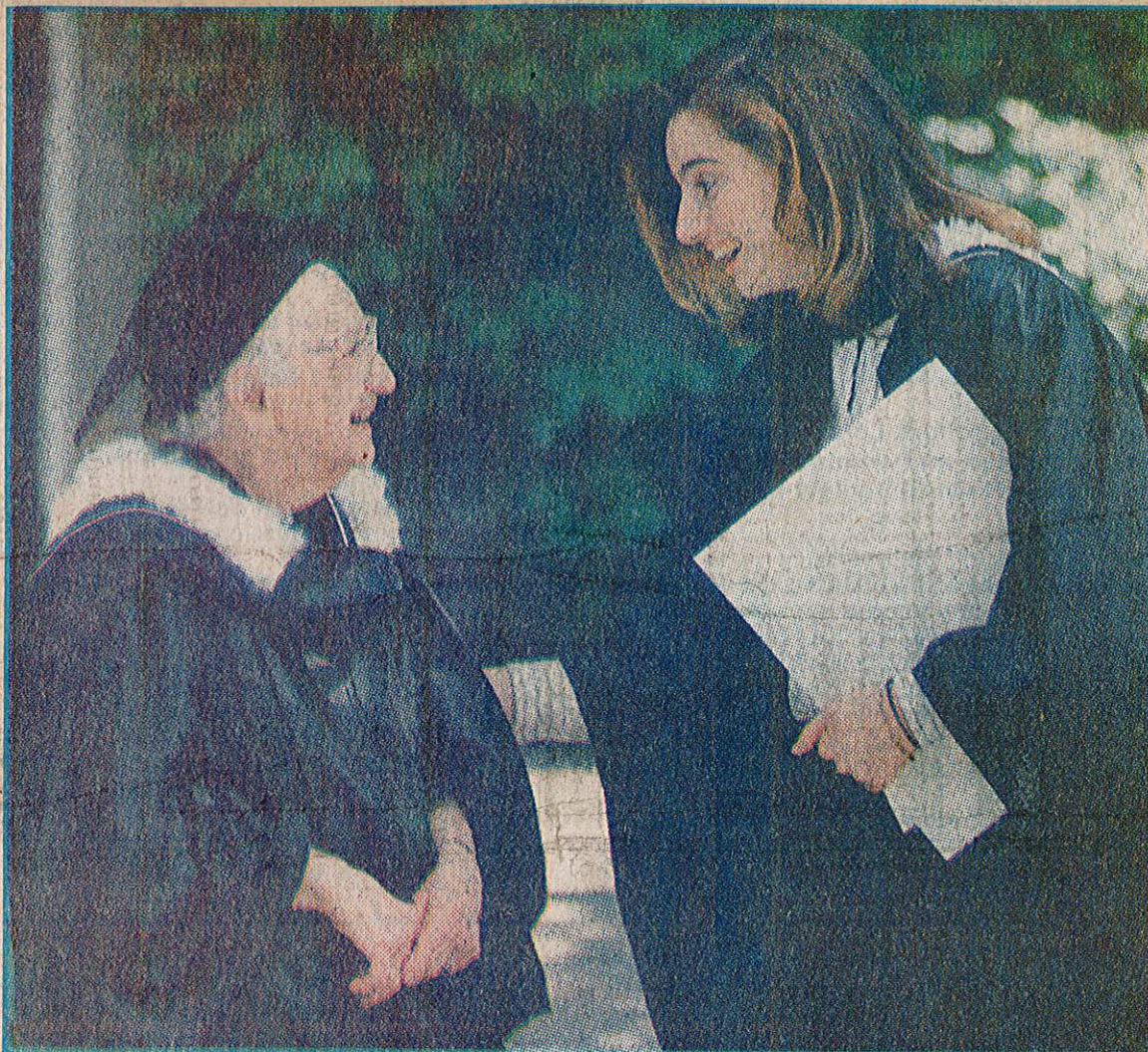


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Selma's a U of T grad at 100



MIKE SLAUGHTER/TORONTO STAR

Selma Plaut, left, and Sadie Lewis may be separated by 78 years, but yesterday they joined together in receiving degrees at the University of Toronto. Plaut, who's 100, says she went for the arts degree simply because she enjoys learning. Story/A7

100-year-old graduate says

By Lynne Ainsworth
TORONTO STAR

Selma Plaut gives new meaning to the phrase lifelong learning.

The 100-year-old university student is the first person to receive an honorary Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Toronto.

Plaut, who turned 100 in April, is four courses shy of earning a 15-course bachelor degree. In celebration of her birthday, the university jumped the gun and awarded her a special degree at a graduation ceremony yesterday.

"I like to be part of those who like to learn," said Plaut, who received a standing ovation at the Convocation Hall ceremony for New College and Woodsworth College graduates.

"You should not give up living because you are old. It's so important just to have that day out of the house."

Plaut shared the stage with her son, Rabbi Gunther Plaut, who told graduates: "You are alive as long as you grow, read and learn."

Plaut enrolled at the Woodsworth College in 1978, causing a bit of a stir.

"The first class, everyone asked: 'What are you doing here?' " she said. " 'I'm here to learn,' I said, and that was the end of the questions."

Arthur Kruger, principal of Woodsworth College, called Plaut a professor's dream — someone who loves learning, who questions and who thinks carefully before she speaks or writes.