

## Tribute: Charlotte de Grünberg z"l

23.02.24

**The ORT Network is devastated to learn of the death of Professor Charlotte de Grünberg, General Director of the Universidad ORT Uruguay.**

She was a much-loved and hugely-respected member of ORT's international family for many years.

Born in Belgium, Prof de Grünberg moved to Uruguay in 1952 after surviving the Holocaust in hiding in France. A moving book about her experience during the Shoah has been published in Spanish throughout Latin America and in other languages worldwide.

She dedicated her life to education, built the university into a beacon for the whole ORT network, and was internationally recognized for her efforts in doing so.

Dan Green, World ORT Director General and CEO, said: "I was deeply saddened to learn of Charlotte's passing. She has spent decades developing the university into one of Uruguay's leading institutions, serving on a series of international ORT committees and development groups, and collecting a number of international awards for her work.

"We will miss her enthusiasm, expertise and endeavor hugely."

Our thoughts and condolences are with her husband, Dr. José Grunberg, her son Dr. Jorge Grünberg, Rector of the Universidad ORT Uruguay, grandchildren and extended family. We join them in mourning this terrible loss.

### Developing ORT Uruguay

Prof de Grünberg became a teacher in the 1960s and joined the neurolinguistic research team at Hospital de Clínicas, Universidad de la República, in the mid-1970s before moving to ORT Uruguay in 1977.

In an interview in 2020 after she won the Robert Singer Award for Outstanding Senior ORT Professionals, she explained her career progression.

"I had been working in a field completely new in Uruguay at that time: the teaching of second languages, through audio-visual methods. After a few years in this activity, I became fairly well-known in the Uruguayan educational community.

"An ORT Uruguay lay leader contacted me – they had received a donation from Holland: a language laboratory. After I saw the lab and how they were using it, I prepared a report which ended up reaching ORT's headquarters in Switzerland.

"Bernard Wand-Pollak, at that time World ORT Director for Latin America, came from Buenos Aires to thank me for the report and ask me if I could train some people to improve results, which I did. Two years later I became the Director General of ORT Uruguay and had to face new technologies in the fields of computer science."

In the following years, Prof de Grünberg worked with colleagues to develop the university into a leading institution, served on a series of international ORT committees and development groups, and collected a number of international awards for her work.

Universidad ORT Uruguay is one of a small number of Jewish universities in the diaspora. Its Department of Jewish Studies publishes specialist books, documentary films and organizes conferences, courses and seminars including a leading annual Holocaust seminar for teachers.

With a staff of more than 1,000 lecturers and researchers, and more than 10,000 students including young people from all social and cultural backgrounds across Uruguay, Prof de Grünberg oversaw the development of a beacon for the whole ORT network.

She was also the first Uruguayan recipient of the Scopus Award of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2018, and the following year received the Jerusalem Award from the Zionist Organization of Uruguay.

Speaking about her career, Prof de Grünberg said when she took on the role she never imagined the university would one day receive such lofty accolades.

"I was too involved in the daily battle as a private institution in a very secular country with a good state-run and free-of-charge educational system," she said.

"It was a step-by-step process. At that time the ORT school had a secondary level department, teaching only the last three years of high school. Uruguay already had three comprehensive Jewish schools, but no Jewish tertiary level institution.

"I had to make a difficult decision: to move from the secondary level to the tertiary level. We decided to move in that direction – the rest was a question of work, right decisions at the right time and perhaps a bit of luck."



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### Contact

World ORT  
ORT House  
147 Arlington Road  
London, NW1 7ET  
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)20 7446 8500  
Email: wo@ort.org

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