



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

Oregon State Legislature
State Capitol
Salem, OR

NEWS RELEASE

March 12, 2019

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Oregonian Holocaust survivor honored by Oregon Senate

SCR 21: Honors and recognizes Alter Wiener for sharing his life story

SALEM – The Oregon Senate honored one of the state’s Holocaust survivors for sharing his life story and his experiences during the Holocaust with thousands of Oregon students and community members.

[Senate Concurrent Resolution 21](#) – which passed by a 27-0 vote on the Senate floor today – honors Alter Wiener for his contributions to Holocaust education. He was born in 1926 and died in 2018, of injuries sustained after being hit by an automobile.

“I was very proud to consider Alter Wiener as a strong influence and a friend,” said Sen. Rob Wagner (D-Lake Oswego), who carried the bill on the Senate floor. “He turned a life that, at an early age, was riddled with horror and tragedy into one of love and education. He was a very special man. He was taken from us too soon and unexpectedly.”

Wiener was born in Crzanow, Poland, to Mordechai-Markus and Pearl Wiener. When he was 13 years old, Wiener’s father was murdered by German forces following their invasion of Poland. In 1942, Wiener was deported to the Blechhammer forced labor camp. Over the next three years, he was imprisoned in five different forced labor camps.

In 1945, Wiener was liberated by Soviet armed forces from the Waldenburg concentration camp. At 18 years old, he weighed only 80 pounds. After his liberation, Wiener returned to Poland to search for his relatives. He found that only five cousins had survived the Holocaust and that 123 of his family members had perished.

Wiener moved to New York in 1960 and became a United States citizen. After arriving in Oregon in 2000, Wiener began giving presentations to high school students on his life story and his Holocaust experiences.

In the following years, he made nearly 1,000 appearances in schools and other community organizations. He gave his final presentation at Lakeridge High School, in Lake Oswego, on Dec. 5 of last year. He passed away on Dec. 11 in Hillsboro.

“This is the highest honor that we can pay to a man who suffered greatly and, instead of turning that into hatred and anger, made his path forward in love and acceptance,” Wagner said.

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