Washington State JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Leslie Mickel

SUMMARY

Leslie Mickel describes her relationship with the Stroum Jewish Community Center as well as with the Seattle Holocaust Center for Humanity. She also discusses her recent book on the topic of Danish Jewish rescuers during the Holocaust.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: My name is Ruth Kodish-Eskind, and it's March 30th and we're at the Stroum Jewish Community Center. Do I have your consent to record this interview?

Leslie Mickel: Yes. Of course.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Would you state your name again?

Leslie Mickel: Leslie Mickel.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Thank you. Um, so what's your relationship to the film festival or to the JCC?

Leslie Mickel: Well, my relationship to the film festival, this is actually my first time at the film festival, although I've been following many of the films and the content or watching them at home on streaming services. Um, I'm very excited to be here. I'm an active member of the Seattle Holocaust Center, and so I'm here to listen to this particular film and watch it. Um, we have talked about it, I'm in the Educators for Change Group through the Seattle Holocaust Center, and we've been talking about this film coming up and so I'm very excited to see it and learn about Carla, who was so impactful, um, during the war and helping others.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Have you been to the JCC before?

Leslie Mickel: Yes, actually, um, although I was raised in a synagogue, um, the JCC was really my first real community connection with being Jewish. I used to attend BBYO events here, and I was here every week, and it was through the J and the welcoming atmosphere here that I really felt that I am connected to a broader community with individuals and friends that I met throughout the Seattle area, attending various different synagogues. I learned about the communities was more than just that one synagogue experience that I had experienced up to that time, and that there was a huge, wonderful, embracing Jewish community and that I experienced all through being able to come here to the JCC.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: That's so great. Um, how do you understand the role of the film festival in Jewish life, either more broadly in the community, or in what role has it played in your life? I guess this is your first time here, but how do you think about the film festival as part of the Jewish community?

Leslie Mickel: Well, I think the film festival is an important part of the Jewish community because it showcases different aspects of our community, of our history, of our heritage that we might not have considered before. Through the artistic design of the directors and the people involved in the films, they create something that shares information about something that, for me personally, I hadn't either didn't know about or hadn't fully explored. Um, and these films provide an avenue to learn more about Unique Jewish culture, history and perspectives. And so I think it's incredibly valuable for our community.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Um, and you touched on this a little bit, but do you want to speak any more about why you're coming to see Carla the rescuer specifically?

Leslie Mickel: Yes. Because, um, I want to learn about those who helped others during the war. I actually just published a book, wrote a book, published it, um, about the rescue of the Danish Jews. Um, I wrote a book for students to learn about the efforts of people who are upstanders and helped others in need during World War II during the Holocaust time. Um, and so learning about Carla now, she was, I understand, not living in Denmark, she was living in the Netherlands. But, um, I really think it's important that we learn about those who took action to help others in need. I think it can act as an inspiration, especially for young students, um, to be able to learn what helping somebody can do and the ripple effect that has. And so I'm excited to watch the film, to learn about Carla, learn about what she did, and just continue to learn about those who helped others during the Holocaust.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Amazing. Thank you so much.

Leslie Mickel: Yeah.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Yeah.