

Eric D. Weitz



Eric David Weitz, PhD, passed away Thursday July 1 at his home in Princeton, NJ, surrounded by his family at the age of 68.

A distinguished professor of Modern European History at City College of New York, he was a frequent lecturer in public and academic settings on the history of human rights, the Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide, and the genocide of the Herero and Nama of Namibia. His book *Weimar Germany* was named an "Editor's Choice" by *The New York Times Book Review*.

He was born in New York City on June 15, 1953 to Charles and Shirley Weitz, the children of Eastern European Jewish immigrants. The youngest of three brothers who remained close throughout his life, he grew up in a small home in Bayside, Queens. His father, a CPA, worked long hours while his mother took care of the family. The Bayside Jewish Center was central in their lives both socially and religiously.

The brothers attended Campy Hurley, near Woodstock, NY and it became an important part of Eric's formative years. There he and his brothers learned about civil rights and peace, informed also by left-wing songwriters who performed there. Eric's future academic work would continue to be rooted in the values he learned at camp and at the United Community Center in East New York, Brooklyn.

Eric married Carol Hunt Weitz in 1974 and the couple had two sons, Lev and Ben. He and Carol were married for 34 years with many happy years together.

As a young man in the 1970s and 80s Eric worked as a cook and a baker, sometimes while writing his dissertation, uncertain that he would land an academic position. He continued to enjoy cooking and baking throughout his life. He went on to a distinguished career as a professor of Modern European History first at St. Olaf College, then the University of Minnesota, and most recently at City College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York. From 2012 to 2016 he served as Dean of Humanities and the Arts at City College.

His many written works, all published by Princeton University Press, include *A World Divided: The Global Struggle for Human Rights in the Age of Nation-States* (2019), *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy* (2007); *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation* (2003), and *Creating German Communism, 1890-1990: From Popular Protests to Socialist State* (1997). In 2006 he initiated a book series, also published by the Press, *Human Rights and Crimes against Humanity*.

In 2011, Eric married Brigitta van Rheinberg, his longtime publishing editor. He enjoyed getting to know her son Sebastian and her former husband Bob, who became good friends. Eric and Brigitta traveled more in the past 10 years than many people do in a lifetime. Highlights include Cuba, Machu Pichu, Kenya, South Africa, China, Japan, and a wonderful trip to Switzerland with the entire extended family. There were also many trips to Germany and the couple spent much time in Aachen, where Eric came to know and cherish Brigitta's family and friends, and in Berlin with their dear friend Hanna Schissler.

Eric is survived by his wife Brigitta van Rheinberg; his sons Benjamin and Lev Weitz (Doha Mekki); his granddaughter Dahlia; his step-son Sebastian Zahler; his brothers Mark Weitz (Carol Weitz) and Alan Weitz (Linda Cohen); and his niece Grace.

A private funeral service will be held at Princeton Cemetery.