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## Alfred Moldovan, 1921–2013

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## ALFRED MOLDOVAN, 1921–2013<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Alfred Moldovan, one of the world's foremost Judaica collectors over the last half-century and an expert on the authenticity of Jewish ceremonial art, died on Monday evening, November 4, 2013 at the age of 92. Moldovan was born on the East side of New York in 1921 to immigrant, Yiddish-speaking parents. During World War II, he served in Italy as a Radar Officer in the 455th Bombardment Group of the Fifteenth Air Force. On returning to the United States, he attended medical school on the G.I. Bill, joined the Communist Party and received permission to fulfill his mobilization service as a family doctor in East Harlem, which kept him busy for over fifty years. Moldovan's intense commitment to economic and social justice led him to become one of the founding members of the Medical Committee for Human Rights (MCHR). In 1963, as a member of the MCHR, he participated in the March on Washington, where Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his "I have a Dream" speech. At the height of the Civil Rights movement, in March of 1965, Dr. Moldovan and the MCHR provided a medical presence during the historic march from Selma, across the Pettus Bridge, to Montgomery, Alabama. By 1970, Dr. Moldovan and his beloved wife Jean Sorkin Moldovan had become serious Judaica collectors. Dr. Moldovan's background and experience as a political organizer subsequently found new social and cultural outlets when he founded the Harry Friedman Society for Judaica Collectors and served on the Acquisitions Committee of the Jewish Museum in New York City. In 2010, his son Joseph T. Moldovan and daughter-in-law Susan Alkalay Moldovan established the Moldovan Family Rare Judaica collection at the University of Pennsylvania Libraries in honor of their father and mother. Known to his grandchildren Jessica and Danny as the "*Zeidopedia*" for his exceptional memory and profound knowledge, Dr. Moldovan was an extraordinary figure of indomitable spirit. *Zikhro li-verakhah*.



Alfred Moldovan ז"ל, at his granddaughter Jessica Moldovan's graduation at Yale University. May 22, 2011, New Haven, CT. Photo credit: Joseph T. Moldovan

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<sup>1</sup> A shorter version of this obituary was published in the Fall 2013 annual newsletter of Jewish Studies at the University of Pennsylvania.