



Gratz Insider, March 2012 - Story Continuation

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Student Spotlight: Lieutenant Rabbi Mark Getman Establishes Holocaust Studies Scholarship at Gratz

After the German invasion of Poland in 1939, Abraham Getman managed to survive torturous Nazi labor camps and then difficult years alone on the run. In stark contrast, more than 70 years later, his son Mark is a Jewish religious leader - a recently ordained rabbi and soon-to-be chaplain in the United States Army National Guard.

Lieutenant Rabbi Mark Getman's current career is a fitting tribute to his father's past in Nazi-occupied Europe - but a career arrived at in a rather roundabout way. Although Getman had spent time in Israel and was connected to Jewish studies, he initially followed the dot-com bubble in the mid-1990's into the IT field. When the bubble burst, Getman enlisted in the National Guard, primarily with the goal of guaranteeing job security. After completing his training, however, he was determined to advance in the Guard, but had not yet considered a religious track. Then, during a meeting with his Jewish faith leader, Getman realized that as a chaplain, he could both become an officer and could "serve the greater good by supporting his fellow soldiers with spiritual guidance." The next year, he was accepted into the National Guard's Chaplain Candidates program.

In order to complete this program, Getman was required to become an ordained rabbi as well as earn 72 graduate credits. And that's where Gratz and its online programming have come in. "Gratz worked out perfectly for my career path," says Getman. "The professors have been very supportive of my situation - even when I am stationed in a tent in an obscure location without reception - because they are understanding of what I am trying to do." Getman graduated with high honors from the Master's in Jewish Studies program last May and is currently pursuing a Gratz graduate-level certificate program.

Since Gratz College is making it possible for Getman to achieve his goal of becoming a chaplain, he has decided to return the favor - in a way that memorializes his father and brings this story full circle. As a survivor of Nazi aggression, his dad was dedicated to teaching others about the Holocaust, and even wrote a book about his experience. In support of these efforts, Getman and his wife, Lizaveta, have established the Abraham Getman Holocaust Memorial Scholarship to provide financial assistance to qualifying students interested in pursuing the Gratz M.A. in Holocaust and Genocide Studies. "People need to continue teaching this subject so that no one ever forgets what happened," says Getman, speaking as a rabbi, future chaplain and deeply committed son of a Holocaust survivor.