

Sigmund Livingston

Sigmund Livingston	
Born	December 27, 1872 Gießen, Germany
Died	June 13, 1946 (aged 73) Highland Park, Illinois, U.S.
Nationality	American German
Ethnicity	White
Known for	Founder of the Anti-Defamation League
Religion	Judaism
Spouse	Hilda Valerie (1881 – 1946, his death)
Children	Richard Livingston

Sigmund G. Livingston (December 27, 1872 – June 13, 1946) was a German-born American Jewish attorney working in Chicago, Illinois. Livingston was the founder and first president of the Anti-Defamation League, and the author of the book *Must Men Hate* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1944). The League's annual Sigmund Livingston Award, which recognizes individuals for outstanding contributions to furthering civil rights and fighting injustice, is named after him [1], as is its Sigmund Livingston fellowship.

Livingston was born in Gießen, Germany, the son of Dora and Mayer Livingston, and emigrated with his brothers and sisters in 1881, settling in Bloomington, Illinois. He became a naturalized US citizen in 1888. Sigmund Livingston married Hilda Valerie Freiler on December 18, 1918. He graduated from the Law School of Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, Illinois and became an attorney. He also became active in Jewish causes, joining his local B'nai B'rith lodge. He grew increasingly concerned at what he saw as pervasive stereotyping of Jews, and after walking out on a theater performance in Chicago where he felt that Jews were being caricatured, he decided to form an organization to refute anti-Jewish stereotypes ("Anti-Defamation League" 2). He discussed the situation with a fellow attorney, Adolph Kraus, the president of B'nai B'rith, and on September 17, 1913, Livingston founded the Anti-Defamation League, at that time a committee of the Chicago B'nai B'rith ("Jews Organize" 8; Hutchings, 11).

Livingston was known as a tireless advocate for tolerance, speaking out against anti-Semitism all over the United States, through speaking engagements and conferences. Under his leadership, the Anti-Defamation League was able to address stereotypes in the popular culture, as well as in academia. For example, in 1930, the ADL was able to persuade Roget's Thesaurus to remove an objectionable portion from its pages: it has defined "Jew" as synonymous with "cunning, rich, usurer, extortioner, heretic." The editors of Roget's apologized and agreed to change the definition in the next edition ("Disparaging Reference" 5) In 1944, Livingston also wrote a book that refuted some of the most common anti-Jewish myths, especially those used by the Nazis. "Must Men Hate?" received a number of favorable reviews, including one that called it an "impressive" and "valuable" volume (Jordan-Smith, C4).

After many years as an attorney and as head of the ADL, Livingston retired, and he died on June 13, 1946 in Highland Park, Illinois, at the age of 73. He was survived by his wife Hilda and a son Richard. In appreciation for his many years of service, B'nai B'rith established ten fellowships in his memory. The original awards were \$2000, with the money going to students who agreed to do research into prejudice and study "racial and cultural relations" ("Livingston Awards" 63).

Works Cited

"Anti-Defamation League Is 40." Washington Post, November 17, 1953, p. 2.

"Disparaging Reference To Jew Removed From Roget's Dictionary." (Newark NJ) Jewish Chronicle, September 19, 1930, p. 5.

"Jews Organize An Anti-Defamation League." Macon (GA) Telegraph, September 18 1913, p. 8.

Hutchings, Harold. "B'nai B'rith One of Oldest Lodges in the United States." Chicago Tribune, May 9, 1956,p. 11.

Jordan-Smith, Paul. "I'll Be the Judge, You Be the Jury." Los Angeles Times, June 25, 1944, p. C4.

"Livingston Awards Made." New York Times, August 7, 1949, p. 63.

Sigmund Livingston Obituary, Chicago Tribune, June 15, 1946, p. 20.

External links

- Founding of ADL, with picture of Livingston ^[2]
- Founding of ADL from perspective of Chicago Jewish community ^[3]
- Summary of review of *Must Men Hate* ^[4]

References

[1] <http://newsroom.dc.gov/show.aspx/agency/mpdc/section/2/release/748/year/2001>

[2] http://www.adl.org/ADLHistory/1913_2000.asp

[3] <http://www.juf.org/news/century.aspx?id=10014>

[4] <http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=PAQ.014.0556A>

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