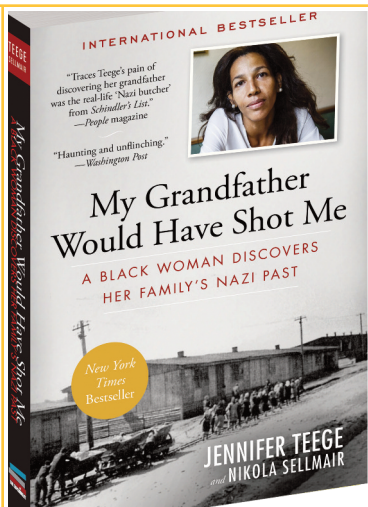


HAMILTON JEWISH FEDERATION | MARGARET'S LEGACY

22nd Annual Student Symposium on the Holocaust



Wednesday, April 1, 2020 | 10 am - 1 pm
Mohawk College | Fennell Campus | McIntyre Theatre

Tentative Schedule

- 10.00 am** Welcome and Introductions
- 10.15 am** Documentary | INHERITANCE
- 11.30 am** Keynote Speaker | JENNIFER TEEGE
- 12.45 pm** Question and Answer period
- 01.00 pm** Dismissal

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INHERITANCE

In the documentary, Monika Hertwig travels to Płaszów on the outskirts of Kraków, Poland in an attempt to learn more about her father, SS-Hauptsturmführer Amon Göth, who was portrayed in Steven Spielberg's 1993 film *Schindler's List*. The film had deeply affected Monika, and she claims to have hated Spielberg after watching it. In her search for more information, Hertwig has a meeting at the scene of the former concentration camp with Helen Jonas-Rosenzweig, a Holocaust survivor born in Kraków, who was interned at Płaszów, and was forced to work as a maid for Amon Göth. She survived the Holocaust with the help of German businessman Oskar Schindler. More than 60 years after Göth's execution for war crimes, the two women first met there in person.

Amon Göth had two Jewish housemaids who stayed with him in the villa: Helen ("Lena") Hirsch (now Helen Horowitz, living in Israel) and Helen ("Susanna") Sternlicht (now Helen Jonas-Rosenzweig, living in the United States). As part of Monika Hertwig's search for more answers, she was given the opportunity to meet the woman from the Kraków Ghetto enslaved and preyed upon by her father during the Holocaust in Poland. Göth abused Helen and shot her boyfriend, a Jewish boy named Adam, dead in front of her.

Göth was a married man, with a wife Anni, and two children in Vienna, when he met Monika's mother Ruth Irene Kalder – a beautician and aspiring actress originally from Gliwice – through his friend Oskar Schindler in Kraków in 1942. She worked as secretary at Schindler's factory at that time. The two had an ostentatious affair which Göth's Austrian wife knew nothing about. They partied, played tennis and rode horseback together. Ruth saw him hunting humans (in fact, he killed hundreds), but in a 1983 interview with the BBC she attempted to defend him nevertheless. During this interview, she was shown the transcripts of his war crimes trial, and committed suicide a day later. Monika, who was 37 years old at the time of the interview, thus first heard her mother speak frankly on the subject of her father, to total strangers. Monika Hertwig, Göth's illegitimate child, and his camp maid Helen Jonas-Rosenzweig, met for the first time in 2004. Hertwig had requested the meeting with Jonas, but Jonas was hesitant because her memories of the past were so traumatic. She eventually agreed after Hertwig wrote to her: "We have to do it for the murdered people". Jonas shared her sentiment and offered to meet at the Płaszów Memorial Monument in Poland and tour Göth's villa with her for this documentary.

JENNIFER TEEGE | AUTHOR OF "MY GRANDFATHER WOULD HAVE SHOT ME" A Black Woman Discovers Her Family's Nazi Past

At age 38, married with two children, Jennifer Teege picked up a book by chance at Hamburg's main library and discovered that her grandfather was the brutal Nazi commandant of the Płaszów concentration camp, portrayed so memorably by Ralph Fiennes in the film *Schindler's List*.

Teege's mother was German; her father was Nigerian. Unable to raise a newborn child, her single mother placed Teege in a children's home when Teege was four weeks old. In her early childhood Teege had only intermittent contact with her mother and grandmother; that ended when Teege, age 7, was adopted by a white German family, where she was raised in a loving home. Later, in her twenties, Teege struggled with depression. She went to college in Israel, where she learned fluent Hebrew and earned degrees in Middle Eastern and African studies. She returned to Germany where she began a career in advertising and started a family of her own.

Already coping with the trauma of rejection by her birth mother, Teege now faced other cruel facts: that she had to learn about her biological family's secret from a book; and that a monstrous man, Amon Goeth, reviled for decades as "the butcher of Plaszow," was her biological grandfather.

After her emotional pilgrimage, Teege says, "I'm no longer a prisoner of the past. I know now that I am not to blame, and the guilt no longer weighs heavily on my shoulders. There is no Nazi gene: We can decide for ourselves who and what we want to be."