

Second Generation: Jerry Gross



Jerry Gross is the eldest son of Ernest (“Ernie”) and Bella Gross. His father, Ernie, was a Holocaust survivor from Romania who was liberated by the United States Army in 1945 after being imprisoned in Dachau. As a teenager, Ernie arrived alone in New York, where Jewish services helped him relocate to Philadelphia, providing housing and employment.

Ernie met Bella, who was born in Czechoslovakia, on a blind date. Together, they raised three sons: Jerry, Steven, and David. Jerry states that his house was the “fun house” in the neighborhood while he was growing up, thanks to the warmth, joy, and food provided by his parents. The ping pong table and basketball court out back were also crowd-pleasers.

Sadly, Jerry’s mother, Bella, passed away at the young age of 47. Jerry chose to remain at home to support his father and younger brothers. Jerry continued his studies at LaSalle while working alongside his father in his various businesses. Jerry earned his Bachelor Degree in 1979, in Accounting, and MBA in 1982 in Finance. In 1981, he founded his own firm, Jerry Gross Financial. After Bella’s passing, Ernie remarried Rosa, who had a daughter, Irene.

Later in life, Ernie began to publicly share his Holocaust experiences. Inspired by an article written by the wife of Don Greenbaum—a U.S. soldier who helped liberate Dachau—Ernie began speaking alongside Don to emphasize the reality of the Holocaust and the importance of remembrance. Ernie recounted his time in Auschwitz and his transfer to Dachau, where he had been sent to die after becoming too weak to work. Don, in turn, spoke about his experiences as a soldier and liberator. Ernie’s sons, Jerry and Steven (“Stevie”), often accompanied him and Don on speaking engagements, frequently taking part in their presentations. In 2016, Ernie and Stevie visited Dachau on a memorial trip. For Ernie, the visit was not only an act of remembrance and honor—it was a moment of deep pride, as he stood there by choice rather than as a prisoner.

Jerry and his wife, Deserie, have four children and two granddaughters. Both Jerry and Deserie are active members of Shir Ami synagogue.

After Ernie’s passing in October 2023, and the untimely loss of his brother Stevie to cancer in May 2025, Jerry made a commitment to continue sharing his father’s story. In doing so, he honors both Ernie and Stevie while carrying forward the vital message his father always lived by: to be kind to one another.



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