Upstander Ripple Effect Episode 4 transcript

**Kevin Aldridge** 00:02

What do we mean by the upstander ripple effect,

**Werner Coppel** 00:06

stand up against hate and prejudice, even if it does not affect you

**Jackie Congedo** 00:13

From moral dilemmas in today's headlines, upstanders who rose for justice and stories of survival,

**Kevin Aldridge** 00:19

be prepared to walk away from this conversation inspired and motivated.

**Jackie Congedo** 00:28

Welcome to episode four of the upstander ripple effect. I'm Jackie Congedo

**Kevin Aldridge** 00:33

and I'm Kevin Aldridge.

**Jackie Congedo** 00:34

So good to have all of you with us. We have a great lineup for today, but before we get into the nuts and bolts of today's episode. Just thought it would be worth, you know, talking a little bit about new beginnings, because we are in a time of new beginnings. You know, everybody's got kids going off to school or starting up their, you know, graduate degrees or coming back from vacation and jumping back into a new chapter at work. And it's an exciting time to be thinking about new things. Yes, this is the new sort of a new chapter for the Holocaust & Humanity Center. Officially, today, I guess, is my first day in this new position. But, and as I've been thinking about this, you know, people have asked me, How are you feeling about it? How you feeling about it? And I didn't really have words to put to that until this past week, the three year old, you know, little Junie, who is headed back to school. And she's, she's a pandemic baby. She's a Velcro child. She loves to be attached to me at all times. And so I was worried about, you know, how she gonna deal with the first day and going back? And so I asked her, I said, How you feeling? Junie about your first day back at school? And she said, "Mom, (three years old) I'm a little anxious, but I'm brave and I'm smart, and so it's going to be okay." And so when I think about this new chapter of work and of you know, my own journey, of course, yeah, I'm a little nervous, but I'm brave and I'm smart and so it's going to be okay. That's what I keep telling myself. And I also just think, like, man, what nuggets of wisdom from a little person

**Kevin Aldridge** 02:11

Absolutely. Well, we know, we know where she gets it from.

**Jackie Congedo** 02:13

I can't take the credit

**Kevin Aldridge** 02:15

she comes from good stock. Yeah. I mean, I think that, well, one the things that kids say and and what we can learn from them. But yeah, I mean, definitely wise words to live by, I mean, because anxiety and anxiousness, that's something that, you know, we all live, we all feel. And I think especially in these days and times where mental health is such a huge issue, and we're starting to get a better handle around how to deal with that and how to manage it. You know, in fact, I was talking to the youth department at my church this past Sunday, and we were talking about that very thing, new beginning, starting the new school year. And I was asking them, What are they anxious or worried about coming into the to the new school year? And each of them named something. And then I asked them how they were going to to manage that and and what we arrived on was sort of this understanding of the things that we can control and the things that we can't control, and and doing our best to maximize the things that we can control and to try not to worry as much about the things that we can't control, Right? And just trusting that we're smart, that we're brave, and that we'll be able to, yeah, we'll be able to right, work through, you know, work through the difficult spots, but but doing our very level best to manage those things that we can control. And I think, you know, that's a great way to look at it. And just very, very wise words.

**Jackie Congedo** 03:38

Yeah, I mean. And I also just thought about, you know, we talk a lot about the VIA character strengths, the 24 character strengths, and the fact that she sort of parroted back to me, I mean, she basically was strength-spotting herself to say, yeah, there's adversity in this situation, and I'm gonna meet it with strength. I'm gonna meet it with my bravery and my smarts. And, I mean, it's just remarkable that she because I'm thinking about the way we were taught, you know, in school, and it was, it was, you know, to focus on, you know, everything's fine. Everything's fine and right, you know, what are you looking forward to about school starting? Yeah,

**Jackie Congedo** 04:19

Absolutely nothing - I'm terrified! But just to be able to create space to actually wrestle with the anxiety and to name it and be in community about it, like you did for these kids at your church, normalize it a little bit, and then that paves the way for, you know, this sort of positive psychology, to be able to to come from, come at it from a position of strength, or, you know, in your context, you know, sort of a spiritual grounding, and it's what can't what can we rely on in these moments of adversity? We can rely on our faith. We can rely on our strengths, our, you know, our our resilience, our bravery, our intelligence. Those are the things that we can control. So, you know, just a shout out to all the people who are having new beginnings. You have a new beginning. Yeah, just last week.

**Kevin Aldridge** 05:08

Yeah, entering and entering a new decade. Just turned 50, and so I don't know what that's supposed to feel like. People ask me, I don't feel any different than I felt the last week before. Maybe that'll show up, you know, on down the line with some aches and pains. But no, I'm just just very thankful. And you know, it's been a great 50 up to this point. And you know, people who've been on that journey say it gets better after 50, so we'll find out, yeah, you know, looking forward to it.

**Jackie Congedo** 05:35

We'll check back in. You know, maybe we'll be sitting here when you're 100 years old. We'll ask you, which was better the first

**Kevin Aldridge** 05:41

100! I don't know. I don't know about that. You know, I often say I don't want to live past the point where I could be useful and do and enjoy the things that I that, that I would love.

**Jackie Congedo** 05:53

Here's the thing, though,

**Kevin Aldridge** 05:54

to be able to do

**Jackie Congedo** 05:55

If you have a life like Al Miller had at 100 years old,

**Kevin Aldridge** 05:59

absolutely,

**Jackie Congedo** 06:00

that's 100 years that are really, you know, I think about the fact that he was speaking up until, you know, the year he died, at 100 like you very well, could

**Kevin Aldridge** 06:11

I'd love to be Al Miller, yeah, like, if I can look and be in the shape that Al Miller was in at 100 I'll take that. I'll take that 10 out of 10 times,

**Jackie Congedo** 06:21

 I wish that and more for you.

**Kevin Aldridge** 06:24

Well, thank you,

**Jackie Congedo** 06:25

and happy birthday, and yeah, and again, just a shout out to everybody in their new beginnings.

**Kevin Aldridge** 06:31

All right. Well, listen the theme for our episode this week, and the stories that we're going to be sharing are all about bearing witness. And so I'd like to share a quote from Jessica Blitchok, who works in Jewish Community Relations on the West Coast, and she says that "Bearing witness is not passive. It is the work of active listening, not looking away, and, most importantly, responding."

**Kevin Aldridge** 06:58

So I just thought that was a very powerful quote about bearing witness. And you know, you, you worked in the media for a number of years. I still work in the media. And so we know the importance of bearing witness. It's sort of what we did for a living and what we still do for a living in different capacities, and the importance of not only watching and paying attention to what's going around, and listening and hearing and observing, but then being able to relay and tell those stories to others is just a very important part of our journey. And each of us can learn something about the role that we can play, you know, in bearing witness to whether that's our own personal, family histories, our community histories, our world histories, that that stories are important. And I'm sure as we go through today, we're going to understand a little bit better why the important, the importance of bearing history, and what that really means in terms of of helping us create a better society.

**Jackie Congedo** 07:58

Yeah, I think that's, you know, the way you framed that in terms of the work of, you know, journalism, and for me, there's so much synergy there, because you're right, like, I'm not in the, you know, in the business of day to day writing or telling stories anymore in that way, but I absolutely am in this place of telling, you know, connecting people with these incredible stories and bearing witness. And so in some ways, you're right, there's a lot of synergy there.

**Jackie Congedo** 08:27

When I think about, you know, bearing witness and and just the work of remembering we, you know, the Holocaust community, survivor community in Cincinnati, lost, lost a friend this past week or two weeks ago as of this taping, so probably a little bit later, as people are listening. But Renate Neeman, who was a speaker for our Coppel Speakers Bureau for many years, she she spoke to hundreds of kids and other folks at schools and public events. She actually traveled a lot for us. She, you know, would speak at libraries in Kentucky and colleges in Indiana. I mean, she was really prolific in terms of how she gave voice and how she really again, was a, was a sort of a foundational force in bearing witness to the history. She is an interest. I figured I'd share just a little bit about about Renate and her history, and then I wanted to share an anecdote. I was... had the privilege of representing our team, our staff and our board at her funeral last week, and her son shared a beautiful sort of piece of wisdom from her that I wanted to share so so first, just to give you a little bit more about Renate, she was born in Germany, and her her parents fled to the Netherlands after her father found out that he was going to be arrested by by the Gestapo, and so she actually lived with her grandmother until her parents arranged for her to travel safely to Amsterdam, and then they all had to go into hiding separately.

**Jackie Congedo** 10:05

So she she actually had false identity papers and worked as a maid for a Christian family in the Netherlands, and her parents were hidden at a fraternity house in Amsterdam at Amsterdam University. And our Director of Holocaust Programs and Museum Experiences, Trinity Johnson, was telling me, who knew Renate much better than I did, that one of the stories Renate would always share was as a little girl. She she was in hiding separately from her whole family, and she would, she would actually go out to a bridge. And her mother would, would get to a place where they could see each other from this bridge, and they would, they would like just wave to each other to remember, like, it's going to be okay. It's going to be okay. And that was the connectivity that she had with her family during the war.

**Jackie Congedo** 10:59

So, you know, this was a woman who certainly struggled and suffered and and yet, at her funeral, her son shared this beautiful anecdote. Her son said, "You might know she was a Holocaust survivor, not in the camps, but in hiding. In Holland, she was surrounded by people who would have who would cheerfully have murdered her. We were talking one time about people who were bitter about how their lives turned out. And I said, 'If anyone has a right to be bitter, it's mom.' And mom shot right back, 'Yes, but look at all the people who put their lives on the line for me.' And she told us about how when the Jewish school got shut down, a nearby church took her in, and when the Nazis came to tear away the Jewish child, mom, the nuns refused and stared them down and sent them away. Those nuns put their lives on the line for mom, and mom never forgot it. She couldn't be bitter, because what she saw was the droplet of goodness, not the ocean of evil."

**Kevin Aldridge** 12:01

Wow, that's awesome. That's an awesome quote. And I think it's just a great perspective that I think more of us could and should learn to adopt. We have a tendency to I think just as human beings focus on the negative, the things that don't go right, versus the things that tend to go in our favor. You know, I I always say that, you know, on some of the ventures that I'm in you, you focus more on the no's than you do on the support that you actually get. And when you do that, sometimes you can take for granted or not celebrate those who actually do support you. And I think Renate's point of view, instead of focusing on all of those people around her who would have surely have rather seen her dead or killed her themselves, she chose to focus on the goodness of the folks who had love in their hearts and wanted to keep her alive.

**Kevin Aldridge** 12:59

And I think that that is a very healthy when we talk about mental health and that sort of thing, like having that perspective, I think is a difference between someone who can truly become someone who survives and thrives, versus someone who maybe survives but lingers and lives in the anger and the bitterness of of what has happened to them. And I think that, you know, interestingly enough, in these times where not, not to get too political, but I think, you know, we're at that juncture, I think as a country, do we want to continue to live in this, this area of grievance and and and just complaining, or do we want to move into an area of joy and positivity and looking at the possibilities of moving forward versus dealing with the grievances of the past. And I think that, you know, each of us has to, you know, make that determination of how we want to live. But I think living in bitterness is just a very terrible way to live and to just continue to live in victimization. And it seemed like Renate was not going to be that type of person. She wasn't going to live,

**Jackie Congedo** 14:05

despite the fact that she had every reason to, every reason to, yeah, you know, it's not just Renate. I mean, this is, this is the story widely speaking of our survivors,

**Kevin Aldridge** 14:15

But it's a choice. I mean, that's a choice, that's a choice to live that way. Yeah, absolutely. And that's and that's the power that we talk about, of the of this ripple effect, of the ability to choose, to empower oneself, versus, you know, living in the rightfully so again, rightfully she could have lived there, and people certainly would have understood, but she wouldn't have had the impact that she had by making the choice to say, I'm going to live this way. Yeah, not, not wallow in the in the past hurts.

**Jackie Congedo** 14:49

Yeah, sort of incredible legacy and and we find it such a privilege to be able to continue to make sure that her story is told and to bear witness to her, her story, and so many other stories connected to hers. You know, as you were talking about these tensions between, you know, the the darkness in our world, and those was the droplet of goodness in an ocean of evil is what Renate's son was saying.

**Jackie Congedo** 15:18

I want to pivot to a piece that recently ran in the Wall Street Journal about the work of Holocaust museums in the field, and the fact that, you know, this is a field as a whole that's entrusted to tell this history during a particular time when there are, you know, not only forces of rising antisemitism, but more broadly, sort of these, these, you know, very serious challenges around hate and division and, you know, and what is the future we're writing, and how do we write that future and and the responsibility and the role that museums should or should not play in those things? And so, you know, this piece by Edward Rothstein makes a very I would say the thesis is, is largely critical of the field. You know, talking about how the field was built by survivors, and in our case, I mean, this is, this is very true, right? We, we are a museum that has its foundations by survivors who came to Cincinnati and rebuilt their lives. And they came together with a mission to educate. And they they built the center. And, you know, the critique is that yes, and you know, they came here, and, I mean, we were sort of like sloughing this off earlier because, you know, Rothstein makes this this quote in the article. You know, "they also ultimately settled in North America, where they thrived on post war liberalism." I'm not really sure that they would describe it that way, right? I think for sure, there was a lot of gratitude, and, you know, the relief at finding a place where they could pursue their own potential in a way that wasn't going to be so deeply threatened, but also it was not a rosy journey. Wasn't an easy journey. And so he's just, you know, he's saying this, this is a field that's doing this work during a time of rising antisemitism, and there are limitations to the way the field's been thinking about it, you know.

**Jackie Congedo** 17:22

Making sure to paint enough of the context about who Jews are, humanizing Jewish life. It's not just about Jewish death and also helping people wrestle with this concept of antisemitism, which is not the same. It's not a synonym for Holocaust, right? It is a broader concept, with the Holocaust being one very violent and arguably the most horrific in terms of the catastrophe manifestation of antisemitism, right? But, you know, there's a piece in here also about, you know, comparing it you and I were talking about this easier, yeah, earlier. You know, "When we go to a museum about American slavery, for example, we expect to focus on the history and learn its ramifications. It would be startling if the narrative suddenly came to an end and galleries explored other examples of slavery while we were being urged to be an upstander against all injustice." And he's saying that's what Holocaust museums writ large do. I'm curious like, your thoughts about that?

**Kevin Aldridge** 18:21

Yeah, well, so when I read that, I the first thing I thought about was the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, which does exactly what you know he, he wrote there in that thing is that certainly it focuses on the history of slavery in America, and the Underground Railroad, which is, which is actually a very specific experience, experience within the overall experience of slavery. Yet that museum doesn't just limit itself, while it is, you know, largely about that. It doesn't just limit itself to that, and it actually talks about slavery around the world, whether that's human trafficking or other types of slavery that exists. So it does, it is that exact type of museum that focuses on one particular kind of like, almost kind of like the Holocaust Museum, in a sense that you focus on a very specific experience or point in history of that experience, and but then you also expand it to, you know, broader topics in an area. And, I mean, you know, look, you can, you can argue one way is better or another way is, is is worse. I think what you want to create in these, these spaces, is an overall educational experience. I think they can, they can cover, you know the gamut, because when you're talking about the Jewish experience, Jewish history, it's way more than one chapter. Yes, one chapter, right, exactly. And so while that chapter is very significant and very important and deserves to be highlighted, and we deserve to be educated around that, and a lot of museums have a very specific mission. I think it's okay to kind of look at that mission and say, do we need to modify the parameters of that somewhat, to expand it, you know, maybe a little bit. And that seems to be kind of like what the author is kind of implying is that this has been the specific mission of Holocaust museums. Maybe we need to think about kind of amending that mission a little bit, and I think

**Jackie Congedo** 19:00

or providing context.

**Kevin Aldridge** 20:25

Yeah, exactly.

**Kevin Aldridge** 20:26

And I always think that that's a good thing for any organization to kind of look at what we're doing, and is what we're doing the most effective way? Are there other ways that we could be more effective? And I think any organization that's not going through that process on kind of a semi regular basis, right? You run the risk of, you know, getting stagnant, becoming stale, or, in many cases, you know, losing relevancy, or the attention of the audiences that you're trying to attract. So I think you know what the author there is suggesting, is not a bad suggestion to say, to take a look at, you know, do Holocaust museums need to provide more context, particularly as it pertains to antisemitism? Because here's the thing, like with with slavery, it's kind of straightforward. Racism in America is kind of straightforward. You know, people were disliked because of the color of their skin. They were thought to be lesser than subhuman. When it gets to the to the essence of Jewish hate, you know, the question is, why do people hate Jews? Right? Like so, I think if you want to understand the Holocaust in that situation, the explanation of why Jews are hated is a critical part of better understanding how the Holocaust came to be, why it happened, and why it's significant, and why even some of the the concerns and themes that existed then are even still relevant today, and why we need to pay attention so, so that maybe seems to be at the heart of what he's trying to get at is this context of antisemitism, and maybe doing a better job of explaining, you know, why Jews are hated, and helping people wrap their minds around that a little bit better in some of the ways that you know, we understand slavery, because antisemitism, you know, we've talked about this, is very

**Jackie Congedo** 22:20

it's elusive.

**Kevin Aldridge** 22:20

Yeah, it's much harder to wrap your arms around, I think, for the average person, in ways that racism is not, you know, racism is sort of very elementary in your face. It's kind of easy to understand. Okay, I can, I can see that the skin color, yeah, right. You know, antisemitism operates much more on conspiracy, and when we're living in an age where conspiracies are rampant, you know, everything's a conspiracy. Nothing's a conspiracy. That can be very difficult for people to wrap their arms around and even know antisemitism when they're seeing it, to even stand up, even stand up against it.

**Jackie Congedo** 22:59

Yeah, yeah. A couple things about that. So a while ago, we were in Washington, our team to do some sort of field work. We're looking at doing some improvements in our humanity gallery. We're looking at other experiences at Smithsonian and other museums in Washington, in the area, and we went to the African American History Museum. The relative (I'm saying new, but that dates me) like it's not so new anymore, new one of the newer museums on the mall. And I have to say that, you know now, this is not, this is not an Underground Railroad Freedom Center. This is not a museum that is really focused specifically on a on a chapter. This is a museum with a mandate, much like many Jewish heritage museums, to teach about an identity, right? And I don't know if you've been, have you seen

**Kevin Aldridge** 23:44

I have not, no,

**Jackie Congedo** 23:45

yeah, it's, it's, it's really remarkable. I mean, it's huge. It's, I think, five or six floors, and the first three floors the sub sub, sub grade, right? So the three floors underground are focused pretty exclusively on the trials of the identity. So it's it's the struggles around slavery and civil rights, racism, more broadly speaking, and then the three floors above ground are the triumphs of the identity. So the totality of it paints this much more human picture of, you know, and we, and the nature of these things is we don't get to pick, we don't get to pick what, which one, right? Those of us who have these identities, any identity that we have, it comes with people who don't like us for that identity, and ways that that identity makes our lives enriched and diverse and meaningful, and are gifts to us, right, and so - and to the world. And so I just, I loved, I loved the way it was framed, and the fullness of it. And I think about the field, again, of Holocaust museums. And then I think the challenge in this country is that in a place like Cincinnati, we we are a Holocaust Museum. We are not a museum of Jewish heritage. We are we're not designed to, you know, for you to come through. And this is just a little chapter, and the rest of it is about the broader scope of Jewish history and Jewish contemporary life. That's not our mandate, and it won't ever be our mandate, you know, at least in the near future. And so the question, though, becomes to your point. The reality is, if people are wrestling with the conversation around antisemitism today, if they and actually, even if they're not, even if they you know, if they want to know more about Jews, or even if they don't. Odds are, in many cases, people who come through our museum, this may be their first interaction with antisemitism, with Jewish life. And so knowing that, I feel we have a responsibility in this context, in our city, to at least provide the right context,

**Jackie Congedo** 26:01

so that people can digest this chapter of history, you know, with the right framing, and sort of, you know, come to it in in in a more, a fuller way, so that they can take the lessons and actually meaningfully apply them. So to your point, you know, what I what I hope we can do as a field, and certainly here in Cincinnati is and it's all a challenge. What can you do in the average time a visitor spends in a museum, right? Like an hour and a half? What can you get done? Right? But we're our team is is working on really evolving our tours, our resources, even aspects of the museum, so that when people come in, they understand there are these people, and they're the Jewish people, and they are white and black and brown and every other ethnicity. And by the way, there's this thing called antisemitism that started when the Jewish people started, and it is hatred for people who are Jewish. This identity that's not just a religious identity, but it's a cultural identity. There's a peoplehood aspect to it, and so, and it's a conspiracy theory, this, this phenomenon of antisemitism, and so it showed up in so many different ways throughout history, but, but at the end of the day, whether the Jews or the communists or the capitalists or the ones that are spreading disease, or the ones who are so superior and wealthy that they're controlling things, right, right? All these things contradict each other, and the reason for that is because it's always whatever society feels is the worst thing in the moment. That's the Jew. That's the Jews, right?

**Kevin Aldridge** 26:01

yes,

**Jackie Congedo** 27:30

So, so if we understand that before we go a deep dive on this particular history in the 1930s and 40s, then we can see that, ah, there's the hallmarks of it. That's what it looked like in this time, and it allows us to think more critically about in our time, what does that look like? And I think that's the critique of this author is, you know, it's not to say that we shouldn't universalize. I mean, well, maybe he's that's what he's saying. I feel it is not just what we we should do, but it's what we must do. I mean, this is what our survivors - This is the whole point is, you know, I think about Werner Coppel, and, you know, "Stand up to hate and prejudice even when it doesn't affect you." Like, the whole lesson from this history is that we should resist dehumanization, whether it's happening to Jews or happening to anyone else. And so we're going to continue to do that. And I think we have to make sure that we're providing the right context, so that when it comes to antisemitism in our world today, which is a real threat to Jewish communities, and by the way, to our freedoms as people and democratic societies, we have to be able to see it. We have to be able to understand it. We have to be able to know its dangers and speak up against it. So there's more we can do there, and I'm looking forward to seeing. I actually think we're, if I don't say so myself, in a position in Cincinnati to lead on this. And there's going to be much more, much more to come on that.

**Jackie Congedo** 28:50

The other piece I wanted to touch on is related to bearing witness and related to survivors and this history. So our two of my colleagues, Trinity Johnson and Cori silbernagel. Trinity, as I mentioned, is our Director of Holocaust Programs and Museum Experiences. Cori leads all of our exhibitions and our collection. Is our Director of Collections and Exhibitions. And both of them were selected to participate in this sort of week long intensive, actually, at Auschwitz. And they, this was, I think, held by the museum there on site. Gonna get the name right here. So it's the International Summer Academy organized by the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust. And so they traveled to Eastern Europe, to Poland, and spent a good week there. And you know, related to what this Wall Street Journal talks about, you know that the tension between the stories of survival is thehe magnitude of the loss, right,

**Kevin Aldridge** 30:01

right.

**Jackie Congedo** 30:03

Cori actually talked about she shared this with our staff when she got back, the value, among other values, that this trip provided for her was just sort of being immersed in the magnitude of the loss. Our stories that we tell in the museum and what grounds us in our mission and in Cincinnati are these stories of survival and resilience of our survivors, and so many millions of people didn't survive to tell their stories. And I know the survivors feel this huge responsibility and weight which it's not theirs, it's our collective responsibility, but they feel it to bear witness for all those people who can't for themselves, right? But, you know, Cori and Trinity just talked about how when you're there on site in Eastern Europe, it's everywhere. You can't escape it. It's like, you know, talking about walking through Warsaw and remnants of the get, not remnants pieces. I mean, these, these aren't ancient. These are pieces of the ghetto wall that contained communities of Jude right, where Jews were, were basically imprisoned. You know, they were confined within these, within these ghettos - are still there, and so people are going about their contemporary lives, you know, having their breakfast, taking their kids to school, going to sporting games, whatever it is, and in their backyard, in their courtyard or their apartment, is a piece of the Warsaw Ghetto wall, literally just, you know, still there, right?

**Jackie Congedo** 31:35

Another really chilling anecdote was Trinity was talking about her visit to Plaszow, which, which was sort of featured in the film Schindler's List. This is a concentration camp and, and it is a largely from what she shared, sort of an open site now, where, I don't think it is designated parkland, but it's sort of treated like parkland by the people who live there. And the history on this site is the concentration camp was built because by bulldozing two Jewish cemeteries. So what you have now is,

**Jackie Congedo** 32:20

in essence, this area that people use like they would use a park, play Frisbee on, have picnics on. You know, the fields are full of sort of wildflowers and grasses that are growing and six inches below those flowers, and the Frisbee playing is gravel that is not just made up of stones, but actually you can see the Hebrew letters on these pieces of granite, because these were the destroyed headstones from these Jewish cemeteries where this concentration camp was built, right?

**Jackie Congedo** 32:54

So it's just like, you know, and I know, for Trinity, she was like choked up talking about it, because she just the reconciling the past and the present, figuring out how to appropriately bear witness and memorialize that history in a place where life goes on. I mean, they have these. We might be able to show some of the some of the pictures of this. They have these sort of Windows, if you look down into underground where they've gotten rid of the grass and the flowers, and you can actually see the gravel beneath with the headstones that are the remnants of the headstones. It's so powerful, but it's a real it is a challenge, I think that Europe continues to wrestle with how to how to remember, and life and life continues.

**Kevin Aldridge** 33:37

Yeah, yeah. I mean, I think that that, was the thing that sort of stuck out to me, and it's, you know, interestingly enough, as you talk about turning 50, it's one of the things that I always think about in terms of, you know, all of the work and legacy and things that we attempt to sort of leave behind or impact that we Have. Life indeed does go on and history only captures and bears witness to a finite, you know, piece of the actual overall history, and a lot of history does get bulldozed over, get gets built on top of

**Jackie Congedo** 34:14

particularly in cases like this, where there was such human catastrophe, where you have, you know, the the survivors are a fraction of the people who are impacted by me, 6 million people who didn't make it out of this alive, right? So the bulk of it was, and to your point earlier, when we were talking - by design of the perpetrators - was erased,

**Kevin Aldridge** 34:16

yes, yeah, yeah, you know, I I'm glad you brought that point up, because I don't want to miss that as we talk about sort of this bearing witness and remembering and, and, you know, some of the history that gets gets lost, or how what do we maintain versus what we what we don't get, or what we do keep, or what we get rid of? I think having these experiences and going to these places and, and. Actually seeing and being able to visualize, hey, this is where this took place, or it gives you a different sense and appreciation for the history than if you're just reading about it in a book or imagining it in your head. There's something about actually being able to touch or physically see this history that even something like Al Miller suitcases we talked about in, or, Yes, I'm sorry, Werner's suitcase.

**Jackie Congedo** 35:30

Yes.

**Kevin Aldridge** 35:31

You know, having those attachments to the physical history is important. So that's why historical preservation is is so incredibly important, and it's a fight for those who are in that field that's important for them to stay after that to make sure we aren't bulldozing over too much of our history, because those immersive experiences are something and when we think about, to me, like one of the great tragedies, and really, I think a lot of people don't grasp the extent of the tragedy or the evilness that was perpetrated by the Nazis against the Jews or or those who perpetrated slavery. That's one thing to kill someone that's, that's horrific, or large swaths of people that's, that's one thing in and of itself, but a lot of things that took place in the institution of slavery and with the Holocaust was the erasure of history, not just the killing of individuals, but the deletion of the history, everything that they were and everything that they could have been, just gone, you know, and no way of recapturing that or retracing that, you know, for many African Americans. You know, our history can only go back so far before you hit a wall and you you have no clue of where you're to any certain extent, to where your history goes, and that, that is the that was the insidiousness, the evilness of the nature of what was done in those in those two instances was you erased histories that can never be recovered.

**Kevin Aldridge** 37:05

And so when we talk about bearing witness to the stories of the survivors, you know, they are the last connection that you have to the folks who didn't survive, who can't tell their own stories. And and even that's limited, you know. I mean, if we think about our knowledge of our own families, you know, it only goes we only know so much about because our parents only share so much, right? We hear that in a lot of these stories where a lot of survivors didn't share a lot of their past experiences with their kids, because it was just too painful to talk about so so imagine the Holocaust survivors trying to relay not only their own stories, but what limited information they had about their parents or aunts and uncles or those who didn't survive, those histories are just gone. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, you can't get it back.

**Jackie Congedo** 37:53

It occurs to me that actually, in that way, the act of bearing witness is like restorative justice.

**Kevin Aldridge** 38:00

You know, yeah, as much as it can be, yeah, it's like

**Jackie Congedo** 38:03

it is an act of justice to say there was an attempt to erase and we, we are the ones that are doing the work of rewriting those stories, of making sure that that doesn't happen. And I know it's a responsibility we feel, certainly our survivors feel. And I think it is really, in some, many ways, a sacred responsibility to be able to say and it is our collective responsibility, absolutely.

**Kevin Aldridge** 38:29

I mean, this goes back to the beginning of time when we think about before we lived in the digital age that we were, or even before you had paper and ink to write things down, the way that things were translated from community is we, we told the stories. We told the stories of our or the oral traditions of our, you know, forefathers and foremothers, you know, that's how we passed down stories through history. Was through oral history, and that was a communal obligation. That was how we kept our history, was to share and tell these stories. And so while we have, you know, great, you know documentarians and folks in the media who share and who share stories, it's all of our responsibilities to bear witness, because that's how we pass down. You know, not only our family histories, but our the histories of our cities, of our neighborhoods, of everything. You know, we have an obligation to talk about the people and the things that occur and and to retell those stories to to later generations, so that history doesn't get lost

**Jackie Congedo** 39:33

totally. And I'm this is a good pivot to our story from the archives this month, which is all about that. This is all about someone who took their personal accountability for telling a piece of this story, or, you know, his family's piece of this global history. We're going to introduce you to a Cincinnati man who discovered a World War II story within, again, his own family. And even though it was difficult, he decided to try and share it to the best of his ability, because the lessons that it holds for all of us.

**Kevin Aldridge** 40:04

Yeah, in 2006 after a severe flood at his mother's home. Ed Kruszynski family found letters and photos from World War II. Ed's father, a decorated combat medic who was deployed to Europe, had died years earlier. Sergeant Kruszynski had not shared his wartime experiences with anyone but his wife, Mary.

**Jackie Congedo** 40:23

Yep, their son, Ed, meant for this book, The Medic's Wife to be a love story about his parents, but the discovery of a trove of artifacts revealed the depth of his father's encounters on D-Day and in Nazi concentration camps after the war. And so The Medic's Wife became a powerful story, not only about the love between his parents, but also the impact of the war and lessons of this chapter of history of the Holocaust. So we were really fortunate to have Ed sit down with Trinity to share a little bit more - we can listen now.

**Ed Kruszynski** 40:56

There are other things that I wrote about that I couldn't even believe but I think you have to write about this stuff, because sometimes people think, well, the Holocaust and the concentration camps, they were, they were 80 years ago. It was so far, you know, removed from where we are today. But when you think about it, I was born only 17 years after the concentration camps were liberated. So in my lifetime, it's not that far away, but my dad was was in, you know, the concentration camps to treat the survivors, if that wasn't enough, at the end of the war, my dad's platoon was selected to go back into four other concentration camps, Dachau being one to treat German prisoners, what the Americans did is we turned tables on the Nazis. Not all the Germans were bad, but the American Army wanted the German rank and file to see what their government had done, see the secrets that they'd been hiding, and German wounded were sent to the concentration camps for treatment. They weren't obviously sent there to be exterminated. They were sent there to be treated. But while they're there, they witnessed themselves what happened, but my dad's unit was was responsible for the medical care of German wounded after the war in those camps, so that, you know, the guy went through a lot, you know, it's no wonder he didn't, you know, speak very much of it,

**Jackie Congedo** 42:30

yeah, and thank you. You shared so much. Not only you know, I can hear and feel how this discovery process affected you, and it's always hard to imagine how it affected a parent. So thank you for for sharing that very difficult piece for yourself, but then a difficult piece of this history, and I'm wondering if part of it not only was a process for you and discovering maybe what you always wondered about your your father. But then how much of that today is part of raising awareness? How important is it to you to share this history so that we're learning the impacts of the Holocaust, even though, to your point, it was 80 years ago, right? But why is it important now for a book like this to be out and for people to read it and know what happened.

**Ed Kruszynski** 43:26

I think there are two things. The first thing is, I wasn't going to publish this book. I said I finished it. I sat on it for six months, and I didn't have the confidence to publish it. Grandfather, I'm not a writer, I guess I am now, but it wasn't until the bombs dropped on the Ukraine that I decided that the story needed to come out. My parents would have wanted me. They wouldn't have kept all this information if they didn't want somebody in our family to do something with it, I don't know what that thing would have been, but I know that they would have said, you have to put the story out there, because the bombs are dropping on the Ukraine, just like they dropped on Poland in 1939 in our family had family there, And I'm not going to try to try to get too political in my talks, but if Ukraine loses the conflict, then the Red Army borders Poland. And back before World War One, Poland wasn't a country, it was partitioned between three other countries. So is it here we go again? I'm not sure, but I think raising the narrative that, are we ready for a global conflict is an undercurrent of what this book is. It's a book about love, it's a book about spirituality, survival, but it's also a book about these are the sacrifices that Americans have to make. That's the first thing. The second thing is. That at least I think of and have learned through the process, is it these stories, all the all these stories, survivor stories, World War II books about soldiers that have survived, survived the war. By reading those stories, it's an act of remembrance for them, and you're honoring them. But more importantly, in my point of view, it's, it's an act of defiance against hatred, still, because hates not going to get the last word.

**Jackie Congedo** 45:34

Yeah? So that's what we were saying, right? I mean that this is, it is an act of restorative justice that we're going to tell, we're going to tell this story. We can reclaim the ownership of making sure that the that this history that someone tried to erase doesn't get erased.

**Kevin Aldridge** 45:53

Yeah, and I think that's a battle that we that that's continuously trying to be fought. I mean, even to bring it into current times. I mean, there are efforts among those who want to ban certain books or tell history from a certain perspective. And I think what he talked about is not only in bearing witness and writing and telling the stories, but reading the stories or an act of defiance against people who, you know, who want to perpetrate that certain thing for their own, you know, nefarious purposes. And I think that we have to continue to fight against that as you know, as I was listening to Ed, you know, and I, you know, I always think you know about things in different ways, as I was sitting there listening to him talk and and I can imagine coming across this treasure trove of of letters and information and stories that you never knew about your father, that he, you know, maybe never shared, and it always leads, because I experienced this with with the death of my own father, and not just in some of the things that he left behind, but stories that his friends would tell that I'd never heard, and a lot of things about him made sense to me after the fact and it and it, it really does make you wonder, as a child, you know, how well did you actually ever really know your parents and and how well and how much did I even bother to try to get to know them on a deeper level, and how much of that affected the way that they raised me and who I am, you know, right?

**Kevin Aldridge** 47:28

I mean, you can't help but think that what Ed's father experienced in many ways not only shaped his life, but shaped how he raised Ed, and the man who Ed became, and so who might even I or Ed had been absent those experiences of the Father. So it's just, it's that deep kind of stuff. When you hear people talk about that and the histories and things that experiences, that's why this stuff is just so powerful, because it not only helps you understand more of who others are, but it kind of helps you understand maybe a little bit more who you are. Yeah, you know, in some of these, yeah,

**Jackie Congedo** 48:05

totally. We recently found out some more about our family history. Actually, I don't even know that I've told you this, but my my mother, just found out through some online genealogy site, you know, where if someone's looking for you or there's a connection on your family tree, they ping you, essentially. And so she just got this ping and tracked down. And it turns out my great, great grandmother, who came here, you know, the story we were always told was with her feather pillows and her candlesticks, and that's all she had. She fled pogroms in the late 1800s coming out of what we thought was Russia. Turns out it was actually Poland, and she was one of five siblings, two, two or three of the others. Eventually, she came to the United States in late 1800s two or three of the others went to other places. I think. One went to what's now Israel. One went to South Africa, possibly. And of course, all of them were leaving the backdrop of this rabid antisemitism, you know, in the late 1800s in in Eastern Europe with the pogroms. And we just found out that one of them, at least one of them, stayed behind and had a family, and that whole family was murdered in the in the Shoah, in the Holocaust. Had had no idea until this story came to life, how many years later, and we were able to make that connection. So it's just, it's remarkable, and I so applaud Ed and what he's done to dig deep and to make this... give other people the opportunity to bear witness.

**Kevin Aldridge** 49:41

Yeah, absolutely

**Jackie Congedo** 49:43

So, The Medics Wife, it's on Amazon. I believe you can get it. And thanks to Ed for joining us to talk a little bit more about it. You can also listen to his conversation, the full conversation, the link's in the show notes.

**Kevin Aldridge** 49:55

If there's one last thing I want to and I want to make sure that you know as folks are listening to this and hearing Ed talk. There was one thing that he said that I think goes into our theme of upstanding and sort of bearing witness. There was a point where he said he almost didn't publish the book because he wasn't sure, "Hey, I'm not a writer. I'm not all of these things," you know, all of these, these insecurities and things that are about us that play into our decisions to either do or not do something. But he moved past that because he saw and understood the significance of telling his dad's story and and what that could possibly mean in the times, you know, with the bombings of Ukraine.

**Kevin Aldridge** 50:41

And it's sort of a reminder to me that sometimes we have to get over ourselves and move past our insecurities to be able to do what is necessary in the moment for the greater good. And that's kind of the essence of what we talk about, and being, you know, being an upstander. And that's, an easy that's a line in his story that, you know, it's easy to just move past that and gloss through that, but, but for me, that was a significant thing in there where, you know, this thing could have stopped. It could have gone no further than that if he, you know, bought into that and said, "You know what, I'm not a writer. Who am I to be, you know, putting this out in some way, shape or form." And, you know, we may not see the end of the work there today, but he pushed past that, you know, whatever self doubts or issues that he had to go on and do something, and I'm glad he did. I'm gonna look forward to reading that at some point.

**Jackie Congedo** 51:37

There it is again. I'm smart and I'm brave, so I can do it, right?

**Kevin Aldridge** 51:41

Absolutely, all right. Well, since we're talking about upstanding this month's upstander is someone who has made bearing witness her life's work. Patrice O'Neill is a documentary filmmaker and founder of Not In Our Town, a movement of people across the country working to build safe, inclusive communities for all. Patrice has produced films documenting people who stand up to hate, including the film, she spoke with us about Repairing the World: Stories from the Tree of Life. The film tells the story of the community in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania that was home to the Tree of Life synagogue.

**Jackie Congedo** 52:16

Yeah, yeah. In 2019 or 2018 of course, we remember a white supremacist opened fire on worshipers in the Jewish congregation, killing 11 people in that horrific act of antisemitic violence. First time on American soil that this had happened in the midst of Jewish Jewish worship and ritual. Patrice spoke with us about her role as filmmaker, connecting with those who wanted to help remember the victims and doing the hard but the hard but important work of bearing witness to the immense loss. Hosting this conversation is Dr Lauren Bairnsfather, who was the Executive Director of the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh at the time of the shooting, and who we at the Holocaust and Humanity Center in Cincinnati, can send consider a colleague and dear friend

**Dr. Lauren Bairnsfather** 52:58

"You talked about the way that you got to know people in Pittsburgh before you interviewed a single person, and that was something that made an impression on me at the time. It was so considerate of our trauma. You were so gentle with everyone, and I think it comes across in the film, the level of trust that you built with people in Pittsburgh. And that's just a comment. This isn't a question. I want to thank you for that, because that's something that we didn't see from very many people in the aftermath, we saw a lot of people wanting to tell our story and explain to us what our trauma felt like. And I suspect that that happens in every community that experiences mass violence, and I wish that there were fewer of them, but unfortunately, there have been so many more since then. I had a presentation where i i I ended with different mass shootings, and I said, I just can't keep up. So I mean that that's the climate that we're living in now and

**Patrice O'Neill** 54:00

And understanding, I think, for us, putting the spotlight on those who were harmed in a way that they feel comfortable sharing and letting their stories emerge is is at the center of our work. We didn't really start this process of filming. We filmed in the immediate day. Charene Zalis, my filmmaking partner, was there several days afterwards, but most of the interviews with the families and happened six months later, because there is a period of time of trying to process we know this right, trying to process the grief, and trying to think about this, and then asking who would want to participate. So it is a long process and you know, but the power and the strength that comes from those voices, it just helped guide the film and help. Guide everything that we did in Pittsburgh.

**Dr. Lauren Bairnsfather** 55:03

It seems like there were connections between people in the Squirrel Hill community before the shooting, but it took this event, maybe to bring it into focus. So we talked about this, also in the context of the clergy who are featured in the film. I just wonder, you know, how you observe the connections between the people in Pittsburgh?

**Patrice O'Neill** 55:30

Well, so in the I think it was probably the sun. I believe it was the Sunday after the attack, the there was a massive interfaith rally in the city of Pittsburgh. You don't do that on a dime. Those relationships were there. There is so much to learn from the city of Pittsburgh about the relationships, both in the Jewish community, the cohesion of the groups who responded immediately, and the relationships that each of those organizations had built, and the relationships, you know, both interfaith and secular, that existed that that made that possible, that made that community response.

**Jackie Congedo** 56:21

Yeah. I mean, what strikes me about this documentary, which is really, it's a really phenomenal work, is that this, the idea of bearing witness in this case, was really, and the responsibility for that was really the whole community took ownership of that and came together to say that this is our collective responsibility to bear witness and to connect across differences and be here for each other. Incredibly powerful.

**Kevin Aldridge** 56:50

Yeah, I think I think really good, tight knit communities in times of tragedies significant like that, do come together? Do pull together? I think you know, the same sense of community exists here in the city of Cincinnati that you know when we've seen tragic incidents, it's almost like that's, it's the defibrillator that shocks, literally shocks our hearts and our consciousness to recognize our neighbors as our neighbors, and that you know that there's more that that draws us together in our humanity and trying to be there for one another than than what separates us. And I think that one of the things that I've always said is is too often, when we have tragedies like this, and as someone who works in the media, you know, maybe we play a hand in this as well. Is that there's generally not enough time given to sort of absorb the gravity of the tragedy, you know, and really just sort of sit with, you know, Patrice talked about in the video. You know, it was like six months before they came back and kind of did the interviews, because people had to have time to process what happens. And I think that in our microwave, one minute to the next, fast moving society, we don't sit with these things as long as we should, to really absorb the gravity of what happened, the lives lost, and before we move on to the next thing, I mean, I mean, think about, you know, we're, we are we're not even talking about the presidential assassination. I mean, and that's only been was that, like a couple weeks ago, two or three weeks ago.

**Jackie Congedo** 58:32

The attempt, yeah.

**Kevin Aldridge** 58:33

I mean, look at how quickly we moved away from that. What everybody in that moment acknowledged was a historical incident. We're not even talking about it. You know, we're not even talking about it anymore. So these days, we kind of move very quickly away from these things. And I think that, you know, as a community bearing witness, I think allowing ourselves to be there for one another, spend more time getting to know the lives that were lost that that's one knock that I always give on the the media sometimes, is we don't spend enough time, you know, really helping people recognize who these individuals were, you know, who lost their lives, and spending some time on that, you know, I think, is very important. And so I'm glad that you know, Patrice did this work, because it's an important work.

**Jackie Congedo** 59:24

Yeah, absolutely. And you know, you can, you can participate in what it is to bear witness. You can watch the film, and we'd love to hear what you think about it. So before we wrap up today, we were, you know, talking about how we might leave people, start a new sort of tradition of leaving people at the end of these episodes with like an upstander shout out and, you know, pivoting from obviously a more heavier subject to something that we can just carry with us for the rest of our day, or wherever you are. Right? Now listening to this episode. So here's one that sort of a thing I didn't necessarily ever think I would see, which probably is my own fault when I think about it that way. This is some really cool news to come out of the Olympics. We have Flavor Flav, with the clock around his neck. He actually, I think he has a USA clock team clock around his neck, which is perfect. I wonder how many clocks he has? Probably a lot

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:00:29

more than we can probably count, more than we can count.

**Jackie Congedo** 1:00:33

So Flav took it upon himself to the US women's water polo team came out and said, We're really in need of support, so sponsorship. And he answered the call, and, you know, not only supported, I think, financially, the team, but also came to the Olympics and was there in full support. And that, that was pretty cool to see. But then, you know, this other piece, which I think fits so well with our theme of the ripple effects. He also stepped up to pay for an Olympians rent. Veronica Fraley's rent, after learning she didn't have enough to afford it.

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:01:09

Yeah?

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:01:10

And what I'm gonna let you deliver the punchline about what he Yeah, what he said,

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:01:15

Yeah. Let me find this here, because this, this goes right into, right into, let's see here, the ripple is this, okay? So, "You never know how one act of kindness can change someone's life." Yeah, that's, I mean, that's the ripple effect in a in a nutshell. I mean, you know, it's almost as if you know Flav has been watching the podcast.

**Jackie Congedo** 1:01:41

Maybe he has been! Maybe Flav you were just inspired by Kevin and I talking about how one act of kindness can really solve a lot of problems in our world, and you decided to step up and take your moment. So it'd be great. Yeah, it's awesome to see.

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:01:57

I love this story for all sorts of reasons, because I think, like, you know, sometimes when we think about, you know, rap artists or entertainers, we tend to sort of box them into the personas the, you know, these, these, these entertainment personas that they create for themselves. And certainly, you know, Flavor, Flav is, is has, has been somewhat of a character in his representations, and, you know, reality shows and different things that he's been doing. But I think we forget that sometimes these are, these are people too, who are much more engaged and socially conscious and philanthropic and generous than sometimes we think in these boxes that we paint them in. And aside from the fact that, you know, he sponsored this women's polo team, and that, you know, he was engaging with them, even participating in some of the practices, and, you know, yeah, you know, and he's trying to raise awareness about, you know, water polo as a sport, not just for African Americans, but for everybody.

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:02:59

I think is a great thing and and to see him out there doing this and having an impact, I think, is a great thing that shows another side of him that people might not see or might have underestimated, underestimated him in because when we think about bearing witness, you know, going back to His, days with Public Enemy. I mean, that's what he did through his rap lyrics. He'd bear witness to the experiences that he had. There was a lot of social commentary in terms of the rap lyrics that Public Enemy put out there. And I would encourage you that if you hadn't listened to it, you know, go, go and listen to some of the iconic songs, like "Fight the Power" and these sorts of things against racial injustice and, you know, so forth and so on. So very socially conscious guy from the beginning, maybe he doesn't get the credit for that that he deserves. You know, much more engaged and smarter guy than people think he's he's more than the clock around his neck and the "yeah boy" that you might, you know, you might get from. So I, that's what I love about stories like this, is that it shows that, that these are layers. Yeah, exactly, yeah.

**Jackie Congedo** 1:04:11

It is really cool when it makes sense now that you say that, that like, you know, this isn't like he changed. This has always been who he is. You know, he came out in his in his artistry, as a rap artist, and you know now he's, he's stepping up. He's, he saw a need and stepped up. It's really cool and and for those who are anxiously curious, I don't think that, unfortunately, he promised the women's team that he would get them all clocks if they won the gold medal. I don't think they did this year. But maybe that promise extends to the next time around. Maybe it's like, retroactive, right? Or maybe he, maybe

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:04:42

he did it anyway.think I think they won the bronze medal. Maybe in it, maybe that was still good enough. Maybe the fact that they medaled was still good enough for him to, yeah, to make good

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:04:46

and they better be waterproof clocks

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:04:55

Without doubt. I mean, you, you got to have them on in the pool. I mean, that's, that's the whole point.

**Jackie Congedo** 1:05:00

That's right. That's right.

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:05:01

Well before we head out, and while we're doing this, upstander shout out, and you know, also bearing witness to history, I would like to just give one shout out to a man from my hometown of Middletown, Ohio, who passed away on July 22. He was a gentleman by the name of Yudell Hightower. And if that last name sounds familiar, it's you may have heard of Hightowers Petroleum Company. They're one of the largest African American owned petroleum companies in the nation, and his son Steve is the president and CEO of that but that company was built off of Yudell's janitorial service business that he built from the ground up into one of the largest janitorial service operations in Greater Cincinnati. And he did all of that. He came from a small country town in Mississippi, same hometown my dad came from, Eupora, Mississippi, came to this area with $60 in his pocket and a dream, and built that into into a great business enterprise. And he was a pioneer in many ways. He redrew the red line in real estate in the city of Middletown by moving out to an exclusive all white end of town. He was the first African American to kind of integrate that community. And that didn't come without all of the stuff that you would imagine that would come with something like that. But he persevered through all of that. And he was, he was a great Middletonian, a great man in general. And I just wanted to make sure to take knowledge him, because he was definitely an upstander.

**Jackie Congedo** 1:06:39

Yeah, absolutely

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:06:40

He did a lot of great things.

**Jackie Congedo** 1:06:41

And you know, that's, that's how we that's how we ensure that those legacies live on to inspire us, is to bear bear witness to that. So thank you for bringing that to to our conversation today and people like that, you know, it's always, it's so bittersweet. You know, to hear about folks who you didn't get to meet like that. What a guy. I wish I had, I wish I had known him, but now I feel like I knew a little bit more.

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:07:07

Yeah, he and anyone who wants to read more about his story, I wrote an article about him in the Cincinnati Enquirer so you can, you can go, you can go look that up. But certainly one of the great rags to riches stories. And I think the thing that I love most about that is, you know, we do a lot of conversation about DEI programs and so forth. He did all of this in an era where DEI hadn't even been thought of, and where the decks were stacked against, you know, African Americans. To a large extent, he was able to build a great family legacy and do some things in spite of all the obstacles he came up...yeah, only had a third grade education too. So you know that always says to me to say that, you know, if, if a guy can accomplish all of that in with with limited education, not a lot of money to speak of, nothing but street smarts and a hard work ethic. You know, it really makes a lot of us check and say, Hey, are we emptying the tank to achieve the dreams that we want

**Jackie Congedo** 1:08:11

what's possible? What's possible? Well, if you have folks who you would like to bear witness in terms of their story. We want to hear from you. Want to hear about how you've been doing that, your thoughts on the act of bearing witness and or maybe if there's someone that you've got to listen to, and you know, someone has, someone has given, sort of given witness to someone else's life, and you've received that and taken it in a certain way and implemented it, we would love, we'd certainly love to hear about that.

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:08:42

Yeah, and remember that you can always hear the full length, Hear My Story episodes. They're available on on our YouTube channel, so make sure you go and check them out in their entirety.

**Jackie Congedo** 1:08:52

Yep, you should leave us a rating. Let us know how you're seeing the ripple effect play out in your lives, wherever you are. Again, all of our information is in the show notes, and thank you for joining. We will be back with you next time.

**Jackie Congedo** 1:09:06

Let us know your thoughts on this episode. Our email is in the show notes. You can listen anytime on Spotify, Apple podcasts or visit Holocaustandhumanity.org/podcast. You can also connect with us on Instagram and Tiktok @holocaustandhumanity and X and Facebook @CincyHHC. The Upstander Ripple Effect is a production of the Nancy and David Wolf Holocaust Humanity Center. The Center's mission is to ensure that the lessons of the Holocaust inspire action today. This series is part of the Cynthia and Harold Gutman Family Center for Storytelling. Visit us in person at historic union terminal in Cincinnati, Ohio, or online anytime at holocaustandhumanity.org.

**Jackie Congedo** 1:09:44

Managing producer is Anne Thompson. Consulting Producer is Joyce Kamen. Technical producer is Robert Mills, and technical director is Josh Emerson. The opening sequence is by Ken Furman. Select music is by Kick Lee, and this is recorded at Technical Consulting Partners Studios in Cincinnati, Ohio.