

In Memoriam

Our community mourns the passing of Dr. Selden Smith

It is with much sadness and a heavy heart that I share the news of the passing of Dr. Selden K. Smith on February 12, 2018 at the age of 88.

Dr. Smith devoted much of his life to justice, tolerance and combatting hatred. He was truly the “father” of Holocaust Education in South Carolina. His tireless efforts to teach the lessons of the Holocaust have been an inspiration to many and his mentorship and guidance has influenced others to follow in his footsteps. Dr. Smith’s journey into the realm of Holocaust education began in the 1970’s at Columbia College where he was a history professor for 37 years. He took up the challenge of developing courses on the Holocaust at the college as well as statewide workshops for educators. He sought out survivors and liberators in the state. What quickly evolved were lifelong friendships and a dedication to remembering the Shoah and those who perished. He encouraged the survivors and liberators to speak out and share their personal stories with students and adults. This bond of over 40 years has grown to include the children and grandchildren of survivors. He was the driving force behind the establishment of the South Carolina Council on the Holocaust in 1989. He served as chair for many years and remained an active board member throughout his life.

On a personal note, Dr. Smith was the one who first approached me in 2010 to become involved in Holocaust Education. Dr. Smith's friendship with the South Carolina survivor families will always be cherished. He enriched our lives. We feel blessed to have known and loved Selden. He led a life of righteousness and compassion. He showed others how important it is to be an "up-stander" and speak out against anti-Semitism and all forms of intolerance and hatred. He dedicated himself to making our community and the world a better place for everyone.

On behalf of The Selden K. Smith Foundation for Holocaust Education, The South Carolina Council on the Holocaust and The Columbia Holocaust Education Commission, I want to express our deepest sympathy to his wife Dorothy of 55 years, his children Jean Margaret Card, Julia Smith McLeod, Selden Kennedy Smith, and Thomas Gasque Smith and their spouses, and his nine grandchildren. We pledge to honor his memory by continuing to teach the lessons of the Holocaust. His spirit lives on in the amazing legacy he created both personally and professionally and in our positive actions and good deeds.

Selden Smith, a truly "special" person, will be greatly missed. He touched our souls. Rest in peace dear friend.

Minda Miller

Chair of The Selden K. Smith Foundation for Holocaust Education