Morris Gastfreund, 94

PROVIDENCE – Morris Gastfreund, a Holocaust survivor instrumental in the establishment of the RI Holocaust Memorial Museum and a lecturer and writer on the Holocaust and Israel, died April 5. He lived in Providence for 60 years, where he was a well-known tailor and clothier.



Born in Wodzislaw, Poland, he was the son of the late Israel and Yentl (Mydlik) Gastfreund. As a student, he learned tailoring after school hours to help with the family clothing business run by his mother, who was widowed early. In pre-war Poland, he was active in the Betar Zionist youth movement.

During World War II, he was in several concentration camps, including Buchenwald. He was packed into a cattle car rolling toward Dachau "to work in the heavens," as a Nazi guard informed the prisoners, when he was liberated. His mother, four sisters, and other relatives perished in the Holocaust.

He was the husband of the late Sally (Gerszten) Gastfreund, a survivor of Auschwitz whom he had met in Wodzislaw before the war; they were reunited in the Landsberg, Germany Displaced Persons (DP) camp, where they married in April 1946. While there, he was co-editor of the Landsberger Yiddishe Zeitung, the community's newspaper, and principal speaker at several mass demonstrations and Zionist events drawing thousands.

The couple came to Providence in 1949 with their son, born in the DP camp two years earlier. He was the proprietor of Elmgrove Tailors in Providence until his retirement; customers from as far away as Missouri sought him out because of his expertise in custom-designed clothing.

A president of the Holocaust Survivors of RI, he was one of the founders of the R.I. Holocaust Memorial Museum. He began advocating for a R.I. memorial in 1964, when then-Governor John Chafee dedicated a day to Holocaust martyrs. He lectured widely about the Holocaust to adults, at Brown University and elsewhere, and to school-children as part of the Museum's speakers' bureau. He was the keynote speaker at the Museum dedication and other related events, including an address at Providence City Hall. He wrote often in the *RI Jewish Herald* and *The Jewish Voice of RI* about the Holocaust, Jewish history and Israel.

He is the father of Deborah and husband Jack Schuss, and the late Irving Gastfreund and surviving wife Diane; the grandfather of Sally Schuss, Sarah and husband Todd Green, Beth and husband Ariel Zell, and Michael Gastfreund; and great-grandfather of Yair Zell, Talia Green, and Ezra Zell. He was the brother of the late Kalman Gastfreund of Providence, also a Holocaust survivor, and the late Chaya, Mina, Faygel Tzipora and Rayzl Shoshana Gastfreund.

He was a member of Temple Emanu-El, attending services daily.

GASTFREUND, MORRIS

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GASTFREUND, MORRIS
Entered into rest April 5, 2010. Beloved husband of the late Sally (Gerszten) Gastfreund.

Devoted father of Deborah and husband Jack Schuss and the late Irving Gastfreund & surviving wife Diane. Loving brother of the late Kalman, Chaya, Mina, Faygel Tzipora, and Rayzl Shoshana Gastfreund. Cherished grandfather of Sally Schuss, Sarah & husband Todd Green, Beth & husband Ariel Zell and Michael Gastfreund and great grandfather of Yair Zell, Talia Green and Ezra Zell.

Services at Sugarman Sinai Mem. Chapel, 458 Hope St, Providence, RI on Thursday, April 8, 2010 at 10 AM. Shiva at his late residence and in Newton, MA. For donation information, contact Prov. Hebrew Day School, Holocaust Education & Resource Ctr of RI or Temple Emanuel of Providence. Stanetsky Memorial Chapels 800-842-4280