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Book to feature local Holocaust survivors

By Sergio Carmona | South Florida Sun-Sentinel



Photographer Monni Must is coming to South Florida to photograph local Holocaust survivors for the book, "Living Witnesses 2." (Submitted photo)

In photographer Monni Must's book "Living Witnesses," she photographed and told the stories of 92 Holocaust survivors living in the metro Detroit area.

Must, a Sylvan Lake, MI resident, is currently working on her second book, "Living Witnesses 2," where she will feature 250-300 survivors from throughout the world.

Among those survivors include those from Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties who she will photograph and interview while she's in South Florida from Feb. 11-18.

"It is always an honor to meet these people and I know I often forget some of the people I photograph in my regular business as a portrait photographer but there's not one survivor I ever forget or what their story is or what they're about," Must said. "They have completely enriched my life."

Must started working on this book more than a year ago and has photographed a little more than 100 survivors. She's planning to photograph approximately 25 from South Florida but said she's always looking for more to photograph. The content will be written by 10th-12th grade students in the survivors' cities of residence. The book will also be accompanied by a curriculum so that it may be used for educational purposes in communities that seek to remember and learn from the atrocities and tragedy of the Holocaust.

Through the book, Must hopes that people won't forget the survivors' stories.

"I want people to realize that these survivors, who lived under the worst part of the history of world, were able to build and enrich their lives and also rebuild the Jewish community," Must added.

Must started creating portraits of Holocaust survivors after the untimely death of her daughter Miya because she was terrified that she would be forgotten.

"My biggest fear was that some of her memories would start to fade in my mind and I realized that by talking to the survivors, that doesn't happen," she said. "You don't forget so meeting these survivors has helped me understand that."

A few local survivors scheduled to be photographed discussed the importance of telling their stories.

"It's simply not a photograph that is in a book; it's part of leaving a legacy for people of future generations," said Boynton Beach resident Norman Frajman, 82. "We're aging and by the grace of God we're still here so it's of the utmost importance of what this lady is going to show to future generations."

Miami resident David Mermelstein, 82, who is also scheduled to be photographed, said "It's important because this is something that shouldn't be forgotten and if you don't talk about it, it will be forgotten and the only way we can stop that from happening again is by talking about it."

Survivors interested in being photographed and high school educators and administrators who would like their students to apply to be involved in the project, contact Lynne Meredith Shreiber, chief creative officer from Your People LLC, at 248-376-0406 or at lynne@yourpl.com.

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