 10, 2017, at Congregation B'nai Israel, 6525 Sylvania Avenue (behind the JCC/YMCA), Sylvania, Ohio, at noon, interment to follow at Beth Shalom Cemetery, Oregon, Ohio, followed by meal of condolence at Temple Congregation Shomer Emunim, 6453 Sylvania Avenue, Sylvania, Ohio, arrangements **Robert H. Wick/Wisniewski Funeral Home**. Visitation (Shiva) will be at the home of Allen and Hindea Markowicz, 2675 Forestvale, Ottawa Hills, Ohio, from 6-8 p.m., Saturday, November 11, 2017 through Wednesday, November 15, 2017, Minyan at 7 p.m. Sunday through Wednesday. Tributes may be directed to the Philip Markowicz Instructorship/Professorship in Judaism and Jewish Biblical Studies at the University of Toledo, the Ruth Fajerman Markowicz Holocaust Resource Center at the Jewish Federation of Greater Toledo, the Diane Markowicz Scholarship Fund for Young Judaea of the Central States Hadassah Zionist Youth Commission, or the charity of donor's choice.



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