



Federal
Inter-Agency
Holocaust
Remembrance
Program

31st Annual Federal Inter-Agency Holocaust Remembrance Program

Stories of Courage

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (EDT)

This year's program will feature two Holocaust survivors: **Ruth Cohen**, from Rockville, Maryland, and **Allan Hall**, from Miami, Florida. The program will be moderated by **Ellen Germain**, Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues at the U.S. Department of State. The program will also feature remarks from other federal officials, including Ambassador **Deborah Lipstadt**, Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism.

The program will be broadcast live from the U.S. Department of State. To view the livestream, please visit the Federal Inter-Agency Holocaust Remembrance Program website: HolocaustRemembrance.org. Sign language interpreting will be provided. Requests for reasonable accommodation may be submitted to wendy.doernberg@eeoc.gov.

The Federal Inter-Agency Holocaust Remembrance Program started at the Department of Education in 1994 and now includes dozens of federal agencies. The Program educates federal employees, students, and the public about the Holocaust through the stories of survivors, who show what can happen if prejudice, hate, and intolerance against any individual or group of people goes unchallenged.

The Holocaust (also called the Shoah) was the systematic, state-sponsored murder of six million Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators during World War II. It was part of the "Final Solution" – the Nazi plan to annihilate more than nine million Jews in Europe. The Nazis murdered millions of others as well. In 1980, Congress expressed its intent that Holocaust remembrance should be observed throughout the United States each year.

Ruth Cohen was born on April 26, 1930, in Czechoslovakia. In March 1944, the Nazis invaded, and Ruth and her family were forced from their home and into a designated ghetto. The following month, Ruth, her family, and others living in the ghetto were sent to Auschwitz. Ruth and her sister Teresa were able to stay together, but they were separated from the rest of their family. Although Ruth did not know it at the time, her mother, brother, and cousins were sent to the gas chambers, while her father was selected for labor.

In late October 1944, after a failed uprising at Auschwitz, Ruth and her sister were sent to a concentration camp in Nuremberg, Germany. Although Ruth was very sick by this time, she was still able to do the work assigned to her. By February 1945, the camp was destroyed from constant bombing. Ruth and her sister were

sent to Holyshov, a subcamp of Flossenbürg concentration camp. They worked in a factory that manufactured airplane parts. Three months later, Ruth and her sister were liberated.

Ruth and her sister made their way back to their hometown where they reunited with their father. The family immigrated to the United States in 1948 and settled in New York City where Ruth found a job as a cashier for the Education Alliance. Ruth currently volunteers for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Allan Hall was born in Krakow, Poland in 1935. He led a charmed life until September 1939 when the Nazis marched into Poland. To escape the Nazis, the family walked over 200 miles to Lvov to find safety during the Soviet occupation of that part of Poland.

In 1941 the Nazis attacked and the family was subject to Nazi repression. Shortly afterwards Allan was the first child picked up in a children's pogrom in the Lvov Ghetto. Allan believes that he is the only child who escaped. His father bribed the Nazis to release him. With false identity papers, the family fled to Warsaw where Allan and his mother were arrested and taken to the train station to be sent to Treblinka. When the trains briefly ceased running, Allan was marched to an orphanage in the Warsaw Ghetto. He was rescued again, this time by a Polish Christian man, sent by his father.

Allan's father had a rhinoplasty and bleached his hair to pass as an Aryan. He rented an office in a high-rise building which housed German Air Force headquarters of Poland and other military offices, Allan and his mother spent two years hiding in the closet in that office building.

During the Warsaw Uprising in 1944, the family crawled, under sniper fire to a bomb shelter where Allan's mother gave birth to a two pound baby boy, Andrew. After being liberated by the Soviets, Allan's father was arrested. Knowing the family might be used as hostages, Allan's mother instructed Allan to take the baby and make his way to Palestine. For months, eleven-year-old Allan carried his two year old baby brother across Europe trying to get to Italy and to take a ship to Palestine.

Allan's father escaped from a Soviet prison and the family was reunited in Austria. In 1947, Allan, his brother, and his parents emigrated to the United States. Twelve-year-old Allan, unable to read or write, and not speaking a word of English, began school. He went on to graduate from the University of Florida with undergraduate law degrees.

Allan lost his uncle, two aunts, his grandparents, and his mother's entire family to the Nazis. He regularly gives presentations about his experience to remind people of the relevance of the Holocaust and to resist injustice whenever it occurs. He published a memoir, which he distributes electronically free of charge, called "[*Hiding in Plain Sight.*](#)"