

## **Sir Sigmund Sternberg KCSG, GCFO, JP**

The Anne Frank Trust mourns the passing of one of its founding and most enthusiastic patrons, the philanthropist, entrepreneur, interfaith activist and communal leader Sir Sigmund Sternberg. Here our Honorary Vice President and Co-founder Gillian Walnes reflects on his passing:

Sir Sigmund (Siggy to us all) passed away on 20 October at the age of 95. He was a refugee from the Holocaust, fleeing Hungary in 1939 when university quotas against Jews meant he could not continue to study. He passionately loved his adopted country of Britain and gave back to it big time through his charitable activities and interfaith activism. Seeing a need for greater understanding and co-operation between the great faiths, Siggy created the International Council of Christians and Jews and then the Three Faiths Forum.

Siggy never stopped believing in and helping to make the world better and was never backward in getting people to do the same. I was at St James's Palace with him once when he told the Prince of Wales in no uncertain terms that he should do more to promote the Rotary movement, a cause which Siggy was passionate about (and even made sure that I became a Rotarian too). There can't have been many ambassadors through the Court of St James who did not get a call from Siggy inviting them to help in his international mission for greater understanding. In 1985 he was given a very rare honour for a Jewish man by being made a Papal Knight by Pope John Paul II.

In 2004 the Anne Frank Trust moved into Star House, owned by Sir Sigmund and the engine room of his interfaith activities. He was such a dear friend to me personally and the Anne Frank Trust, promoting our work whenever he had an opportunity. Visiting dignitaries to the ground floor Sternberg Foundation were almost always brought upstairs by Siggy to visit the Anne Frank Trust too.

Siggy was small in stature but huge in charisma, very handsome with twinkling eyes and a constantly enquiring mind. This brilliant mind was sadly quietened in his last years, especially after the loss of his beloved wife and soulmate Hazel. The world is already a poorer place without the great humanitarian Sir Sigmund Sternberg.