

## Holocaust Liberator Biography: Dr. Leon Bass

---



Dr. Leon Bass is a former high school principal and veteran of World War II who has dedicated much of his life as a teacher, a school administrator, and a speaker, to fighting racism wherever it exists.

As a nineteen-year-old soldier serving in a segregated unit of the U.S. Army, Leon Bass participated in the liberation of Buchenwald concentration camp in 1945. That moment changed his life. "I was an angry soldier," says Bass. "I was being asked to fight for freedom while at the same time, as a black man, I was constantly being told in many ways that I wasn't good enough to have that freedom."

Following his service in the U.S. Army 183rd Engineer Combat Battalion in World War II, Bass graduated from West Chester University of Pennsylvania and later received a doctorate from Temple University. He taught at several schools in the School District of Philadelphia and was a principal at the Benjamin Franklin High School in Philadelphia for 14 years.

He has presented his story to audiences throughout the United States and across the world. He was a participant in the International Liberators Conference, held in Washington DC in 1981. In 1994 he was the keynote speaker at the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust, and in 1996 he was awarded the Pearlman Award for Humanitarian Advancement from Jewish Women International. He appeared in the Academy Award-nominated Documentary "Liberators: Fighting on Two Fronts in World War II." In 2011 he published his book "Good Enough: One Man's Memoir on the Price of a Dream."

# The Holocaust Awareness Museum and Education Center

The Holocaust Awareness Museum and Education Center, *America's First Holocaust Museum*, is fifty years young. Yaakov Riz, the museum's founder, was a Holocaust survivor who lost eighty-three members of his family in Hitler's death camps. Riz vowed that if he survived he would dedicate his life to establishing a museum that would memorialize the six million Jews and millions of non-Jews who perished at the hands of Nazi barbarism. The museum's genesis, growth, and struggle against intolerance are the realization of his dream, courage, and commitment.

## **Why Teach Holocaust History?**

The Holocaust was a watershed event, not only in the 20th century, but also in the entire history of humanity. The study of the Holocaust provides us with one of the most effective ways to work with students to examine the basic moral issues and value systems. We have an opportunity to teach students through the use of the primary sources in the museum to explore the fate of the Jewish people and other innocents in Nazi Germany and throughout Europe between the years 1933-1945.

## **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**

[www.hamec.org](http://www.hamec.org)

**Kleinlife, Suite 210, 10100 Jamison Ave, Philadelphia 19116**

**Phone: (215) 464-4701 Fax: (215) 464-4703 Email: [info@hamec.org](mailto:info@hamec.org)**

Copyright 2015 Holocaust Awareness Museum. All Rights Reserved