

Warsaw Ghetto Museum says goodbye to Sonja Helene Nissenbaum.

With the deepest regret we have received the news about the death of Sonja Helene Nissenbaum – a noble, good man, highly distinguished for saving testimonies and monuments of the Jewish culture in Poland.

Sonja Helene Nissenbaum in the years 2002 – 2018 became the head of the Nissenbaum Family Foundation. She took over of the function of a president after the death of her husband Sigmund Szimon Nissenbaum. The continuation of this work became the goal of her life.

The genesis of the Foundation dates back to the wartime. Sigmund Szimon Nissenbaum was born in Warsaw as one of the five children of Lejb and Genia. His family ran a brickyard and construction companies in Warsaw Praga District, in Marki, Pustelnik and Radzymin. After the outbreak of World War II, they were resettled to the Warsaw ghetto.

Sigmund transported food to the closed district and later carried explosives and weapons. After the fall of the uprising in the ghetto, he and his family were transported to Treblinka. His mother and sisters died there. He and his father survived, were transported to Majdanek and then went through many successive concentration and labor camps.

After the war Sigmund Szimon Nissenbaum settled in Konstanz. There he met and married Sonja Helena and they had three children.

They came to Poland together in 1983. Moved by the destruction and devastation of the Jewish cemeteries, the family decided to save these places. They founded the Nissenbaum Family Foundation.

For 35 years, the Foundation has been saving testimonies and monuments of Jewish culture in Poland. It especially cares for the reconstruction and protection of Jewish cemeteries. It commemorates the places of struggle and martyrdom of Jews during World War II in areas located within the borders of the present Polish state. It promotes knowledge about the best traditions of the history of Poles and Jews at home and abroad. It revives interest in the Jewish spiritual and material heritage both in the world diaspora and in the Polish society. The Foundation initiates the arrivals of Jews, mainly young people to Poland, the country of their ancestors, to become acquainted with the most numerous Holocaust testimonies here. Finally, it supports the establishment of mutual Jewish-Polish contacts, including economic relations.

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