



**The Eli Hurvitz Conference**  
on Economy and Society

The  
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## Eli Hurvitz, Z"L

Eli Hurvitz was born on Passover Eve, 1932 in Jerusalem during the British Mandate of Palestine. Two years later, he moved with his family to the new city of Tel Aviv. He studied at HaCarmel School, followed by the Ironi Alef High School, where he was a leader in the *Tzofim* (Israel Scouts).

In May 1948, Eli, while still underage, enlisted in the Israel Defense Forces to fight in Israel's War of Independence. He returned to school in order to complete his matriculation (*Bagrut*) exams, and later joined the newly-formed IDF Nahal Brigade, which founded Kibbutz Tel Katzir.



He was an effective ambassador and recruiter for the Kibbutz – so successful that he recruited Dalia Salomon, who he later married in June 1953. The young couple subsequently moved to Tel Aviv so Eli could earn his university degree in the Tel Aviv branch of the Hebrew University.

As a student of economics, Eli began working in 1953 as a part-time glassware washer in the laboratory in Assia Chemical Labs Ltd., a firm managed by Dalia's father, Nachman Salomon. Eli joined the firm full-time after his graduation in 1957 and was rapidly promoted from clerical to executive roles.

In 1964, Eli led the merger of Assia, a small pharmaceutical plant in Petah Tikva, with Zori, another similar plant in Tel Aviv, and in 1969 acquired a controlling interest in the publically-traded Teva, which was then a small pharmaceutical company in Jerusalem. In 1976, the three firms merged to become Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd., Israel's leading pharmaceutical company with sales of \$28 million. Eli became the CEO.

With Eli's vision and strategic leadership, Teva consolidated the fragmented and nascent Israeli pharmaceutical industry. It then embarked upon a series of foreign acquisitions that created the world's largest generic pharmaceutical company and Israel's largest corporate enterprise.

Throughout his life, Eli maintained a strong commitment to public service, including an inspirational career in the Israel Defense Forces. Eli was deeply committed to the principles of Zionism. He enrolled in the field officer's course and served as a reserve combat officer in the Artillery, earning successive promotions and recognition for

service in times of war and peace. He fought on the front lines of the Sinai Campaign, the Six Day War, the Yom Kippur War, and the First Lebanon War, ultimately retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel. He probably was the first who managed to achieve such a promotion in his military career, while serving in the reserves.

Eli advanced his core principles through his service to academic institutions focused on peace and democracy in Israel and abroad. He chaired the executive committee of the Weizmann Institute of Science (1989-1995) and served as a member of the board of governors of Tel Aviv University (2001-2011). He had a leading role in the planning and eventual opening (2011) of the medical school in Safed, to serve the Israeli communities in the north. In recognition of his lifetime of service, Eli was elected to the international council of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs in the J. F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University (2002-2005).

He was a trusted advisor of all of Israel's presidents, prime ministers and finance ministers, who frequently recruited him for non-political leadership roles. Three years before his death, Eli chaired "Israel 2028: Vision and Strategy for Economy and Society in a Global World," which was an ambitious and "extensive plan to achieve national objectives – rapid, balanced growth and reduction of social gaps – aimed at positioning Israel among the 10-15 leading countries in terms of economic achievement and quality of life, over the next twenty years".

Eli's prolific activity in both the public and private sectors earned him a long list of awards from public and academic institutions, including six honorary degrees. In April 2002, he was awarded the Jewish State's highest honor, the Israel Prize for Special Contribution to Society State.

Eli had a special relationship with the Israel Democracy Institute. Eli saw IDI's work as crucial to strengthening Israeli democracy. He attached great importance to the Institute's efforts to help decision makers devise and implement wise policies based on research, thoughtful deliberation and long-range planning, for the benefit of Israeli society as a whole.

From 2002-2008, Eli led the board of the Israel Democracy Institute. In addition, he was a long standing member of the Caesarea Forum, widely recognized as Israel's most influential economic conference. Eli participated in the prestigious forum until the year he passed away. In his honor, the gathering was renamed The Eli Hurvitz Conference on Economy and Society.

Eli Hurvitz died on November 21, 2011, at the age of 79.