

Warren Fellowship to become endowed legacy at HMH

New generations will be ensured of a Holocaust education

By EMILY FEINSTEIN

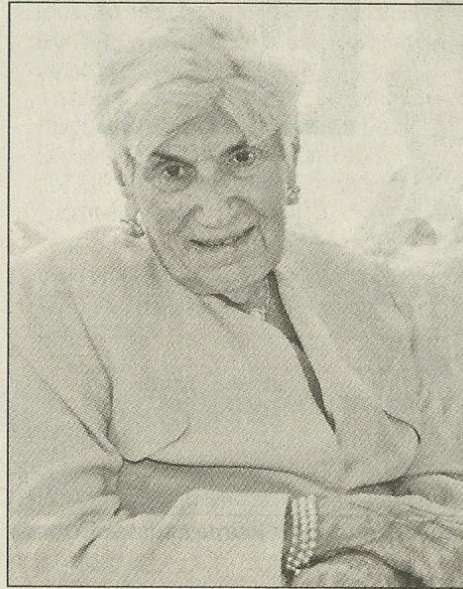
At the age of 91, Holocaust survivor Naomi Warren is watching her legacy come to fruition through The Warren Fellowship for Future Teachers. The program, supported by The Warren Fellowship Fund, develops a corps of pre-service educators who want to learn how to teach effectively about genocide and the Holocaust. It takes place at the Holocaust Museum Houston each spring.

During World War II, Warren suffered three years at the Auschwitz, Ravensbruck and Bergen Belsen concentration camps. She lost her mother and her first husband during the Holocaust; however, she and her two siblings survived. She came to the United States after the war, remarried, and had three children. In 2000, on her 80th birthday, those children – Benjamin Warren, Helen Spector and Geri Roper – wanted to honor her in a special way.

“We wanted to do something that would exemplify who she is and what she represents,” said Benjamin Warren. “We wanted to create a legacy, so that her presence would have an impact on future generations.”

Warren’s children knew that just adding her name on a wall or a building wasn’t what she would want. They approached Susan Myers, executive director of the HMH, about setting up a fund in her honor, and the idea of an educational fellowship was born.

“Holocaust education is one of the most important aspects of everything we do to commemorate the Holocaust and to keep its memories alive.” said



Naomi Warren

“There’s nothing more exciting every year than walking into the classroom and seeing a group of young, potential educators who will have the tools and the education that I always dreamed of having at their age,” said Myers. “I can’t wait for the day when a Warren offspring goes into a classroom and their teacher announces that they are a Warren fellow. The whole process will have come full circle for me at that time.”

The one week, all-expenses-paid program brings the future teachers to the HMH for intensive learning, featuring preeminent Holocaust scholars from around the world. At the end of the program, the students receive their credentials as Warren fellows.

“The students have an enormous responsibility upon entering this program and becoming Warren fellows, because the window is

Myers. "By creating a fellowship, teachers have the necessary tools to educate their students about the Holocaust once they enter the classroom."

"When Myers said she wanted to create this program and that she would like my mother to be closely connected with it, I started crying, because I thought it was such a powerful concept," said Benjamin Warren.

"I feel very humbled, because I never wanted my name on anything," said Warren. "I feel that when you do mitzvot or initiate developments, you are paying back the community that was so wonderful to you."

"So, every year since 2000, we've been funding this program," said Benjamin Warren. "Our ultimate goal is to permanently endow this fellowship, so it will live on forever and the name Naomi Warren will be connected."

The program's first partnership was with The University of Texas College of Education. Today, the program consists of students throughout the South, including University of Alabama, Baylor University, University of Houston, Rice University, SMU and Texas A&M University; and it has expanded to include Syracuse University's School of Education.

Annually, the program selects approximately 50 pre-service educators, who apply through their respective schools of education. To date, there are more than 400 Warren fellows.

closing on survivors and they should feel a sense of privilege for having the opportunity to know them," said Benjamin Warren. "What they learn will place them in the position that their voices will be the voices of survivors when they are all gone. So, that's really the legacy."

"It transforms the lives of the students," said Warren. "The moment they enter the program, it changes their lives to the point that they cannot live with anger all the time."

Her son added, "We want to make sure that when Mom is no longer here that the Warren fellows have a connection to who Naomi Warren is and to who the other survivors are."

The fund for the Warren Fellowship resides with the Houston Jewish Community Foundation and exhibits the Warren family's strong belief in endowment and legacy giving.

Benjamin Warren is an active member of the Houston Jewish community. One of his primary roles is chairing the Create a Jewish Legacy program, a new initiative of the Houston Jewish Community Foundation. It is designed to promote partnerships between donors and the organization of their choice.

HMH is one of nine partners of the Houston Jewish Community Foundation Create a Jewish Legacy program that work together on implementing legacy giving. The Houston Jewish Community Foundation, the community's planned-giving resource, helped make the Warren Fellowship possible. □