

Marlyn's Speech at the Dizengoff Memorial Ceremony, Sunday March 20, 2005

Shalom:

I am pleased to be able to present the Dizengoff Memorial Quilt today – a work of handcraft which I see as a warm and vibrant tribute to the lives of the our children, parents, brothers and sisters, friends...who were lost here nine years ago.

The motivation for this project came from reading a short book I found when I visited Thereisenstadt last year – a book called Hanna's Suitcase; the story of a simple brown cardboard suitcase, owned by a child who perished in the Holocaust – one child out of one and a half million; and it struck me that every person, no matter how young or how old, how well known or little known, has an important personal story – a story of loves, hopes, ambitions, dreams – which needs to be told.

Through working on this project I have come to know each and every one of the 13 who died here: wonderful talented children and young adults, full of hope and potential for their future– older people, grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles who had led fulfilling lives and made their own contribution to their families and communities.

But each person, young or old, left a rich legacy of achievement, memories and love. And this is what I set out to record with this project. To create something which celebrates their *lives* – instead of them being just statistics, names on a list or a stone plaque which memorializes their deaths.

For this project, I enlisted the help of a talented group of quilters all of whom volunteered readily to help. Each of them interviewed the family of the person for whom the quilt was being created and the warmth and openness with which the quilters were received by the families opened the doors to some very special and often emotional experiences.

As each of the quilts was created, based on the information gathered from the families – and from many of the interviews I personally attended – I grew to know each of the victims as an individual: who they were, what they liked, what they wanted to achieve or had achieved, their place in their families and in the communities in which they lived.

- I learned that Dan Tversky had discovered and literally fallen in love with the Far East long before any young Israeli ever thought of venturing to those exotic lands.
- I learned that Rachel Sela loved stringing amber beads and was passionate about Chinese porcelain, Armenian ceramics and the Israel Philharmonic...
- I learned about Tali Gordon's compassion with which she nursed a close friend for nearly a year after a serious motor accident;
- I was intrigued to learn how Inbar Atia combined a love of ballet and a love of motorcycles;
- I found out about Bat-Chen Shahak's drawings, her writing and her diary...
- Hadas Dror's love of jazz dancing and her sunny personality made me smile;
- and Dana Gutterman's hearts in her notebook symbolized a happy child with a hope of future romance;
- I came to know Yovav Levi as a helpful, caring child who loved playing soccer...
- and I was introduced to his best friend Kobi Zaharon, who loved animals and dreamed of becoming a vet.
- I now know Asaf Wachs as an exceptional young soldier, a role model for his comrades and an excellent representative of Israel abroad.
- Leah Mizrahi warmed my heart with her love for her family and the appetizing meals she cooked for them...

- and of course every day, I remember so many wonderful things about my mother Sylvia and sister Gail. My dear mother left her mark in the community after only spending just two of the happiest years of her life here in Israel. My beautiful sister, married for the second time just one year before she was killed, never got to see her five wonderful grandchildren.

This project has taught me how families coped with this tragedy and it has taught me that loving kindness and good deeds are more powerful than hatred; the quilt is an unusual and different way to communicate with wonderful people, allowing them to express their deepest feelings and to have those feelings translated into a living artistic expression of the lives of our loved ones. I hope this quilt will become a symbol for ALL victims of terror...

But most of all, I want this quilt to remind the world about what happened here on Erev Purim 1996...and for everyone to really know each of the people who were lost that day.

I hope we have done justice to the memories of your loved ones – I thank you all for your cooperation and for opening your homes and your hearts to us...

Thank you...