



# ALUMNI NEWS

## Insights from Jerusalem

**SOILY KAPLINSKI,  
HERZLIA ALUMNUS 1965**

Last year, shortly after the Israel launch of my novella, *A World of Pains: A Redemptive Parable?* Arleen and I were sitting down to dinner with our very good friends in their home in Tel Aviv. Sometime during the course of the meal, our host said to me rather gingerly:

*“Solly, I have something I need to tell you. I have read your book and I feel that now is the time to ask you for forgiveness.”*

*“What do you mean?” I responded.*

*“Well, when I was a young clerk in Cape Town, part of my responsibilities involved debt collection and one of my clients was your father.”*

*“So why do you need to ask me for my forgiveness?”*

*“I knew very little about the Holocaust and your dad didn’t pay his bills and he owed a lot of money. I thought he was using the Holocaust as an excuse not to pay up. Therefore, I gave him a hard time. I badgered him relentlessly. I have been carrying this secret, and the guilt, with me all my life and whenever we were together with you, I wanted to tell you but I could not pluck up the courage. I was so moved by your book, a memorial to your family that it opened up the door for me. I am deeply sorry.”*

My parents were survivors of the *Shoah*, having amongst other traumas, spent several years with the Bielski brothers in the forests of Belarus. (You may have seen the movie *Defiance* with

Daniel Craig). Although my father was a medical doctor having graduated from the University of Paris in 1936, his degree was not recognized in South Africa. He tried his hand at various ventures but without much success. In truth, my parents were dirt poor and being victims of the *Shoah* did not help them with their integration into a strange country with a foreign language.

This meant amongst other things that they could not afford the school fees at HERZLIA. Only a pittance.

I am deeply grateful that the school leadership (both lay and professional) were sympathetic to the plight of my parents, and while I was not an exemplary student (!), I managed to ‘find my place’ at the school.

HERZLIA gave me the grounding (together with my parents) in *Yiddishkeit*, Jewish community and love of Israel as well as an academic foundation to further my studies at University. More importantly, HERZLIA inculcated in me the values of community, being involved and giving back - and paved the way for me to enter the helping professions of teaching and psychology.

When I look back today at the milestones of my professional life including becoming Headmaster of UNITED HERZLIA SCHOOLS, Director of Education of a network of Jewish Day Schools in Canada, Director of the International Relations English Desk at Yad Vashem and today, for the last 11 years, Executive Director of Overseas Joint Ventures at the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, I attribute in large measure my accomplishments - and our family making *Aliyah*, to the education I received at HERZLIA - and to the far sighted vision of those generous people who enabled my parents, of blessed memory, to send me and my brother Benny to HERZLIA.

I hope that those of you who are reading my story and who are in a position to support deserving and indigent students at HERZLIA, will feel driven to make an investment in their lives and empower them (like I was empowered) to become productive citizens and proud Jews!

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Solly Kaplinski with his proud parents, Dr Izak and Mrs Sima Kaplinski z”l, at UCT Graduation 1972.



**THE HERZLIA  
FOUNDATION TRUST**

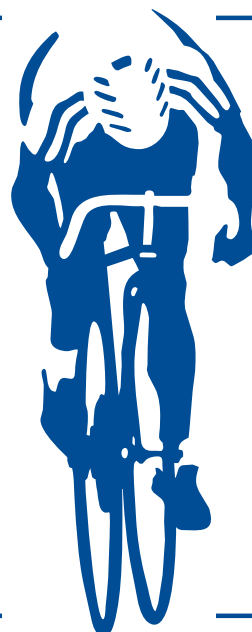
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To book your place on our team contact Amanda Zar on +27 21 286 3472 or email [azar@herzlia.com](mailto:azar@herzlia.com)

The Herzlia Foundation Trust’s vision is to future-proof UNITED HERZLIA SCHOOLS by building of the Endowment Fund to ensure that no Jewish child is denied a Jewish education for genuine financial reasons; and that HERZLIA remains an affordable Jewish community school providing educational excellence with world-class facilities.



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