

**A ROUNDTABLE INTERVIEW WITH
THE HOLOCAUST RESOURCE CENTER
(MYRA BERKOVITS, SUSAN DUBIN AND DOUG UNGER)**

An Oral History Conducted by Barbara Tabach

The Southern Nevada Jewish Community
Digital Heritage Project

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Today is September fourth, 2014. This is Barbara Tabach. We're in the Holocaust Resource Center at the corner of Tropicana and Eastern.

I'm going to let my roundtable introduce themselves. Just spell your last names.

My name is Myra Berkovits, B-E-R-K-O-V-I-T-S.

I'm Susan Dubin, D-U-B-I-N.

And I'm Doug Unger, U-N-G-E-R.

Great. We're going to start with Myra.

So I got involved when the Holocaust Resource Center—it was the Sperling Kronberg Mack Holocaust Resource Center—was set up in a building on Maryland Parkway between Flamingo and Twain. It was maybe a four-story building and you drove downstairs. And in the same building was Jewish Federation. I think the JCC was on the third floor and there was a big multipurpose room where the JCCs used to play poker; the members would play poker. But those three Jewish organizations were in the same building. And the Sperling Kronberg Mack Holocaust Resource Center was on the second floor.

Called just the library.

It was just called the library then. Yeah, right.

Sperling Library.

Sperling Library. No, it wasn't.

It was just the library.

No. At that time it was all three names.

Oh, was it?

Yeah, it was all three names at that time. But just, I think it just. Maybe when it was at the Jewish Federation on Twain it was just the library.

It was just the Sperling Library.

Yeah. And then I think Edythe probably got these guys involved so they would give a little money, and so then it was the Sperling Kronberg Mack.

Anyway, I had an interest in the Holocaust and I was going to Amsterdam—I think it was 1992—and I was going to Amsterdam to see family and I wanted to go to Westerbork, which was sort of holding camp for the Dutch Jews before the Holocaust. Somebody said that there was a lady named Edythe Katz who was very involved with Holocaust education and she might be able to tell me how to go about doing that so I could arrange a tour or something. And I was going with my daughter.

So I called her up. And she was a very lovely lady. And she said that she had a gift for this lady; her name was Jopie and she was Anne Frank's friend. So anyway, to make a long story short, I never met Edythe, but at where she lived she left this gift for Jopie and when I went to Amsterdam I brought the gift. And I think I talked about this in my regular interview. So now I'm going to skip to the part when I came back.

So I came back and I said, “Gee, I've really been interested in the Holocaust for years, but I've never really done anything about it.” So she said, “Well, why don't you come into the office?” So then I told you where the office was. And there was Edythe and there was another lady named Shirley Kravitz, who was a volunteer and she's since passed away and she used to help Edythe, and then there was another lady named Roz Sbarra, who also helped Edythe, and she may be another person whom you'd want to interview about the history of the center because she was very involved at the time. So there were the three of them and they were sort of like the Three Musketeers.

And I came and I was interested and I said, “Gee, is there any volunteer work I could

do?” And so they sort of brought me in and I got familiar with the center. At that time they were beginning to do student-teacher conferences.

So the way it was set up was there was a Governor's Advisory Council that was at this pretty new, and then below it there was a Holocaust Education Committee because those were the people—it was a small committee—those were the people that helped plan the student-teacher conference that we had every year. The Governor's Advisory Council was actually funded by the state at that time. Maybe Doug can go into the details of the funding. And so we would get money every year so that with had this one presence in the school district, which was this student-teacher conference.

I don't know how it happened, but Edythe, of course, was this incredible person. She connected with Sheldon Adelson, who at that time had just pretty much bought the Sands, maybe a few years earlier. She connected with him and in her magic she arranged for him to give us all the resources of the Sands for free. So that meant that Sheldon gave us the room, the food, and all the facilities for an afternoon so that we could have these four or five hundred students and teachers come to the Sands Expo and have this Holocaust conference.

Can I stop you?

Yeah.

So this is like 2005 or six, I would think; something like that. No. This had to be 2000.

What I'm talking about?

Yes. You're in 1999 or 2000.

No, I'm talking about much sooner.

Because I was the [Jewis] Federation president.

Right. But, no, we had them sooner.

You had them sooner at different places, not at the Venetian. Because when I was the Federation president, I got a call from Edythe who said, "I'm calling Sheldon Adelson and he's not returning my phone calls and I want to go to the hotel."

Right, right. But when I started, which whatever it was, was in the nineties we had it at the Sands.

At the Sands, but not Sheldon Adelson. It may have been the Sands.

No.

Well, he maybe owned the Sands Expo.

Right. That's what I'm talking about.

Only the Expo.

He owns the Sands Expo.

Expo. That's right.

Remember I told the story about the son-in-law in my last thing? So go ahead.

So then when he built the Venetian; that's 2000. That's when I was the president.

Right. But this was way before.

Okay. Well, I thought that's what you were talking about.

No. I was talking about way before.

Okay. Then go ahead with your story.

When he just owned the Sands Expo. And so he gave us all this stuff. Edythe was—I don't know how she knew him, but she got close with him. She was friendly with his secretary, who I think is still his secretary. She'd go to him every year. She was like the politician. Wouldn't you say that, Doug? If you needed something done, you'd just go to Edythe and you'd say, "I need this." Okay, I'll take care of it. Nobody could say no to Edythe. There was no way on earth that

you could refuse anything from her. So when she went there and she said, gee, we want A, B, C and D, no problem. Adelson, Sheldon Adelson, in this particular instance, was incredibly generous to the Jewish community, to Holocaust survivors, and also to us, to the Holocaust Committee.

So anyway, every year we would plan and that's really what we did. And then maybe in the middle nineties I started to go with Roz, and then we had a new librarian, Carol Helfan. It was the middle nineties. It was after *Schindler's List* came out, so whenever that was. We'd go up to Reno and we'd teach classes up there and I would teach classes here, for teachers. It was for credit and so forth. I did that for many years.

Edythe was also friends, which I talked about in my own interview, was also friends with the man who had *Schindler's List* written. And so for some reason—and she was friends with all these incredible people, the lady that—Yaffa Eliach, she was the lady who put all the pictures up in the tower at the Holocaust Museum in Washington. She was the editor, sort of, of that project. So Edythe knew her. And Edythe knew Leopold Page, who was one of Schindler's people. She also had a relationship with, of course, the superintendents of the school district. And so she'd just walk into their office and say *we want to do this and that* and she would get it done.

She was the one, I know I mentioned before, where the teachers were having tests on the Jewish holidays and Edythe would say, “No, you can't do that.” And then she developed this Jewish calendar; found it somewhere and gave it to them, and so that kids wouldn't be penalized, Jewish children, if they were left.

And don't forget, the Jewish community here, just like in the rest of the United States, was minimal. I mean teeny. I mean it was a very small group of people. But Edythe was, I would say, a leader. I didn't know her husband, but you knew her husband. Did you know her

husband?

I knew who he was. I wasn't friendly. Because he owned the movie theaters; that's why I knew him.

Yeah, he owned the movie theaters.

So anyway, Edythe for me was a mentor and just life changing, as far as I was concerned, because she really got me involved. The governor's council granted me two grants so that I could actually get an education in the Holocaust. One year I went to Yad Vashem for a month and it was a summer institute. It was incredible. And then two years later in 1998, I went again, also with a grant from the governor's council, to Poland for ten days and to Israel for ten days. Also, it was a summer institute.

We did amazing things. Like the student-teach conferences were amazing because, first of all, it involved students and teachers so that they would come to the conference. At that time all our survivors could actually speak; they were young. They had been interviewed by the Shoah Foundation, many of them, and so they were articulate. Edythe, in her own way, really gave them a voice because the format was that we'd have survivors speak on whatever subject or tell their life story and then we'd have a keynote speaker. And we'd use these survivors every year and she had a really wonderful relationship with them.

And she wanted to have a survivors group, but in the early nineties it wasn't possible. And then Henry Schuster came along and there was another man before him. I've forgotten their names; it was a couple. And they started the group, but then they both passed away. And then the Schusters came. That's when the claims conference so that the survivors group was very important because that survivors group gave directions to many survivors here on how to collect reparations from the claims conference, which was something that was run by the German

government and it's still run by the German government so that survivors in America could start eventually getting some reparations. Now, many of the survivors, because of the Schusters, they did get reparations, who had never even thought about getting reparations before. So they, too, were very important.

And Edythe was this incredible—now she has Alzheimer's—but she was like a ball of fire. She was everywhere. She did everything. She knew everybody. And so she was great for the rest of us to know her. And she was widowed; her husband passed away. So I met her after her husband passed away.

So I was a volunteer at the time; I wasn't working at the school district. So there was a very small group of people who actually planned this. Let me see if I can remember. There was Carla McComb, who at the time was the multicultural person for the school district. There was myself. There was Carol Helfan, who was a librarian eventually when we moved. Then there was Sharon Carter; she was a teacher in the school district. There was Mary Ann Core, who was a teacher at St. Viator's, the Catholic school. There was Beth Weinberger, who would always every year arrange for the facilities at the Sands Expo. I don't know; she was magical; she knew somebody. Let me see who else. It will come back to me. But it was this really small group of people and we used to do everything. The only thing we didn't do was to register the kids and the teachers for the conference and that was always somebody in the school district. For many years it was Sharon Carter because Sharon Carter was the grant person for the American history grant. And so she was in the social studies department. So it was just like a perfect melding of people.

What age were the students that you were targeting?

We originally started with middle school students. And then for a few years we just had high

school students, which wasn't so great. And now for many years it's been a mix between the two. But we never did anything with elementary school students because we felt that the subject matter was too much. And since it's not really a subject that's really taught in elementary school, to any extent really except maybe kids read *Number the Stars* [by Lois Lowry] or something like that. But other than that not really anything. But nowadays, of course, it's a push.

So anyway, we did this for many years and it was incredibly successful. Then we branched out. I was still working for the school district. So then I became—maybe in the middle or late nineties, I became the—no. Let's see. It actually was in the 2000s at some point where I became the liaison between the school district and the Holocaust Education Committee. And that was a very busy job.

So part of my pay came through the general—well, through the federal government, actually. It was a grant, a hard grant through Title One. And then part of my money came—I was split paid through the general fund because that was the part where I worked as a liaison and I did a lot of things to organize so that we had a presence in the school district. And I had a relationship with whoever was the superintendent at the time.

So the general fund is from...?

School district. It was just split funding. So we did a lot of things at that time because my job was really—I worked in homeless education since 1999; I was in charge, and also I could be the Holocaust liaison. So it was really a great relationship for the school district.

So every year we'd have these incredible speakers. One year was Leopold [Page]. One year was Yaffa [Eliach]. We had Gerda Klein. We had the author. What's her name, the cutie? *The Terrible Things*.

Oh. *Eve Bunting*.

Eve Bunting. We just had some great speakers. One year we actually had newscasters, whoever was here at the time. We had a book, a short story, of each survivor and we gave each student this book. It was Rikki Cheese among other people. So, in other words, she'd read the story about one of the survivors. And the only thing you heard was actually the pages turning. I mean that was a really incredible year. So we did a lot of great things. We really felt like we were right in there as far as Holocaust education here in the state.

So I think that was really what happened and I did that for many years with this very small committee. Then the committee changed and the format changed a little bit. And then for a few years I was not well, so I didn't do anything and then came back. Then the chairmanship actually pretty much went to somebody in the school district. But we still had a great relationship and did great things.

Then I would say that things really began to happen on a serious level where we did much more than just the student-teacher conference and taught classes is when we really developed the center the way it is now.

And that would be what year?

2012. Two thousand twelve is when we really—

Well, you jumped ahead a lot of years there.

Yes, but it was pretty much the same format, was we'd have a student-teacher conference and we'd teach some classes. Actually, that's what we did. We did it down here and we did it in Reno. But only after I retired did we really do a lot more creative things within this. It was Sue and Doug and I and we put our heads together. Now we have really serious programming all day long.

Okay. If we can for just a minute, let's go back. This governor's council, maybe we should

fill in some of that history so that our listeners will understand.

You can tell the story. That was 1989.

Okay. 1989 the council began because Engelstad—his name was Ralph Engelstad—owned the Imperial Palace. Was that maybe '88 or whatever it was? He used to have parties to celebrate Hitler's birthday. And he would make the people go to the parties and the staff would say, “No, we don't want to go.” So to make a long story short, he was fined by the state of Nevada a million dollars.

In the interim Edythe had Holocaust education things going on, on a much smaller scale, but they were still moving and grooving. She went to the governor, who was [Ross] Miller, and she said, “You know, you're getting a million dollars.” And nobody could say no to Edythe, God bless her. “I think we should have some of that money and we shall form a council,” if I'm correct, “And the mission of the council should be to educate the citizens of Nevada on the themes and subjects of Holocaust statewide.” And so he said, “Okay,” and he gave her—how much was the seed money?

Remember we read the letter.

Yeah. What was it?

Fifty thousand dollars.

Fifty thousand dollars. And that was the seed money.

That was the first year.

The first year. And she developed this council. Doug could actually tell you who was on the council, but I'm only going to tell you that anything Edythe wanted she got. And so even though today the way we do things is a little different, in those days she said, “I want you on the council; I'll have you and I'll have you and you.” Nobody's voted in. Nobody had any say. It was just

who she wanted. Am I correct?

Yeah. I'm assuming there must be a government statute how that came up with eleven people because it was eleven; it's still eleven people today on the council. It's called the Governor's Advisory Council on Education Relating to the Holocaust. The first year was a fifty-thousand-dollar grant. That's right.

It had eleven members.

And there were eleven members.

There were eleven members. And how it worked was the governor actually appointed all the people, all eleven people.

At Edythe's request.

But Edythe sent the letter to the governor saying, "These are the eleven people I'd like you to put on the council." And pretty much he did.

And do you think there were criteria that he was looking for there or just Edythe's blessings did it?

I believe it was Edythe's list.

Yes.

It was just Edythe's list, just who she wanted. Actually, she was such an incredible person that she knew everybody's strengths, and not only their strengths but how they were connected in the community because that was very important to her. She was a very political person, very, unlike me completely. But she knew that so-and-so on the council could do A, B and C, and this person could bring this to the table, and so forth. And so she jumped on to their strengths and together they melded into this very nice council.

Not only that. I can tell you that when she felt like a council member was not a fulfilling duties or

usefulness, she also got them taken off the council.

Well, I was just going to ask, was there a term limit?

*Well, yes, there are term limits. It's a two-year term. However, some members got reappointed year after year and some members were asked to resign; **you're off the council.** So Edythe really ran the council, not the governor.*

Yeah. Oh, totally, yeah, yeah. And we would have meetings. Whenever we would have meetings, I would come and give my little report, what we did from an educational point of view for the six months or three months or whatever. And everything we did was okay.

Well, she started have meetings of the eleven and I got invited to a couple of those meetings. So I'm talking about now—

What year was that?

Either in 1999 or 2000.

You were invited to be a member or just to be a...?

No, just to attend. Not one of the eleven. Just to attend. I remember attending some meetings.

For the most part they were actually right next door at Marie Callender's.

That's right.

We'd have lunch meetings.

Right, right. How did you meet Edythe?

That was through Jean Weinberger. They were good friends.

The lady.

*Yes, Billy's wife. They started *The Reporter* together. Edythe took the name *Reporter* from a San Diego paper. Somewhere there's a *Reporter*; she took the name. And the two of them started the *Jewish Reporter* and were very good friends. Of course, the Weinbergers were good friends of*

my parents, helped me out a lot. And so I knew who Edythe was.

So I used to see her; when I became Federation president in 1999, I would see her in her office. I would stop every once in a while on the second floor and go in and say hello. Truthfully, I didn't know what she did. I don't think anybody knew what she did, really.

She came every day.

Every day.

With Roz.

With Roz. But nobody saw them too much. They didn't do too much. They weren't a problem to anybody.

And they were funded.

And we gave them money. But nobody really knew what Edythe did at the time from a Jewish Federation standpoint.

Oh, so she wasn't—she never had to report to Jewish Federation.

Nope. Not at all.

Federation never gave her money.

They gave her the room and occasionally they gave her grants, but pretty much she went on and got her own money and her own funding. We just left her alone.

Right. As I say, nobody ever said no to her. She'd go into the governor. She'd go to the superintendent. Whoever she went. She knew everybody and she would get whatever we wanted.

So now I'll tell you the Sheldon Adelson story because now, when I was president, she called me and said, "Sheldon Adelson won't return my calls and I need help."

Oh, yeah, she had a tiff with him.

So something must have happened—

Yeah, the year before.

Maybe. So I called him. I arranged the appointment. We go see him. So she's doing the talking. And I remember sitting next to her for maybe ten minutes or fifteen minutes, telling Sheldon her issues and situation and what she needed. He's listening and listening and listening. He's very patient. Then finally he just said, "Edythe, what do you want?" And she said, "I want the rooms; I want breakout rooms; I want conference; I want you to pay for dinner." He said, "Okay, goodbye." That's it. We got up and we walked out. That was, I think, 1999 or 2000, and he's allowed us to come back every year.

Yeah, we had a few years—

Well, we left a couple years on our own. It wasn't because—

Well, it was because the school district people and they didn't know Sheldon.

But it wasn't because of him.

No, it wasn't because of him.

Actually, we'll jump way ahead. We went to the Adelson School and then now we're back at the Venetian.

And you went to Northwest Technical before that.

See, the thing is...I want to talk a little bit about the Sands venue because we always loved having it at the Sands Expo. Number one, most of these children did not have the experience of actually eating out in a nice restaurant with tablecloths, being served; all that kind of stuff.

When children were picked to go to these conferences, there was four children and one teacher, and they usually had to write an essay or something as to why they wanted to attend the conference. And so it was really a privilege for them. It was a very special thing. Everything

was done first class. When the kids walked in, Sheldon had a spread so that they had sandwiches and chips and fruit, just before it began. And then they were all organized into their little groups and then they'd move from room to room to listen to different survivors. Then they'd come back and they'd have this incredible dinner. It was all vegetarian, but served. It was all served; there was no buffet at that time. Everything was first class. The kids would then listen to the keynote speaker. Then we had this autograph tables. Then afterwards they'd go to the autograph table and the survivors would autograph their programs. It was just an incredible experience.

So I always felt like we should always go there because it was so special. I mean we did the same kind of thing when we went to Northwest Technical and I guess to a certain extent at Adelson School, but the Sands Expo was always much better just because of the atmosphere and so forth. So we always pushed for that. So last year I said, “Doug, you have to go talk to Sheldon because we have to go back to Sheldon,” which he's been very nice and very gracious.

And also, Sheldon—actually, you should be interviewing him if you could ever get to him. But the other thing he does, which is incredible, is he makes sure that every year the survivors' group has a Hanukkah party that he pays for completely, and he's done that for many, many years. A few years they would go someplace else because it was getting harder for the survivors to walk. And I really don't know where this year it's going to be. But that was part of his thing; that he liked to do that for survivors. So he was very involved in making sure that survivors had what they needed. I think still to this day if a survivor were in need of something massive that we couldn't do for them, he probably would be there for them.

Isn't that wonderful?

Yeah, I'm sure that he would.

So anyway, I'm at the place—I fast forwarded. But let me just say that working with

survivors, which I did for so many years, and working with teachers and the school district and working with Susie, of course, and Carol before her and even Shirley and Roz, it was really a high point in my life because it really changed my focus in so many ways. It really has been a privilege to be able to in some small way really help survivors. So that's really been a great thing for me. So I'm pretty much—that's my history.

So I'll start now like around 2000, 2002.

Right, because I am—yeah.

In 2002 I moved to Reno. In 2003, I believe, I had this issue with my bookkeeper. And I called Edythe and I remember saying to her, "Edythe, you have to do something up here. You need to do some Holocaust education. I know that's what you do and you should start up here in Reno." And she was like, "Well, I used to. It's not like I need to start it; I used to do it for years." And I said, "Well, what happened?" She said, "We lost personnel. We lost our contact at the school district." I said, "Well, let's get restarted; I'll help you."

Yeah. And that's when we connected with DiPoli and you helped us start classes.

I met Martha Gould, Sue Davis. We went to the superintendent. I went to John Farahi that owns the Atlantis Hotel. We put together our first student-teacher conference in maybe four or five years of a gap; that was all.

And this is in Reno?

This is in Reno.

In Reno, the Washoe County School District.

Yeah, at the Atlantis. Then 2000—

Who was John Farahi? You need to probably...

He owns the Atlantis Hotel.

Yes. And he's a Jewish man.

*Jewish man. Best friends with my friend who passed away. So when I moved to Reno to run his business, I was very friendly with John. Matter of fact, we started our friendship going to Israel together for a week. So he was just like Sheldon; said yes, **anything I can do**; gave us everything. Still does to this day.*

So I think that's when I really started to get involved was 2003, 2004. I remember I flew back to Las Vegas from Reno several times to go to meetings, somewhere at Marie Callender's. At the time Edythe had started to become friends with some of the people at the Boyd Law School at UNLV and we started to have meetings at the Boyd School of Law; that was like 2005.

Yeah. And then we just had some just at UNLV someplace.

Then 2006, I remember all we did pretty much was have student-teacher conferences. I don't think we did too much else.

Right. But I have to tell you that what would happen would be Roz and Carol and I would fly up to Reno.

And I would pick you up at the airport. Remember that?

And Doug would pick us up at the airport.

That was in Reno, yeah.

He had like this big van. What did you have, a van, a truck or something?

I had a big truck, yeah.

He would be like, *great*. He'd pick us up. We stayed at this hotel. We didn't stay at Farahi's hotel; we stayed at another hotel downtown. He would be like, *great*. He would help us so much.

Toastmaster, huh?

Well, I open my mouth to Edythe and then I said, "Okay, I'm going to help." And you're right. For several years, maybe three years I think I picked you all up for student-teacher conferences before I moved back.

Oh, absolutely. Oh, yeah. And we would have one conference up there, probably March or April because February was still snowy and all that, yeah. And that was pretty much how we trained teachers up there.

And just duplicate what you were doing in Las Vegas.

We had the same format; we didn't always have the same speakers, yeah. Well, that was classes. We would do classes up there, but then the conference was a little different. You'd pick us up for the classes, when we'd do a class over the weekend. Oh, the reason we did classes up there is because Judy Mack started a resource center up in Reno named after her father. Her father was a survivor.

Shia Szrut.

Yeah, Shia Szrut. Were you with us when we went up to Reno to find a location? Were you with us?

Martha Gould took us to the library because—

Right. She took us to a lot of places.

—because she has a plaque on the wall there.

Public library.

It's a public library. So what happened was Judy Mack wanted to put something in Reno because originally Judy is from Reno.

That's right.

Yeah, they had—what did they own?

Pawnshop.

Pawnshops up in Reno. So she wanted to do something in Reno. It was Judy and Ron Mack, it was you, it was Edythe and I and probably Carol and maybe Martha; and we went to the library at UNR and we went to several places. And then we found this library in the northwest, which had just been built. It was a beautiful library that sort of overlooked the whole city. So we went there. I guess we were up there and it was dedicated. We went up there because the library was dedicated that year, whatever it was. So a portion of the library, which I guess Sue could talk about that, a portion of the library was just dedicated to the Holocaust.

Sue, do you remember the librarian before Carla? Dianne.

Dianne Varnon.

Dianne Varnon was the librarian up there.

I was looking to see if there was a date on the plaque, but there isn't. But the librarian up there now is Carla Tronson and she's a public librarian. It is part of the public library system in Reno in Washoe County. They have an area of the library that's set aside as a Holocaust collection. It's maintained by Carla who does other things, but it is her specific duty to maintain that area, to put up displays, and to provide resources for the teachers, just as we do here.

When I first started here at the library, I understood that in the past materials for here and the Szrut Library up in Reno were bought together. So if we bought a book here, they would buy a duplicate up there. But when I first started here, I spoke with Carla and she said they had their own budget now. And so they buy their materials separately, but we coordinate.

And you started here when?

I started here in 2012. After Doug is finished I'll tell a little bit about how I started because

that's the later history.

Okay. I'm just making sure we have the right time context.

Dianne Varnon is April 2004; that's when that happened at the northwest library.

Yeah. And we had a dedication. Of course, at that time Kenny Guinn, may he rest in peace, was the governor and he was up there. Edythe always had this incredible relationship.

I remember while I was in Reno, Edythe called me one day on the telephone and said, "I want you to be my co-chair." I remember saying to her, "Well, Edythe, this isn't my field and I want to help you and all that, but I don't know that I'm a good choice to be your co-chair." And she said, "Oh, yeah, you are; you're going to be my co-chair." I remember thinking, well, I'm in Reno. And she said, "That's fine."

So two years later I moved back to Las Vegas. And then all of a sudden she changed the letterhead and I then became the co-chair on paper then. I think that was like in 2006; something like that.

Well, now she thinks you're her son.

Yes. And then that was really the beginning of a change, also, of some council members. She had old council members and starting to make some changes, new members.

Was she failing then, 2006?

Not yet, no. Still running the meetings. I tried to hire you—you remember when I came back, 2006, 2007. We had conversations with Edythe and Roz and we had money.

I couldn't.

You were still working and we just couldn't work out anything with Roz.

No, no. And I still had a full-time job at the school district, but I still did a lot of volunteering.

So then I remember 2008; the Jewish Federation approached me about our space. Now we were

on Renaissance Drive and we had a pretty good-size space. The president, Danny Greenspun, came to me and said, "Well, you're really not utilizing your space to the best abilities and what's going on?"

Can I ask you a question?

Sure.

Why did we leave the building on Maryland Parkway? Because we had a big space there. We had like a whole floor of the Holocaust Resource Center. Do you remember the reason?

Well, sure. The building was starting to collapse and we hired a contractor who repaired the building. And then we were advised by a couple of board members to sell the build right away and get out, and we did. And so then we had to look for a location. At the time we had a donor who had donated some land to us and we were thinking about building a central campus for the Federation and that wasn't working out and that was going to be years out in advance anyhow. So we needed a place to go. Mike Saltman owned the shopping center across the street.

Oh, Renaissance?

I remember I went and asked him for a donation and at the same time said, "Do you happen to have any space here?" And he said, "Yes." And I brought Bob Unger over, who was going to be the next president. Bob negotiated a five-year lease with Mike.

Did we pay?

Yes. And we still pay. It was a pretty good lease. I remember at the time thinking five years is way too long, and Bob said, "This will give us plenty of time to get our building together." That was more than five years ago; that's over ten years ago. Still waiting to go to our property.

So the library was part of the Jewish Federation.

So then Meyer, the executive director then, redesigned the space on Renaissance Drive and gave

the Holocaust Library a pretty good-size space. Now, Danny Greenspun becomes the president after Bob, then Mike Novak, then Danny. He made some changes and was making changes in Federation. I remember having discussions with him about changes that we were going to make and I was going to get involved and start to make and make the space a little more efficient.

One day I got a call from the interim executive director, because Meyer had been let go, who said that last night the Federation board had a vote and voted you out; you should leave.

You should leave?

The library.

You personally or the library?

The library should leave; you leave the library.

Oh. And then what did Edythe do? Whoa.

I remember I had discussions with Danny and Danny said, "Well, that didn't happen, didn't take place, and we didn't ask you to leave. But if you are considering it, go ahead." And so we did.

That's how it happened.

But Edythe did not take it laying down.

Well, she wasn't upset about that. I don't remember that. You have to tell what you remember; I don't.

I remember that she did voice her opinion that she was very upset that we had to leave. But then it turned out okay. But she was very upset that we had to leave. But I think that was the beginning of her sort of...

Well, I was starting to speak up more than her at that point. She was still running the meetings.

Right. What year was that?

Two thousand six, 2007. Two thousand eight, I was pretty much starting to run the meetings.

Her memory was going a little bit.

And Roz was starting to take over, her volunteer assistant for ten or fifteen years at that point. I was slowly learning, through Myra and other council members, what our mission was. It became pretty obvious to me that if we were going to leave the Jewish Federation that we should be out in the community. So we spent time at UNLV at the Lied Library. I went to the library in Henderson, the West Sahara Library. We were making plans to split up in three locations and be a public accessible entity.

Which Roz did not like.

Roz was not happy.

So let me make sure I understand what you're saying. So physically the library would be at three different locations.

That's correct.

The collection would be.

The collection, yeah. And then we really didn't think it—well, we didn't even know how the people would be absorbed in the library situation. Would it be the librarian employees?

Well, I would imagine that a lot of logistics.

Yeah, a lot of logistics. And at that time I believe is when Edythe—Edythe was married to Gil Yarchever. I think they were beginning to—I don't know fail is the right word—but they were getting older, and so their ability to do things was lessening.

*Well, Edythe was doing very little. I remember having a discussion with her about **let me run the next meeting** and she said, "Okay." It was kind of a smooth transition. She still came to the meetings and talked. I remember doing the first agendas and she was the last person on the agenda because I always gave her time to talk.*

Then as we were planning our departure, 2009 came and the state stopped funding us. So this was right at the same time that the state cut off our funding and we were about to split up in three locations. Roz went to her girlfriend, Priscilla Schwartz, same woman that had donated the land for the campus for the Jewish Federation, and asked her if she would donate this space that we're in right now to the library.

Because she owned this building.

She owns the building. Right next door was Family Service Agency. This was a butcher shop.

A kosher butcher shop and market.

For years, many years. And then it closed and the space had been empty. As I understand it, she could not find a tenant. I remember Roz brought me in here one day and we all walked in and it even smelled like a butcher shop. This was an opportunity for us for a location, a place to move.

I remember then we had our council meeting and I went to everybody on the council and said, "Well, this is what I think we ought to do, but we have this opportunity here for free." What happened is the council voted for free. And so I remember being very dejected and very unhappy about it because I thought this was a real opportunity for us to get out in the community and be accessible in the community economically, but it was over and we were ready to move.

So let me just back up a minute. When we were across the street in the Jewish Federation Building, we had a librarian. Well, she wasn't a librarian the way Sue is a librarian, but she ordered books and kept things going and was right up on what was the literature of the time. She was friends with Jerry [Gerald] Molen, who was the producer of *Schindler's List*. And she and her husband moved here, her husband Joe; they moved here after the big earthquake in California. Which was what year, Susie?

Ninety-four.

Ninety-four. So they moved here in maybe '94, '95. So Carol was friends with Jerry Molen and Edythe was friends with Leopold Page, who actually had *Schindler's List* made. And so I guess Jerry Molen spoke to Leopold and said, "Oh, my friends are moving to Las Vegas; can you help them?" They didn't have jobs or anything and they were too young to retire. So then I guess Leopold called Edythe and said, I have friends, blah, blah, blah. Anyway, so Carol came to be interviewed as the librarian.

Carol...?

Helfan was her name. Everybody liked her. Roz got along. She didn't have the education or the degree to be a librarian, but she was very organized. And so for her knowledge, whatever, she did the best she could and she was very personable. For what they did at the library at that time, it was fine. And then she for many, many reasons was not able to be the librarian anymore. She went back to California with her children.

Well, physically. She wasn't let go.

Physically. No, no, no, she wasn't let go.

She couldn't do the job anymore.

She couldn't do the job anymore; she was sick. So then they had to hire somebody else.

Well, that's when we wanted to hire an executive director and that was you.

Right. And I couldn't do it.

And that was the first battle that I had with Roz. That's when we hired Kim.

Kim was supposed to be a librarian.

The librarian, our first librarian.

And Kim's last name?

Nastaszewski. I'm going to find it someplace and spell it for you.

It's in the records.

Ah, here it is. N-A-S-T-A-S-Z-E-W-S-K-I.

Whatever. So she came to work here. Then at that time, which was right around the time I was sick, so I pretty much wasn't here for about two years. And then...?

So 2009 we did this move. I remember that was me; I did the move. So we had the location. I remember I ordered carpet. I had painters come in. I did everything in the space, including packed up my truck fifteen times and brought everything. It was only across the street; it wasn't that big a deal.

Those short moves are the worst.

The worst.

Came across the street. Set up the whole room with everything that we had exactly like Roz wanted it, everything in her position just like she wanted it. Put pictures on the wall like she wanted it. Got Kim set up in her location. I had an old computer at home. I brought a computer in. So now we had a computer in the space. We were pretty well set up.

I had nothing here at all and I remember coming in here one day and sitting and talking to Roz. And Roz said to me, "Well, now that we're here and everything is all moved, you really don't need your key anymore. Why don't you give me your key to the space back?" So I said, "Okay." So that was the end of me having a key to the library.

Oh, yeah. Right. She basically took over.

Took over.

Roz did?

Roz, yeah. What we've left out is in this transition from across the street from Renaissance Drive to the Eastern space was at the same time Jewish Family Service Agency, which Priscilla was a

board member and big donor, agreed to accept the fiscal agency responsibility as well as the operation of the library.

And Kim was paid. She was the only paid person.

She was a paid person. That's right. So JFSA was the fiscal agent as well as the operation of the space, and I had no key. So pretty much 2009, 2010, I was out of business.

And all the funding has ended at this time, too?

And we had no money also. So I knew what was going to happen eventually; JFSA was going to have to start to pay the librarian. We had a couple of council meetings and I remember at the meetings I would bring up, "Kim, let's hear your report. What have you done as far as cataloging the books?" Meeting after meeting nothing had ever been done.

So the council still exists even though the funding from the state is no longer.

Right. And of course, that's when the whole economy in the United States went to hell. So it was about at the same time.

So I remember having a discussion with Rabbi Aksehrad, who had been a council member right from the start, I think from like 1990 or 1991 and I'm very close with. I said to him, "This is a really bad situation. Edythe is pretty much incapable of operating the council any longer. Roz has really absconded with the council and they're really not doing anything. And now they've been cut off with funding and we're paying for a librarian that doesn't do anything." So it was a pretty bad situation.

It was horrible.

So I wrote letters to council members and I had meetings with everybody about what Roz was doing and how bad we were spending or how wasteful we were with our taxpayer dollars. No one was helping. No one was responding. I was pretty frustrated. I remember sitting home one

day thinking, I'm the governor's council. I was still co-chair of the governor's council and I'm thinking, you know what? I'm going to start to have governor's council meetings without the library. We'll just go someplace else.

So I went to the Greenspun Urban Affairs Building at UNLV and said, "Do you have web casting?" And they said, "Yes." I then went to Truckee Meadows College in Reno and they had web casting also. And I got both of them to donate web casting. In 2010, I believe, we had our first governor's council meeting, a webcast of Northern Nevada people and Southern Nevada people, and I invited Roz to the meeting. Instead, up to that point, Roz had scheduled the meetings. She was the secretary. She did all the notes of all the meetings.

So anyhow, she was invited to the meeting and came and sat there at the meeting. I had what I would call was a pretty much restart meeting; we talked about objectives and goals of the council. Roz took the minutes of the meeting. Elliott became the Federation director during that time and I remember inviting Elliot to a meeting.

Elliot Karp.

*Elliot Karp, the Jewish Federation president/CEO. I remember Elliot passed me a note at the meeting with something like, **this just isn't happening and there's nothing here; you don't even have a council here.** So he was pretty dejected, the fact that what he saw was a nonexistent council that had been around for a lot of years that had no footing, wasn't doing anything. And that's pretty much correct.*

You felt that way, too?

I did too. So some time went on, another maybe six or eight months or a year, some time. Then sometime around 2010, eleven; something like that, Elliot calls me over to his office and in the office is the executive director of the Family Service Agency and they want to have a discussion

about the library. So the discussion was basically Family Service was not prepared to support the library. State funding had ended. Would I have any interest in—I, the governor's council—in taking back the library? And so I remember saying, “Yes, I would.”

Then we had a subsequent meeting and at that meeting Elliot proposed an advisory council that would oversee the library and its operation. The governor's council would report to the advisory council. The advisory council would run the library and be funded by private donations. And I just said, “No.”

So a couple of months later Elliot finally called me and said, “Okay, you can just take the library back, then.” And I said, “Under those terms I will.” And I said, “Would you be willing to take back the fiscal agency responsibility back from JFSA at the same time?” And he said, “Yes.” So that's when I again—

That must have been like the middle of 2011, I bet.

Something like that. So then I remember at just about that time I think Myra was nearly retired, just about.

Right. I was retiring in January 2012. And so then Doug and I—we went to lunch and we had a conversation.

It was kind of like, we're going to do this. I need you because I know nothing about Holocaust education and I'm going to support you and I promise we're going to get some footing now and we're going to fund the council and restart what Edythe did.

Right, right. And at this time, of course, it was like two camps; it was like Roz and Kim in one camp and Doug and I in the other camp. When did we come to the library?

I'll get to that; coming up. So that would be November 2011. I can tell you November 22nd was the day we turned on the alarm. So it was sometime that summer when the conversation started

and it took several months.

Then I remember the day we came in here. It was like a warehouse. There were five-gallon water bottles, fifty of them stacked back in the corner over there. It was a mess.

It was a storage room for Jewish Family Services.

So we had another meeting, a governor's council meeting. And I remember saying to the—we went back to UNLV again for another meeting. And I remember saying to the council members, “We're taking over the library again and we're going to get it back and I'm going to make some changes, the way we operate the library and fund it.” I thought that was a great meeting. Elliot came over to me after the meeting. He said, “Sounds like you're not going to dissolve and go away; like you actually could get restarted.”

I remember I had lunch with Rabbi Akselrad and I said to him, “Roz is going to resign; this is it.” And it wasn't but the a few weeks later she did; she quit.

Can I tell my story?

Sure.

So at that time we were sort of thinking about maybe moving the collection. And so we had the man who was in charge of the Las Vegas Libraries, or the second in command. He came here and he said we're going to have a meeting with him. Something happened and we couldn't come into this library. So we went next door and sat in the lobby of Jewish Family Services.

Sat in the lobby and had our meeting.

And Kim, who was the librarian, called Roz. And Roz came to the lobby of Jewish Family Services and was less than happy because she didn't want the library to be disintegrated or destroyed or taken apart by going and giving it to the Clark County Libraries because eventually I believe he said to us that all this collection would be mixed in and eventually lost.

So the fear of diluting the collection.

Diluting the library. And he said he wouldn't really—did he say he wouldn't really be interested or...? Basically he didn't really need us.

Yes, pretty much.

He was having his own funding issues at the time.

Yeah, yeah. So then Doug and I came back here and we said, “Oh, what are we going to do? What are we going to do?” And then that's when you made some big decisions.

And I remember I went to the executive director of JFSA and said, “I'm not paying Kim anymore, and so you should stop if you think you're going to get money from us.” Then, boy, were we surprised because then we got a letter about twelve thousand dollars of back pay that we owed JFSA because when the state money ran out, Roz kept paying Kim out of JFSA's money. So we had to repay that and then let Kim go.

So we were getting our footing and I remember we had a meeting, December 2011. I had some new council members at the time. Unlike Edythe, I had council members that sent their application to the governor direct, asked the governor direct to be on the council, and were put on the council directly. So things had changed. So now I had to deal with people that I didn't know and members of the council that wanted to see that things were done properly. Really we were a startup company. So everything we were doing was brand-new. We had no money. I had to hire Myra because I knew we were going no place without her. So I remember at that meeting, I had suggested to the council members that Myra's retirement was coming up and that Myra could start January third, 2012. So this was like the beginning of December.

Some retirement.

None.

And at that meeting a council member said, "Well, you're not just going to hire somebody like that. We have no advance notice. We have no schedule. This is not how this council should operate." And I said, "Fine." And I started paying Myra in January eighth, 2012.

So we then spent I'm going to say five or six months, I think, just cleaning up every day. I remember coming here and that was all I did every day was clean and move.

Moving and schlepping, oy. And let me just say—then Sue can come in—when we came here it was like a room full of I don't know what. It was not anything like that was over Jewish Federation across the street in the Renaissance. It was just a mess, a mess.

We went to Brian Booth at the Clark County School District. He was our contact. This guy was great for us, wasn't he?

Yeah. He was new. He was new.

Curriculum.

Yeah. It was like we started up a new business basically.

Professional Development Division he ran.

So you were excited.

We were very excited.

Just being excited and energized.

Oh, yeah. And we knew we needed to do something. But to be quite frank, I knew the educational piece, but I wasn't a librarian. It was just a mass of books. I had no idea what to do and I didn't feel confident that I could do anything. And so that was a big steppingstone for us.

It was a big issue.

We had money issues. We had no website. Everybody was talking about how could you exist without a website?

We were so foreign.

We had no letterhead. No signage.

No nothing. Nothing, nothing.

So we developed all that stuff in February 2012. And then in July, I had another meeting and then September a second meeting, talking about Myra. Finally, almost a year later, the council agreed to start paying Myra's salary and I got the council to reimburse me. Then Myra became an independent contractor, an official contractor, almost a year later.

So let me jump in here because I came to Las Vegas in 2011 in the fall. I had met Paul Schiffman, who was the director of the Adelson School, at an educational conference in Los Angeles. He said, "Well, when you come to Las Vegas, come see me." So I made an appointment to see him, just to get an idea what was going on Judaically. At time I was the international president of the Association of Jewish Libraries. And so when I came here, I was retired. I thought this would be a great time to establish a chapter of the organization in Las Vegas. I knew there was a Jewish community. There were a couple of librarians that were members of the association. And so I thought, okay, I'll talk to Paul and see if I could get something together. And I said, "Well, what's going on with Jewish libraries?" He said, "Nothing; there aren't any." And I said, "Nobody? I mean you have synagogues, you have schools. What?" And he said, "No, not really." He said, "Although I heard that the Holocaust Library in Las Vegas is looking for a librarian. Maybe you should go talk to them." So I kind of filed that away and thought, okay, that's interesting.

Then a friend of mine who is a librarian at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. knew I was of moving to Las Vegas and she said, "I have a friend who lives in Las Vegas that you have to talk to because she's somebody that I think you guys would get along really

well.” And she introduced me through E-mail to this friend of hers. This friend said, “Yeah, the Holocaust Library is kind of in a state of trying to decide what they're doing and where they're going and there's going to be a meeting there with Martha Gould, who is on the governor's council, and some people from UNLV from the Lied Library to see what they're going to do with the Holocaust Library. Maybe as president of the association you should meet with them.”

So she put me in touch with Martha Gould and I called her and Martha invited me to the meeting. I came and I met with Martha and the person from UNLV, who is not there any longer. We talked about, what are the possibilities for the library? What could happen with the collection? How it could be made a real space? And I said, “Please feel free to call on me if you need help. I'm happy to see what I could do.”

Well, a little while later, probably about two months later, I got a call from Martha and she said, “I want you to meet with Doug Unger. They're looking to hire a librarian and you should probably talk to him.”

So Doug invited me to have lunch with him and we met. And I shared my resume with him and my ideas for what I thought the library should be. He got back to me. And they hired me as a consultant to help—

Of course, I had to go to the council and get their permission.

Okay. So that was not something that I knew about.

You didn't need to worry about that part, right.

Yeah, yeah. So Doug got back to me and said, “Yeah, we'd like you to start. So what do you want to do?”

Had you visited the facility yet?

Yeah. I had had the meeting with Martha here. It was pretty much a disaster. It was not the way it was when Doug and Myra came to clean it up. It was clean, but there was a desk in the front that was piled with papers and a computer. The books were all back here. There was none of this stuff here.

None of the seating area.

None of the seating area.

Oh, no, no. No, nothing.

Not the pictures on the wall. None of that was here. The round table was here; this table was here. I looked at the books. I looked at the collection when I was here. From a library point of view I could see, number one, most of the things had been donated by somebody cleaning out their garage. Number two, there were maybe fifteen copies of a book that nobody would ever check out and no copies of books that were important. Number three, everything was put in the Dewey Decimal System under the number nine hundred. So the way a library works is it should be organized in such a way that you could actually find things if you're looking for them.

What a novel idea.

If you have everything under the same exact number, they're not organized in any way. It's like everything is all clumped together. So if you wanted a book on Auschwitz, you kind of had to wander around and look on the shelves and if it said Auschwitz on the cover, you knew that that book was about Auschwitz. If that was not the title, you would have no idea.

So when I met with Doug, I told him that some of the things I wanted to do as the consultant is, number one, I wanted to weed the collection. I wanted to go through it, take out the books that were no longer needed or that were old or were shabby or were redundant.

That I wanted to organize the collection and catalog it according to a real system. I wanted to put the catalog on a computer that would be accessible over the Internet and could be searchable by keyword and by subject and by title and by author. That I wanted to get a mission statement for the library, a written mission statement, a written set of goals and objectives, a vision statement. We needed to have all of those things in place, a library policy, so we knew who we were, what our governing rules were, and that it wouldn't just die and be something in somebody's head; that it would actually be in writing and be official. So Doug gave me the okay to do all that and I started working on it.

I first came and started weeding the collection. We probably gave away—what would you say?—about twelve or fifteen boxes of books.

Oh, at least.

I would say maybe twenty-five hundred books.

Where did they go? Who did you give them away to?

Well, first of all, we offered them to synagogues. There were no takers. For the tape, I was shaking my head. Then there was a used bookstore, I believe.

The dinosaur store.

The dinosaur store. They said that they would take them. So hopefully, they went from there to good homes.

I must have made ten trips to that store.

Yes. Boxes and boxes and boxes.

We could have gotten rid of two thousand books.

I would say at least.

That's amazing.

That was just to start. Then what I did is we purchased a cataloging system, which is called OPALS, which is an open-source system, which allows for Internet connection so that anybody in the community can go online and see our collection. It actually catalogs the books using MARC records, which means that they're universally recognized by libraries all over the world. So if in fifty years we decide we're no longer using this system, we can actually move the records without losing everything that we've already done. Then I started cataloging the books and putting them on the computer. As of now, I would say 95 percent of the collection is now cataloged in order and on the computer.

And then I started organizing the shelves in such a way so it was logical so when you went through the collection you could actually find things. Doug helped move around the bookshelves so that they were more usable, more user friendly. We purchased some bookshelves from a synagogue that had extra shelving from a library that they were setting up and that's where we put our collection of books that we use for classroom sets. So one of the unique features of this library is that there are sets of books in like sets of twenty-five so a teacher can come in, borrow twenty-five books, and have a book for every student in their class.

Wow. That's wonderful.

We applied for accreditation from the Association of Jewish Libraries and became the first accredited library in Nevada from them. So we are now officially accredited and we need to renew or accreditation next year, in 2015.

That's exciting.

Which is very exciting. Doug set up the website for the center, for the library. As part of the center, there is a link to the library catalog so that somebody in the community or a student

who's doing research can actually go to the library catalog and find the materials that are available. One of the features of that catalog is that from there they have links to other resources, like website resources, other libraries that might have books about that title. So it's a very powerful research tool.

One of the issues that we had is we had many, many, many—we still have many—VHS tapes. At the time in 2012, not a lot of schools, not a lot of patrons still had VHS tape recorders. So we didn't know what to do with them. So I believe, Doug, you found somebody who was looking into converting them to DVDs.

And has that been done?

No. Because what happened is when I came in and saw them, I said, “Stop; you can't do this unless you have copyright permissions.” So we wrote to the copyright holders of many of the tapes and could not get permission. So we are keeping them as VHS tapes because we still have a VHS player here and so they can be used here. Any future purchases will be DVDs or whatever the state of the electronic industry is at the time we purchase things.

Have you had that conversation with Michelle Light about these VHS tapes?

No.

We'll make sure we put that on our agenda when we talk about—

Great.

And a lot of the tapes, which are really old, if you go on Amazon—oh, my God, they're so expensive—they do have them in DVD form, but they're so expensive. I mean incredible.

I see. To replace them.

Yes, to put them in DVD. Although I don't know if DVD is even going to be around that long.

Well, that's one of the issues.

But at least you (inaudible/1:16:04).

You could.

Theoretically.

Theoretically.

You still have some copyright issues, but we'll talk a about that at a different time.

Some of it is if we were to use it for a class, we could do that because you can under the FAIR USE Act. But if we were to lend it, as part of the library's lending service, then it becomes sticky. As a librarian I can't sanction doing that knowing that it's against copyright. So if somebody gives us a tape that they've copied from something—la, la, la, la, la—don't tell me. Although we do have some VHS tapes, which we can convert, which are tapes of a program that we did or a speaker that we had that we have permissions. So that is something that we can do.

Good. And are those digital or are they still VHS?

Some of them are digital and some of them are VHS. So that is a next step.

What I'm hoping to do with the library is once everything is cataloged and online then to go back through and do another weed and look at what's been used and what areas we need to increase our collection. I know already that there are some areas that we don't have enough books or books that are appropriate for our use. We need more books on some of the concentration camps, the individual concentration camps. We need more books on some of the ghettos where we might have one source on one of the particular ghettos, but that's the only source that we have. So those are areas that I know we're going to want to build up.

So in terms of how things have worked with the library, one of—my background is as a school librarian. I worked with the Wiesenthal Center through a grant process in Los Angeles.

So I'm familiar with Holocaust. But one of the things that I really love doing is working with Myra in developing educational programs. So in addition to all the cataloging and stuff, which is what I was originally hired to do, I've kind of morphed into working with Myra and, again, Liz, Liz Spalding from UNLV—

Who has joined us, for the record.

—and the school district in terms of developing programs that will work for teacher education. I know when I first started working with Myra, a lot of the programming that we had was directed at a frontal teaching approach where you had a lecturer or you had a guest speaker or you had a film and the teachers watched it. What I wanted to do is to make it a more active educational experience. So between Myra and I, we developed learning centers within the library so that when we did a program with teachers—part of it was frontal teaching, but part of it was also their involvement with the materials and modeling the ways that they could actually teach in their classrooms.

One of the other things that I did when I came in is I started setting up displays. Now, for me I love books and seeing a wall of books is very exciting, but for most people it's very intimidating to come in and just see books. So I wanted to set up things that would engage people the minute they came in. So I started setting up displays that I change periodically based on the time of year, a particular topic that we're doing. For example, we're doing an after-school class for teachers and the first one is going to be on life before the Holocaust. So I set up a display table with objects, with books, with posters that will draw their eye to that particular topic and give them some ideas of, oh, I didn't know that this happened, and then maybe they would be curious about checking a book out or a film or a tape.

One of the exciting projects that was just starting when I came in was the photographs

that are on the walls of our library resource center. Myra and Doug had started this project before I came and they were working with a photographer that they had hired from UNLV who was hired to take pictures of the survivor community in Las Vegas. I believe—and Myra or Doug, you can kind of jump in here because this was before I started—but I believe that the directions were to find survivors and to get a picture of them as they look now. What the photographer did is she instructed the people whose photograph she was taking not to think about the horrors that they had been through but the fact that they had triumphed. And so many of the people in the pictures are smiling. That's because they're thinking about what their life is now and what they've gone through and survived. The pictures were all in frames when I came in and we were thinking about, what are we going to do? How is this going to look? We talked together and decided to come up with a tree.

So we had an exhibit where we had two huge functions in the fall of 2012. The first was...we called it the Wall of Hope and Doug hired an artist to come and do a tree. And then the tree extends here and then we have pictures that are all around the room. Then we invited the survivors. There was about sixty-something pictures here. We invited the survivors. They brought their families. They would take pictures in front of the pictures. It was incredible. It was an incredible event. But we came up with this idea when Doug and I went to the museum in California and we saw these kinds of pictures. We came up with the idea because we wanted to honor the survivors.

We're going to pause for just a second here.

[End of recorded interview]