Washington State JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Carol Schapira

SUMMARY

Carol Schapira describes her family's longstanding relationship to the Stroum Jewish Community Center, where her children learned to swim and attended summer camp.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: This is Ruth Kodish-Eskind, and it's March 30th, 2025, and I'm sitting with. Can you state your name?

Carol Schapira: Carol Shapira.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: And we're at the JCC. Can I have your consent to record this interview?

Carol Schapira: Absolutely.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Thank you. Um, so we're at the Jewish Film Festival at the Stroum Jewish Community Center. Do you have a relationship with the film festival or the community center, or both?

Carol Schapira: Both. I have children in their mid 30s, and each of them was in preschool here. Went to summer camps. Uh, we belonged at that time. We met lovely friends, similar age in children in that very exciting swimming pool here just across the way. So plenty of that. Um, in terms of the film festival, um, my husband has been, my husband's name is Michael, he has been very active. He was chair of the film festival for a couple of years, I think maybe when they were even with the AJC. And then they came over to the JCC, he did graphics and I have been a volunteer. We've attended a zillion films, glorious years. So I feel very loyal and excited to be back. I'm an usher today.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Um, how do you, oh, you're acting as an usher today? Nice. How do you understand the role of the film festival in the Jewish community or in Jewish life?

Carol Schapira: Well, that's a great question. The interesting part of Jewish life today, I'm obviously much older than I was at other times in my Jewish life. Um, is that, uh, we're all looking for connections, right? So the obvious way used to be, of course, you belong to a synagogue. Of course, you went there regularly. Of course, that's who all your kids friends were. Well, kids grow up, you move, you do things. Um. And perhaps your values also change. This is a place that people can come without judgment. They can reconnect. They can see people they haven't seen in a long time and, uh, you know, get educated together. So fantastic. And I love working with Pamela and the other staff members on all kinds of events, not just the film festival, but, you know, there's cooking, and they're, you know, so I love coming here sometimes, uh, as just a patron. But I love volunteering, too, because anything that makes it happen more and makes people feel welcome is terrific.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Um, can I ask you, why, oh well you're ushering today? So are you ushering every movie or did you come specifically for this one?

Carol Schapira: Two. Two movies.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Did you choose Carla the Rescuer at all or at random?

Carol Schapira: No, kind of random. I had looked at the schedule, and I had submitted when I had time, and some of those are the

same. Next week we'll be going to Bad Shabbos, but we just bought a ticket for that because we knew that we wanted to see it.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Will you tell me why you wanted to see that film in particular?

Carol Schapira: Oh, it just looks like fun. And again, it will be a larger gathering. Some of these films, like 50 people show up, which is a lot of people if you're having a party, but it's not a lot of people for the theater. So that I think, in fact, they're adding a second showing, which is cool. So, um, but I think it's a film that actually will have a commercial showing as well. Some of these films would be very hard to find streaming or commercially.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: I see. Um, is there anything else you want to add before we wrap it up?

Carol Schapira: No. I so appreciate learning about this and you and yours, uh, doing something like this. I do want to mention that, uh, I had a wonderful stepmother. My mom died when I was young. I had a wonderful stepmother, also German immigrant. And, uh, her older daughter, uh, enrolled her in whatever way was necessary in Steven Spielberg's Shoah. So we all have a disk from that interview. I knew her story. But of course, you never know the story unless you watch it. And, you know, a clever interviewer is asking you questions and helping you to talk about it. Because particularly for that generation, they did not want to talk about all the horrible things that had happened, all the people they'd lost. And so this is not that moment. But the point is, it's still important to hear a story.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Yeah. Of course. Thank you so much.

Carol Schapira: Of course. Thank you.