



(/home)

Home (/home)

SA (/sa)

Israel (/israel)

World (/world)

Opinion (/opinion)

Religion (/religion)

Latest (/latest)

Achievers (/achievers)

Youth News (/youth-news)

Search...

Recognising the bravery of Rinske van den Brink



(/images/default-source/default-album/annual-holocaust-commemoration-394b07954347cf6007affdff0000014754.jpg?sfvrsn=8fc8f510_0)

The late Rinske van den Brink risked her life to save Jewish children during the Holocaust 77 years ago. This week, she was posthumously recognised as Righteous Among the Nations at the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre (JHGC).

by JORDAN MOSHE | Jan 30, 2020

Applause reverberated around the auditorium on Monday evening as the audience rose from their seats. This Dutch woman now joins her husband, Aart, and his brother, (both previously recognised in 1979), on Yad Vashem's list of non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust.

"When a stone is dropped into a pool of water, the ripple effect continues to widen long after the stone has sunk to the bottom," Rinske's grandson, Aart van den Brink, said as he and her other grandchild, Rinske "Kiki" van Rooyen, accepted the award on her behalf. "Tonight, we as a family still feel the ripple of a stone dropped into a pool many years ago, and although we weren't there, the impact today remains as tangible as it was all those years ago.

"Seventy-seven years ago, my grandparents performed a deed of love that continues to circle out and [have an] impact [on] our lives. They assisted several Jewish children, Aby [Abraham Staal] among them. They took him in and cared for him like one of their own children. I can still recall the stories my father told me about the children they hid in their bedroom and closets.

Israeli ambassador to South Africa, Lior Keinan, stressed the importance of honouring the bravery of such individuals who chose to listen to their conscience.

"They did so while putting themselves and their families at great risk, as their fate was obvious if they were found to be protecting Jews," he said.

"The state of Israel doesn't hand out medals. The only medals we hand out are to the individuals recognised by Yad Vashem in Israel as Righteous Among the Nations.

"Twenty-six thousand people have been recognised from 50 different countries, from the famous Oskar Schindler to lesser-known heroes. From farmers and workers to diplomats who operated against government orders. We emphasise that their acts are the most honourable and brave. They put into action the Jewish saying, 'He who saves one person is as if he saved an entire world.'"

Ayellet Black, deputy Israeli ambassador, gave an account of one of the lives Rinske and her husband saved: "Aby" Staal. Born in 1928, Aby was the son of Louis and Elisabeth Staal and lived in Amsterdam.

"When the Germans invaded Holland, Louis and Elisabeth were very nervous," said Black. "They drove to the harbour, hoping to get on a boat abroad, but the road was packed with Jews, and they didn't manage to get anywhere and so, they returned home, and life went on."



Delicious
KOSHER SUSHI
made fresh
every day...
could you ask for
anything better?



(<http://www.kosherworld.co.za/Default.aspx>)



(<http://www.yadaharon.co.za>)

Follow us on

(<https://www.facebook.com/sajewishrepor>)

(<https://twitter.com/OnlineSAJR>)

(../feeds/news)

In 1941, the Staal family moved to Ermelo, a town in the province of Gelderland. They rented a small summerhouse where the children enjoyed country life. Soon, the family adjusted to their new environment and made friends, including Anton Rook, the head of the local post office and member of the local resistance. In 1942, however, the family got an order to report for transport to a labour camp.

Said Black, “Instead of obeying, the family went into hiding in a summerhouse in the woods belonging to family friends, the Keijzers. The Staal family lived invisibly in the house. There were some trusted people who supported the family with food and services, among them Rook. Life was tense. From time to time, the Keijzer couple visited the Staal family in the summer house, the families even celebrated New Year’s Eve together on 1 January 1943.”

Tragically, the family was discovered on 22 March 1943 when a Jewish German immigrant, Hugo Hirsch, visited the Staal family together with the Keijzer couple. “It seems they had been followed, because suddenly the bell rang, and the Dutch police raided the house, together with the Nazi-sympathising mayor of neighbouring town, Putten,” said Black. “All present persons were arrested. Only Aby managed to escape. The Keijzer couple were freed the next day, but the Staal family was sent to Westerbork and from there to Sobibor, where they were all murdered on 2 April 1943.”

Aby remained in hiding for months, moving from place to place and taken in by various Dutch families willing to conceal him, including the Rooks. One of these courageous families that took Aby in was the Van den Brink family including Aart, his wife Rinske, and their children, including Froukje Steyn, who was in attendance at the JHGC ceremony.

While Van den Brink thanked Yad Vashem, the JHGC, and the Israeli embassy for recognising his grandmother, he paid tribute to Aby’s daughter, Lorri, who resides in the United States. “Since 2016, she has been searching for all those who helped her father during the war,” he said. “It’s due to her persistence and endless efforts that recognition can be given to grandma Rinske tonight.”

Comment

Your name

Email *(optional)*

Comment

[Formatting options](#)



Type the code from the image

