

# Holocaust Survivor Biography: Kurt Herman

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Kurt Herman was born in October 1929 in Vienna, Austria. He went to school across the street from his house with Jews and non-Jews and frequently played with his friends after school. After Germany's annexation of Austria in March 1938, Kurt's non-Jewish school friends began calling him names and wearing swastikas.

The Nazis seized his family's fabric business and his father was in constant danger of being arrested during random house raids by Stormtroopers. After Kristallnacht, the Night of the Broken Glass, on November 9-10, 1938, Kurt's family tried to flee Austria.

When Kurt was ten, his mother answered a newspaper ad looking for children to immigrate to America. A nurse and pediatrician interviewed and tested Kurt for his health, intelligence, and his ability to be separated from his parents. In May 1939, Kurt was selected, along with 49 other children, aged 5-14, to immigrate to Philadelphia.

Kurt set sail on the USS President Harding, arriving in New York Harbor on June 3, 1939. He was first assigned to a children's summer camp and then placed with a foster family in Allentown, PA. Within two years, Kurt was reunited with his parents. His grandparents, however, were murdered in Auschwitz.

Kurt feels a great responsibility to act in ways that pay respect to the memory of his family. Herman has three daughters and eight grandchildren. He is a retired financial officer and a frequent speaker to school groups and others about his experiences during the Holocaust.

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## Witness to History Project:

The Witness To History Project is designed to further the message and lessons of the Holocaust by direct interaction between students or interested adults and Holocaust survivors. Participants "adopt" a survivor by learning his or her unique account of via listening to the survivor tell his/her story, asking questions, writing a biography, reviewing a videotape, and memorizing and re-telling the story to others. Ultimately, the participant will have the lifelong job of educating others about the Holocaust by sharing this personal narrative. Contact the Holocaust Awareness Museum to participate.

**Holocaust Awareness Museum and Education Center**

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