

Sisters share parents' Holocaust story

BY CARLA HINTON

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Hadasa Bau shares the story of her parents' love affair and clandestine wedding during the Holocaust with great fanfare — right down to the secret whistle they used to communicate to each other on the night they married in a concentration camp.

Bau, and her sister Clila, said they like to tell the story of Joseph and Rebecca Bau, whose secret wedding in the Plaszow concentration camp in Krakow, Poland, was depicted in the award-winning movie "Schindler's List."

"Always they told about the first wedding," Hadasa Bau said. "My father said there were so many miracles."

The Israeli sisters recounted their parents' tale of love and miracles during a gathering at Emanuel Synagogue, 900 NW 47. The sisters said they are spreading their parents' legacy of hope throughout the metro area.

They said Joseph and Rebecca Bau lived a life full of laughter and love after surviving the horrors of the Holocaust.

"We came here so that the story would continue and the happiness would be for always," Hadasa Bau said.

Hadasa Bau, 63, said she and her sister also are raising funds to help preserve their father's art studio. Joseph Bau's studio in Tel Aviv, Israel, has been transformed into a museum featuring his artwork — drawings, paintings and animation. In addition to their presentations, the sisters sell lithographs of

their father's work as well as copies of his book, a touching account of the Holocaust interspersed with humor called "Dear God! Have You Ever Gone Hungry?"

Hadasa Bau said some Holocaust survivors did not like to talk to their children about their experiences during the Holocaust. By contrast, she said her parents spoke everyday to their daughters about how they met, fell in love and married amid the suffering and death in a Nazi concentration camp.

Hadasa Bau said her parents wanted people to know that through their love and shared laughter, their hope survived.

The sisters said their parents met at Plaszow where the Nazis had Joseph Bau, a graphic artist and illustrator, working as a draftsman in a construction office. The couple married in secret one night in February 1944 and attempted to share their wedding night together in the women's barracks, only to find out that the Nazis were conducting a surprise inspection there.

Hadasa Bau said her father was not discovered, although two other men hiding in the women's area were found and killed. She said he told her that his narrow escape was one of many miracles that occurred during this time.

The Bau sisters said their father helped forge documents and identity papers so that hundreds of Jews were able to escape the Plaszow concentration camp. Clila Bau, 55, said he also created a very detailed map of the camp, which is included in his book "Dear



The Bau sisters, daughters of Holocaust survivors Joseph and Rebecca Levenson, recently attended Jewish Federation of Greater Oklahoma City's Women of Valor award luncheon honoring Ruth Leebron Levenson. Pictures from left are: Robert Henry, president of Oklahoma City University; Hadasa Bau; Ruth Leebron Levenson; and Clila Bau.

IF YOU GO

CLILA AND HADASA BAU

- **When:** 7 p.m. today.
- **Where:** Pegasus Theater, Liberal Arts Building, University of Central Oklahoma campus, Edmond.
- **Cost:** Free.
- **Information:** Call the Jewish Federation of Greater Oklahoma City at 848-3132. For more information about the Bau sisters, go to www.josephbau.com.

God!" She said the map helped director Steven Spielberg re-create the camp in great detail for "Schindler's List." The sisters said Joseph Bau also wrote jokes and poetry every day while he was in the concentration camp. They said their father wrote his humorous notes and drawings in a tiny notebook that fit in the palm of his hand.

Rebecca Bau died in 1997. Joseph Bau died in 2002.

The Bau sisters' visit to the Oklahoma City area is sponsored by the Jewish

Federation of Greater Oklahoma City and Chesapeake Energy.

"This is an opportunity for us to share the important message of the Holocaust and the lessons of the Holocaust," said Edie Roodman, Jewish Federation executive director. "In the case of the Bau sisters, it's with humor, which is unusual. We are grateful to Chesapeake Energy for helping underwrite their visit."

The sisters are set to speak tonight during a free presentation at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond.