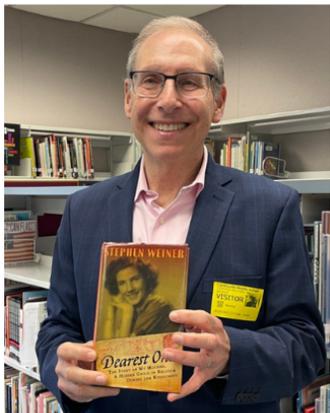


Second Generation: Dr. Stephen Weiner



Steve is a Philadelphia native, and a clinical psychologist by training. His Doctoral Dissertation was on family dynamics of Children of Survivors and their families. His mother, Bella Flora was born in Brussels, Belgium in 1929. She was eleven years old when Belgium was invaded and occupied by Nazi Germany in 1940. As restrictions were progressively imposed upon the small Jewish community of Belgium, her father began to prepare for his family to go into hiding.

On the day that the Gestapo ordered Bella and her sister Jeanne to report to a “summer camp”, Bella’s father sprang into action, and he executed a plan long in the making to hide with a family whom he trusted. Unfortunately, that family denounced them, and they escaped to a second family who helped them hide in the northern part of the country, in a small village in Flanders. However, the family decided to separate when it became too dangerous for all of them to stay together.

Bella left of her own volition at the age of thirteen to hide in the southern part of the country in Wallonia, rotating between different safe houses and depending upon the kindness of the families who took her in at great risk to their own lives and that of their families. Escaping the clutches of the Gestapo time and time again, Bella would write to her parents in code, and those letters were delivered by the Resistance to her parents and sister, still hiding in Flanders. Shortly before her death in 1992, twenty five of these letters were found, translated, and became the foundation of a presentation detailing her life on the run. Since each letter began with the French salutation “Mes Cheres,” (when translated, “Dearest Ones”),

Steve wrote a book about Bella’s experiences as a testament for future generations of his family called Dearest Ones, so that her story of survival during the Shoah would be memorialized for all time. His presentation of the same name is given to schools, churches and synagogues to educate audiences on the history of the Shoah in Belgium as well as Bella’s own remarkable tale of survival as a young girl.



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