

BIOGRAPHY OF DR. THÉRÈSE LENA SHORE

Dr. Thérèse (Lena Allen) Shore née Herzig (*November 17, 1921 – December 3, 2018*)

Dr. Lena Allen-Shore, philosopher, poet, writer, businesswoman, and educator, authored seventeen books in English and French, composed over 100 songs (lyrics and music) and wrote a Cantata that was performed in Poland for the 50th anniversary celebrating the liberation of Auschwitz.

Founder of the *Lena Allen-Shore Center for the Advancement of Human Potential* in Philadelphia, (affiliated with Gratz College), Dr. Shore created 28 accredited interdisciplinary courses which addressed issues including: how to find meaning in life, holocaust studies, combating prejudice, communication by which to build bridges and the importance of art in education.

Dr. Shore, who was a post-graduate fellow at the University of Pennsylvania. She saw herself as “just a little woman who dreams about a better world.” What made this little woman so remarkable is how she shared her dreams with her over six thousand students. In her quest to leave the world a better place, she befriended many humanitarians and giants – some of whom were Nobel Peace Prize winners including Father Dominique Pire, Dr. Albert Schweitzer and Pope John Paul II.

In 1978, just after Karol Wojtyla was elected Pope, Dr. Shore wrote a letter urging him to use his position to make a difference. Thus, began a 25-year deep and trusted friendship of kindred spirits. Dr. Shore travelled and accompanied Pope John Paul II in Jerusalem in 2000 when John Paul broke new ground in Catholic-Jewish relations and to Assisi when the Pope and other leaders of world religions prayed for peace in 2002.

Her book “Building Bridges” presents parallel lives, based on her conversations with the Pope and the bridge they built between their religions. Pope John Paul II wrote to Dr. Shore, “Your book, Building Bridges... was written ‘with heart.’ Thank you for seeing deep into my thoughts and understanding the intentions guiding my actions.”

Background/Education

Thérèse Lena Herzig was born in Cracow, Poland, in 1921. While excelling in music, writing and languages, Lena loved the outdoors and connecting with nature. Growing up she was an avid skier, tennis player, and horseback rider. Lena’s curiosity and passion for learning continued even during the War. Lena enrolled at the Conservatory of Music in Lvov where she took courses in music and economics, until her studies were cut short in 1941, when she and her family had to flee Lvov after the Nazis entered Lvov.

After losing their identity papers, Lena argued with her father that the only way the family could survive would be to obtain false papers, which would state that they were Christian. Alone one night, Lena courageously travelled to purchase false documents for the family. This brave action allowed the family to survive the remainder of the war in the open. Working for the Underground, she put herself in danger by forewarning others of impending arrests.

Lena survived the war with her parents Jakub and Lusia Herzig and her brother Adam.

After the war, she married Sigmond Shore (two weeks after meeting him) and moved to Paris where she worked as a journalist and continued her studies at the University of Paris. Being a journalist was a natural fit for her talents as she had a deep curiosity of life and people and used her writing skills to share their messages.

In 1951, she and her husband moved to Montreal where her husband built an import-export business and Lena continued to write music, poetry and short stories. Together they raised two sons, Michel and Jacques.

After her husband's death in 1967, Lena took over her husband's business. She was always a fighter, determined to do anything to help her family. She was never easy on herself, as always, she consistently had to do more for others, never resting on any laurels.

In parallel to running the business, Lena decided to pursue her studies first at the University of Montreal and later at McGill University where she received her M.A. in education. Her thesis was "*Kant's Ethics and Aesthetics in Education.*"

After completing her M.A., she and her second husband John Edward Greenberg moved to Philadelphia where she studied at the Dropsie University and received her doctorate in Philosophy. Her thesis was entitled, "*Julian Tuwim, as a poet and as a Jew in the ideological context of the time.*"

Whether in Paris, Montreal or Philadelphia, Lena made a mark wherever she lived. This little woman would be remembered by anyone who met her.

Lena lived life.

She was a unique woman on a mission who spent the last four decades of her life devoted to spreading principles of universality and human potential. Lena never took any day for granted. She made a promise to God during the War that if she survived with her family she would work towards a better world of understanding.

One would have thought Allen-Shore would have retained bitterness about the Holocaust, but her core message was rife with optimism and working to find the important essence in life.

"*Building Bridges*" may have been her best-known work, but she considered another book, "*Ten Steps in the Land of Life: A Step by Step Guide to Meaning and Happiness in Life,*" her best, along with her poem, "*Cry From Warsaw*".

Those steps include respecting life, recognizing the features of our own character, being aware of the beauty around us, realizing we are not alone and accepting the responsibility and joy of fulfillment. Other steps are being in touch with aspirations, being a member of the family of man, recognizing the role of art, continuing education and selection of a reason to live.

"You know that life is a challenge and you are ready to meet it, ready to walk to the crossroads and choose the road – your own road," Allen-Shore wrote in the book while discussing the last step. "The 10th step emphasizes that every person is different, as different as the 'why to live' for every person."

"Everything depends on us and the way we see people," she said. "I love life."

Lena was charismatic. People were drawn to her. She loved an audience that cared and people loved to listen to this smart, impeccably dressed, intelligent woman with a most radiant smile.

Her ability as a philosopher to build bridges between people, regardless of creed, color, faith and language was remarkable and her persistent stubbornness in getting her messages across – whether in her novels, music, poetry or lectures was unique.

These encounters took place beyond boardrooms or classrooms, they extended to elevator rides, and taxi rides where she would start up conversations with strangers – being able to converse with everyone she met. If the person she wanted to talk to, did not speak one of the six languages Lena was fluent in, she would use hand gestures to convey ideas to dialogue.

Lena was a force of energy to her many thousands of students and admirers. She pointed out simple, pristine truths and added the profound accents of her philosophy, which were truly brilliant – yet

accessible to all. Lena believed that there is nothing impossible and she entrenched that belief in everyone around her.

She was “the patch of pink in the sky” of an often very dreary complex world.

Lena was blessed to feel a strong sense of faith, a deep belief in God. She said “as long as God is with me, I am not alone. As long as God is with me, I know what I should do.”

She did a lifetime of creative work and built bridges on ideas and of truths to share with others so that the bridges they would then build could bring people together through ideas, and people closer to the natural wonders of our planet, its flowers, its sunsets and the stars...

Lena’s writing brings a message of inspiration and hope for a better tomorrow.

Nobel Prize laureate Albert Schweitzer wrote to Lena, “We all have to be courageous and never give up hope. This is the meaning of your poetry.”

Dr. Shore stated, “My greatest accomplishment has been to promote understanding among people.”

Published Writings by Dr. Lena Allen-Shore:

1. Ten short stories in Polish, “Silhouettes under the sign of the Swastika”
2. L’Orage dans mon couer (poems), 1963
3. Le Pain de la Paix (poems), 1964
4. Ne me demandez pas qui je suis (novel) 1965
5. May the flowers grow (poems) 1969
6. Langue Universelle, 1971
7. The Singing God – Le Dieu qui chante (poems) 1971
8. Ten Steps in the Land of Life: How to Find Meaning in Life, 1980
9. Roots and Wings (in collaboration with her Father, Jakub Herzi, 1982
10. The Little Shoes- The Cry of Warsaw, 1983
11. 40 Years after Darkness, 1985
12. Dix Pas dans le Pays de la Viie, 1985
13. Ten Steps in the Land of life, 1983
14. Thinking of Rembrandt...Life on the Canvass of your Soul, 1992
15. Rendez-vous with Love, 1993
16. Building Bridges: Pope John Paul II and the Horizon of Life (First edition, 2003, Second edition 2004, and Third edition 2007)
17. Les Étoiles Chantent à Midi