

Century-Old Holocaust Survivor Shows off Pitching Arm at Rays Game



At 100 years old, Helen Kahan isn't the oldest person to throw out the first pitch at a Major League Baseball game. Instead, Kahan's distinction comes as the first 100-year-old Holocaust survivor to do so.

The Tampa Bay Rays honored Kahan last Friday at Tropicana Field in St. Petersburg by allowing her to throw out the pre-game ceremonial first pitch before their game with the New York Yankees. Kahan's participation marked a partnership between the Rays and Florida Holocaust Museum, where she is a volunteer.

The Rays also gave a \$10,000 grant to the Holocaust Museum. Israel will celebrate its 75th anniversary as a nation this Sunday.

The oldest person to throw the first pitch at a Major League Baseball game was Evelyn Jones in 2015 on her 108th birthday. That broke a record previously held by 105-year-old Agnes McKee, who had thrown out the first pitch at a San Diego Padres game the year before.

Kahan was born in Romania and, along with the rest of her family, was sent to the death camp at Auschwitz. She was 21, and World War II was in its latter stages in 1944. The eldest of six siblings, many of her family perished at the camp, but she and a sister survived and were liberated by the Red Army, The Times of Israel reported.

One of her sisters died the day the Auschwitz camp was liberated.

“Of course, it’s hard for me. But I’m still happy that I am here, and I can pray to God for them and for myself,” Kahan told WFTS Tampa.

Kahan eventually returned to Romania after the war and came to the United States in 1967 with her husband and family.

For someone born in 1923, her pitching arm is in excellent condition. She wore a Rays’ uniform and threw a lob to the catcher.

Holocaust survivor Helen Kahan got to throw out the first pitch at the Rays game to celebrate her 100th birthday

: @BallyRays

– Sporting News MLB (@sn_mlb) May 6, 2023

“The more I do, I practice here, the more I’m better,” Kahan told the USA Today. “I did not have time to do it, but now I’m doing it.”

Many of Kahan’s family were present in St. Petersburg to watch her throw the pitching, including 14 grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Kahan says that she is not too old to enjoy a baseball game.

“I love to see youngsters play. They are youngsters now to me,” she said. {eo}

Shawn A. Akers is the online editor at Charisma Media.