



Published February 6th, 2019

Author of debut memoir discusses decades of struggle following Holocaust

Submitted by Ian Richards

Contra Costa County Library presents Meet the Author
'A Life Rebuilt: The Remarkable Transformation of a War Orphan'

- February 4 | 6:30 p.m.
San Ramon Library
100 Montgomery Street
925.973.2850
- February 5 | 6:30 p.m.
Martinez Library
740 Court Street
925.646.9900
- February 11 | 1 p.m.
Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way
925.254.2184
- February 11 | 6 p.m.
Walnut Creek Library
1544 N. Broadway
925.977.3340



Born in 1939 Belgium, Sylvia Ruth Gutmann became an orphan at age three when her parents were sent to their deaths at Auschwitz. In her debut memoir, *A Life Rebuilt: The Remarkable Transformation of a War Orphan*, she chronicles her escape to Switzerland with her two sisters, their arrival in New York to the home of her uncle and his abusive wife, and her struggles to overcome the trauma of her childhood.

For more information, visit sylviaruthgutmann.com

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*For special accommodations, please contact the Library with 72 hours notice.

The Contra Costa County Library will host author Sylvia Ruth Gutmann as she discusses her debut memoir, "A Life Rebuilt: The Remarkable Transformation of a War Orphan." Born in 1939 Belgium, Sylvia Ruth Gutmann became an orphan at age 3 when her parents were sent to their deaths at Auschwitz. Together she and her two older sisters managed to escape to Switzerland and eventually made it to America. Deeply traumatized, Sylvia arrived in New York City at age 7, where a well-meaning uncle and a cruel aunt took her in. "Don't speak of it. Put it behind you. Move on," they told her. The messages she received in America forced her to again keep silent and hide in full view. She spent the next five decades struggling to put the pieces of her life back together and to fully understand the past she was too young to remember.

"A Life Rebuilt: The Remarkable Transformation of a War Orphan" chronicles an odyssey that spans 60 years, three countries, and thousands of miles. Remarkably, at age 62, Gutmann developed a relationship with a young man, 40 years her junior, and against all odds she moved to Germany to live with him. Here she began to share the story of her family's fate with German students, senior citizens, and even neo-Nazi groups. By doing so, Gutmann reconciled with the people she had feared and loathed, and resurrected the lives of the parents she cannot remember, and cannot forget. Heartbreaking and ultimately inspiring, this

memoir of loss, love, resilience, belonging, identity, and authenticity has a surprising resolution, told in an intimate voice with candor, substance, and heart.

"I needed five decades to heal from the trauma of being brutally separated from my parents when I was a child," she says. "It's horrifyingly ironic that the current zero-tolerance immigration policy of separating young children from their parents, has made my story even more relevant today."

Gutmann will be speaking at 1 p.m. on Feb. 11 at the Orinda Library and at 6 p.m. on that same day at the Walnut Creek Library.

Gutmann is a former spokesperson on behalf of the United Jewish Appeal Federation of New York City. Every year she shares her story at numerous Holocaust remembrance and Wounded Warrior ceremonies organized by the U.S. Military. She has also spoken extensively throughout Europe and was granted honorary German citizenship in 2002 for her peace activism.

For more information, contact Serenity Dean at (925) 646-9900.

Info: <https://sylviaruthgutmann.com/>

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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