

Rabbi David Wolpe's

Off The Pulpit

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Martin Gilbert, In Memoriam

Martin Gilbert, who recently passed away, completed the official biography of Winston Churchill and wrote many other books on Jewish, general, and British history. But he was also an extraordinary *mensch*. I experienced his kindness myself.

Gilbert was invited to be scholar in residence at my synagogue over a decade ago. I had read several of his books but never met the eminent historian and was excited to do so. Shortly before he came I fell ill with a seizure and brain tumor. I was recovering, and unable to go anywhere, the weekend he spoke. We had a brief conversation on the phone and I told him I was always interested in WWI, about which he had written a fine book. Three weeks later from England, a package arrived: five books on World War I, all signed by the authors who

were friends of Gilbert's.

A few years later when I recovered and was traveling in England he invited me to his house to finally meet. Over dinner I told him how much his gracious gesture meant to me. He was characteristically diffident and humble. To be an historian of Gilbert's caliber is extremely rare. To be renowned and so kind is a model from which all can learn, and so honor the memory of this true scholar and gentleman. May his memory be for a blessing.

Get Rabbi Wolpe's new book *David: The Divided Heart*.