

Second Generation: Adlai P. Joseph



Adlai was born in Newark, NJ and now resides in Media, PA. He is a registered pharmacist and has worked in the retail and hospital practices. Growing up in his home, he noticed differences between his parents and his friends' parents. Being from Czechoslovakia, both his parents, Siegmund and Yolanda both spoke with accents, and sometimes conversed in different languages. Noticeable was his mother's emotional struggles. As he got older, Adlai would ask his mother why she would cry whenever the subject of parents and sibling came up. In his younger years, both parents would not say what their source of pain was.

One Sunday morning at Hebrew school, Adlai saw a movie, showing the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps. At that moment, things all added up for him, and he went home telling his parents what he had seen that morning. "I think I now know what happened to you during WWII. This is what happened to you guys and your families, yes?" My Mom acknowledged this is what indeed had happened to them and this is what made her so sad. She said she was sorry she could not tell me any sooner, being afraid to emotionally scar her child. As we now know, this was very common for survivor parents not to speak of their Holocaust experiences.

Both of Adlai's parents were Holocaust survivors. They grew up in an area that is now designated as Slovakia, both from 2 tiny farming communities, Iske & Derigne, that were adjacent to each other. Being born 1922 and 1923, they met as small children, when Adlai's mother Yolanda would visit her older married sister. Yolanda caught his father Siegmund's eye, and he would proudly ride his bicycle to greet her whenever she came to visit.

In April of 1944 Adlai's parents were each arrested along with their families in their respective towns. Yolanda was sent to and worked in the Ungvar ghetto, spent time in Auschwitz, and ultimately was forced onto a death march until her liberation. Siegmund was taken to a Nazi-run workcamp, building bunkers for the German army. He eventually went into hiding posing in various roles as a non-Jew. With the exception of Yolanda's brother, both Yolanda and Siegmund lost their entire families during the war.

Adlai recounts the miraculous survival and remarkable reunion of his parents in his gripping explanation of the power of their astounding grit, perseverance, hope, faith, and love. Yolanda published a book in 2001 recalling her Holocaust experience entitled, "I Remember". Adlai speaks in loving memory of both of his parents.



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