Washington State JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Ellen Goldblatt

SUMMARY

Ellen Goldblatt reviews her experience at the Seattle Jewish Film Festival, and shares her family's history in relationship to the Holocaust. She discusses growing up in an Orthodox community in Cleveland, Ohio and highlights the central role of the local JCC in her life and in the lives of many Jewish families in the area.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Okay, um, this is Ruth Kodish-Eskind. It's March 30th, 2025. We're at the Seattle Jewish Film Festival. Um, may I have your consent to record this interview?

Ellen Goldblatt: Yes.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Can you state your name, please?

Ellen Goldblatt: Ellen Goldblatt.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Um, so you just stepped out of Carla the Rescuer. What did the film bring up for you? Um, how did you relate to the film? And if you didn't, why not?

Ellen Goldblatt: I think it's a magnificent little piece. Um, it captures both a really important part of history that we need to keep alive. World War II, the Holocaust, everything that happened, it captured who Carla and her family is today. And it captured her hopes and wishes for generations in the future. And how she speaks and plants seeds in the school system for hope and a better world.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Do you have any personal relationship to her story or any of her messages?

Ellen Goldblatt: Uh, so I grew up in the Midwest and, um, grew up in an Orthodox home. Um, and in the 60s, when I grew up, the, um, memories of the Holocaust were very fresh. And I remember going to the JCC, it feels like monthly, quarterly at least, and seeing Holocaust events and pictures, and I feel like it was a big part of my growing up, and it has remained a big part of my soul. I have read so many books and seen so many films, and I never get tired of the subject because like any enormous event, there's so many angles and perspectives and experiences to capture and appreciate.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Yeah, of course. Um, it sounds like you grew up going to a JCC. What's your relationship to Jewish community centers or this one in particular?

Ellen Goldblatt: Growing up, it was really important. That's where my brothers and I learned to swim. And, um, it was a big part of our life growing up as kids. Um, here, not so much. I live in Seattle, not Mercer Island. And my kids went to a day school, Seattle Jewish Community School, and we were very active in our shul and, um, not so much the J. But I've come here and other theaters in town every year for the Seattle Jewish Film Festival.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Yeah. Um, what do you think about the role of the film festival in Jewish community or in Jewish life?

Ellen Goldblatt: Huge. I think it's huge. And I'm always sad when I come to a film, and it's not as well attended as I want it to be. I wish, I wish more, I don't know how this would happen, but I would love to see more non-Jews come. I feel even the Jewish

community doesn't support this as much as I would like to see. Um, and I think the messages are critical, whatever the subject matter within these films. And it's broad and deep. I would love it if, um, more non-Jews were here. Um, I'm just guessing who Jews are and who aren't.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Um. That's great. I'm just curious where you grew up in the Midwest before?

Ellen Goldblatt: Cleveland, Ohio.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Oh, okay. And the JCC was in Cleveland?

Ellen Goldblatt: Yes and it was really central to us and to many Jewish families. Yeah.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Yeah. Cool. Thank you so much.

Ellen Goldblatt: Thank you, Ruth.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Yeah.