



# Sacks~Wilner

## Holocaust Education Program

~ *Learn so that we remember* ~



Ninth Annual Presentation

**March 6, 2016 (Sunday)**

**2 p.m.** Reception with the speaker for participants in the Life and Legacy Program

**3 p.m.** Presentation by Jeannie Opdyke Smith followed by a Dessert Reception

# “One Woman’s Courage: Irene Gut Opdyke, Rescuer”

*Presented by Jeannie Opdyke Smith*

*In many ways the story of my mother's life seems too unbelievable for even Hollywood. What was it about Irene Gut Opdyke that made her step out of the path of least resistance and choose to get involved when so many others did not? Was it her upbringing? Her faith? What gave her the courage and strength to do what she did?*

### OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY



Presented by Adath Israel Congregation in partnership with Jewish Family and Children's Service



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## More about Irene Gut Opdyke

from Jeannie Opdyke Smith

As the only child of Irene, I've been asked these questions for years. My mother never sat me down and explained all of her reasons... But these questions were answered: by her actions, her deeds and her day to day life. Mom "lived" the two greatest commandments: to love God with all your heart and to love your neighbor as yourself. The short, simple answer is this: faith, forgiveness and love!

My mother didn't think she had exceptional courage or strength. She truly believed that God placed her in positions for a reason: and so she placed herself in His hands. She had a simple view about life and a faith that carried and sustained her. Mom used to say, "Courage is a whisper from above... If you think only with your head and not with your heart, your head will tell you"Dis is dangerous... don't do dat. You have to involve your heart."

The day before my mom passed away she told my husband and I how grateful she was for her life, how she cherished every day. There was no regret, no bitterness... just gratitude. I could only marvel at her contentment and pray that at the end of my life, I could say that: I too had run the race that was set before me, and finished as well as she had.

**This program was established by a bequest from Dr. Arthur and Esther Sacks-Wilner.**



**Dr. Arthur Sacks-Wilner** had a life-long commitment to learning and to Judaism with a strong focus on European Jewish history and the Holocaust. In his lifetime, he was recognized for his service to this country, having received the Selective Service Medal by the United States Congress as well as Special Certificates of Appreciation from Harry S. Truman, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Richard Nixon.

**Esther Sacks-Wilner** was not only his dedicated life partner, she was, in her own right, committed to the welfare of the greater Mercer County Jewish community. Through her work in Deborah Hospital, Greenwood House, the Sisterhood of Adath Israel, and Hadassah, Esther, like Arthur, saw the value of service to the larger community.

It is the hope of the family that promoting Holocaust education will help establish a world in which hatred and prejudice will be diminished and freedom and dignity are increased.