

Lawyer's Search for Wallenberg Hits Bookshelves

Morris Wolff's quest to find Holocaust hero continues

Sammy Hudes

Morris Wolff, a prominent international lawyer who has devoted his life to finding and rescuing Holocaust hero, Raoul Wallenberg, has written a book about the subject. Titled, "Whatever Happened to Raoul Wallenberg," the book sells for just \$9.99 on the Kindle or \$24.95 in paperback. In it, the Philadelphia lawyer tells the complete story of his journey in attempt to find Wallenberg, through filing a precedent-setting lawsuit, speaking to former U.S. Presidents and outing the lies told by Russian officials in court.

The story begins with Wallenberg, who was from Sweden, travelling to Budapest, Hungary in 1944 at the request of the U.S. government. In an attempt to form a war refugee board made up of diplomats from neutral countries, he was assigned to act as a watchdog in Europe. Wallenberg decided to go beyond his duties, creating methods and strategies for rescuing Jews, such as issuing protective passports to prevent them from being deported. Wallenberg threatened the Soviet army, who wished to impose military domination, to stop abusing Jewish women or else he would serve as a witness at their war crimes trials. A thorn in their side, the Soviets handled the problem by arresting Wallenberg.

Wolff entered the story in March of 1983, with Wallenberg having already been in custody for 39 years. Asked what he could do, Wolff suggested filing a lawsuit against the Soviets, claiming kidnapping and other criminal behaviour that violated Wallenberg's rights. Wolff took hold of the ship, pro bono, and began researching at the University of Pennsylvania law library. He consulted with professors from universities around the U.S., including Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Chicago and the University of Houston. He was determined to rescue Wallenberg.

"He was a forgotten man when I first took the case," Wolff tells Shalom Toronto. "Nobody knew Wallenberg's name."

Prior to filing the lawsuit, Wolff sent a letter to then U.S. President, Ronald Reagan pointing out his absolute power under the U.S. Hostages Act to demand the release of

Whatever Happened To Raoul Wallenberg?

The true story of Holocaust hero Raoul Wallenberg and the author's efforts to rescue him from Soviet Union imprisonment

Morris Wolff

Wallenberg, a United States citizen, from Russian captivity. Unfortunately, as Wolff would learn later on, a conspiracy involving the State Department Legal Counsel kept the letter off the President's desk.

Wolff proceeded to file the lawsuit against the Russians in February of 1984, in the U.S. Federal Court in Washington D.C. He won the case and the judge awarded Wallenberg's family a total of \$39 million in damages; \$1 million for each of his years in captivity up to that point. Unfortunately, this did not lead to Wallenberg's release, which was the more important issue on Wolff's agenda.

"[My goal was] obviously to find Wallenberg alive," he said.

Many believe that Wallenberg passed away shortly after World War II, as this is what was reported by the Russian government.

"There was never any evidence he was dead. The Russians kept making up lies and stories that he had died," said Wolff, refusing to buy such excuses. "He had never died. There was no basis of it and [the judge] found that there was no basis of it. He accused the Russians of lying. The judge said that he found Russian claims of his death totally without credibility."

Wolff has met with other notable politicians regarding Wallenberg's release, including former U.S. President, Bill Clinton in 1993. Clinton has praised Wolff's book, calling it a display of "how much one man can do to achieve justice."

"The case took up about 60% of my time," Wolff said. "It was my main focus. I thought it was my duty I was a fortunate Jewish young man, able to live in a free country. Wallenberg had cared deeply about the Jewish people. He had shown respect for the Jewish people and I thought it was an excellent opportunity to do my part."

Wolff adds that "the issue is still alive," 27 years after winning the lawsuit. In September, he and his team will be heading back to the U.S. Supreme Court to argue for the reinstatement of the 1984 judgment. He estimates that the original \$39 million in damages is now worth somewhere between \$120 million to \$132 million. Wolff would like to use the money to form a foundation called "The Raoul Wallenberg Institute for Auschwitz Studies."

"[The Foundation] will focus on why good people do good things for no reason that benefits them," he says. "We'll have young people who care about the world win scholarships to that place and get trained in international law, international politics and psychology."

Wolff says that it gives him satisfaction to see so many honours given to Raoul Wallenberg around the world, such as having streets, schools and monuments named after him.

"[I feel] excellent because I helped to precipitate all that. It wasn't until I sued the Soviets, went on national TV and spoke to 25 million people about the terrible injustice of his sitting incommunicado in a Soviet prison and that's when the whole thing broke loose."

The book is continuously being updated according to Wolff, and with that in mind, the author has a special request.

"To the wonderful Jewish community of Greater Toronto: If there are people who were fortunate to know Wallenberg in Budapest and would send me their comments and their experiences with him, that would enhance the next edition of my book."

If not, there are still other ways to help the cause, he says.

"Be sensitive to issues of human abuse. I took action and I believe in the value of taking action. Join forces with others to do something about it."

To purchase a copy of the book in paperback or on the Kindle, visit <http://wallberg.edupublisher.com>. To leave comments regarding experiences with Raoul Wallenberg, submit them at <http://thewallbergrescuebook.com/askquestions.php>.

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Canada tightens relationship

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renewable energy.

"Canadian scientists and researchers have a world-class reputation for innovation and creativity, and collaborating with key trading partners such as Israel will continue to benefit citizens in both countries," said Minister Fast. "From transforming sea water into fresh water to developing more fuel-efficient cars and developing new technologies for treating

cancer, our researchers will remain at the forefront of new technologies."

Minister Fast announced the funding following the conclusion of the Canada-Israel Technology Innovation Summit, which took place in Tel Aviv on July 7, 2011. The summit was a result of a meeting in Ottawa in June 2010 between Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu