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MARK YOUR CALENDAR-RIEGLE AWARD EVENT SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7

The 31st Annual Donald Riegler Community Service Award Event will take place this year on Thursday evening, **October 7th. YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS THIS EVENT, SO PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!**

The Riegler Selection Committee which is comprised of past award recipients, has chosen three outstanding individuals that we are sure you will agree are exceptional in their service to our community. The 2021 honorees are **Brenda Clack, Russell Deutsch and Sandra Jones.**

The proceeds from this annual event will help provide funding for the necessary acculturation, social programs and case coordination services to refugees and other immigrants in Genesee County.

Sponsorships for the event are available: Award Sponsor—\$1,000 for eight tickets and Corporate Sponsor—\$5,000 for twenty five tickets.

For more information on how to become a sponsor at this year's event, please call Ashley Musser at the Flint Jewish Federation office at 810.767.5922 or email ashleymusser@flintfed.org.

More details will follow in future *Jewish Reporter* issues and in the Blast.



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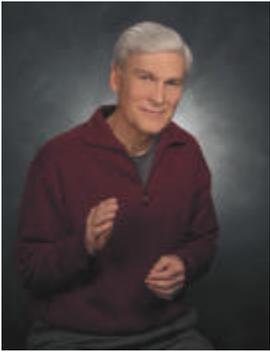
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Contact Steven Low (810.767.5922) at the Flint Jewish Federation if you would like more information on how to make a Life & Legacy Gift

No Surrender: A Father, a Son, and an Extraordinary Act of Heroism That Continues to Live on Today

By Chris Edmunds and Douglass Century

Book Review by Michael J. Thorp



Like many people I grew up knowing my Dad was a soldier. He had served in Korea and had even gone back a second time because he was bored; but that is a story in itself.

When I noticed Chris Edmunds book, “No Surrender”, about his father and his service in WWII I noted the promo line, “A son’s search for his father in WWII”. This son was a Baptist Minister in Tennessee and a father. As a long-time broadcaster, newsman and author I have interviewed hundreds of veterans, including my Dad, and what I discovered is that they seldom talk about the war.

In my Dad’s case he could talk about how cold it was, getting leave in Japan, seeing the Ginza, the troop ship journey that took him through a typhoon in the Aleutian Islands, off the coast of Alaska. He reminded me and my brothers, (all Eagle Scouts) about the tricks to hiking and always having an extra and dry pair of sox, but nary a word on the war. When I read about Chris Edmunds story I could relate. His daughter came home from college and wanted to write a paper

on her grandfather, Army Master Sgt. Roddie Edmonds; a man she had never known. But she did know he had been a POW of the Nazi’s in WWII and thought his would be a great story.

She came home and asked her Dad about his father, and he realized he knew nothing. He had wondered, and sort of asked, but his dad never responded well. He got the idea that dad didn’t want to talk about it. So, to his great regret he was not able to help his daughter; but he now needed to know himself.

His dad, Roddy, had been dead for 20 years and he wasn’t sure where to start. So, he started where we all do these days, he googled his dad’s name and got the shock of his life. The first note that popped up was an article in the New York Times about an influential and important lawyer, Lester Tannenbaum. Could this be right?

He read the article and Mr. Tannenbaum had written, “anything I accomplished was because of Master Sgt. Roddie Edmonds, I am alive today because of him”. Chris was stunned, could that be the same Roddy Edmonds, his dad? He compared notes, his dad had been captured at the Battle of the Bulge, he had been held at a POW Camp near Ziegenhain, Germany; the same as Lester Tannenbaum.

It had to be his dad, but a hero, mentioned in the New York Times? What did his father do to earn such praise?

Thus began a remarkable journey for Chris Edmunds and his family as they learned about the father’s service and his convictions that reverberate over the decades. What Chris discovered was his father was more of a hero than he could have dreamed, or imagined.

“What was most remarkable about my journey to discover what my father did during the war,” Chris writes, “was the realization that any one of us has the untapped potential to do something incredibly courageous. We all have the potential to change the world simply by standing up for what’s right.”

Twice, and many more times in lesser circumstances, Sgt Edmunds had saved his men. His story is well worth reading, so I don’t want to give it all away, but I will tell you what he did was heroic. The kind of thing you wonder if you could do if called on. He made others with him brave and do remarkable acts.

In the Nazi prison camp, in the last weeks of the war, the Nazi’s were continuing to kill, Jews, Gypsy’s, enemies; murder was what they did and they expanded the killing as the end was coming. When Master Sgt. Edmunds, who was the senior noncommissioned officer in a prison camp for noncommissioned officers, was ordered to turn out all the Jews at six the next morning he refused. He was threatened that all would be taken.

He came up with a plan. He ordered every man in camp, 1,700 plus, men who were starving and sick and dying, to turn out at six am. When the Nazi Major in charge saw what was happening, he got mad and threatening. Pulling his Lugar pistol, he said, “what is this, I ordered Jews out”. Master Sgt. Roddy Edmunds replied, with the Lugar pointed at the side of his head, “We are American Soldiers, we are all Jews.”

The men, some had to be carried out because Edmunds wanted every man in place, all repeated the comment; we are all Jews. Too many witnesses for the German officer; the German Major left. It wasn’t over but they made it through another day.

A powerful book and story about a man of faith who had faith and acted in God’s mercy for his friends and fellow soldiers. The book is a true journey by Chris Edmunds to discover his father and the heroism that lives today in the lives of thousands of descendants alive today because of his actions.

I couldn’t put it down’ a story of a son’s journey to meet his dad. About the war, the Battle of the Bulge, POW camps, Nazi atrocities, death and about life. A story that will reinforce your belief in human nature.

Michael J. Thorp is a long-time television and radio broadcaster, the host of *Capitol Memories* on line at Capitoltheatreflint.com, the host and producer of the *Flint Jewish Federation’s “Humanity in Harmony Music Festival*, and the author of five books on Michigan including “*Michigan’s Thumb Drive*” and “*The Great, Great Lakes Trivia Test*”, available at www.michhaeljthorp.com. His next book, “*Michiganians You Should Know: (Plus, Some You Do But Don’t Know Why)*”, will be released this summer.

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**Russian Senior Program Celebrating Fayvel
Markman's Birthday**

SAVE THE DATES!

**YALE STROM
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 18**

**HUMANITY IN HARMONY
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21**

More Details to follow!

INSIDE JEWISH COMMUNITY SERVICES
JCS Senior Lunch Program (Subject to Change)

Thursday, July 1	BLINTZ SOUFFLE	YOGA (11:30 AM)/BDAYS
Monday, July 5	CLOSED JULY 4TH HOLIDAY	
Tuesday, July 6	GRILL OF INDIA AT TBE/CBI	BINGO
Thursday, July 8	TUNA SALAD	YOGA (11:30 AM)
Monday, July 12	ROSEMARY CHICKEN	
Tuesday, July 13	GRILL OF INDIA AT TBE/CBI	YOGA (11:30 AM)
Thursday, July 15	DELI SANDWICHES	
Monday, July 19	SHEPHERD'S PIE	YOGA (11:30 AM)
Tuesday, July 20	GRILL OF INDIA AT TBE/CBI	
Thursday, July 22	SALMON	YOGA (11:30 AM)
Monday, July 26	ITALIAN CHICKEN	
Tuesday, July 27	GRILL OF INDIA AT TBE/CBI	YOGA (11:30 AM)
Thursday, July 29	DOGS & BEANS	

*RSVP to Jamie at jcs@flintfed.org/810-767-5922 for lunch (24 hour notice)
Temple Beth El, 5150 Calkins Rd. (enter through main door of Temple—
MASK is required)*



Senior Lunch Program celebrating Bimala's Birthday (Top left and right pictures) and Chair Yoga with Instructor, Deb Chimovitz (Bottom picture)—Do not have to sign up in advance.

How Israel Lacrosse Connected Me With My Roots



Growing up in south coast Massachusetts, I rarely ran into another Jewish kid in town. I'd usually tell someone I'm Jewish and get a weird or surprised look in response. I knew very little about my Jewish heritage, and even less about Israel. After graduating high school, I wanted all that to change.

Sports, specifically lacrosse, had historically been a driving force for me all my life. When I found out about Israel Lacrosse, it sounded like an opportunity I'd be sorry to overlook. To play the game I love in a place I was looking to connect with was an easy choice.

Choosing to move to Israel having never visited the country, not knowing anyone there and never living on my own in the past, for that matter, was something that was met with a lot of uncertainty by some of my close friends and family. I took the leap of faith fully knowing I'd be out of my comfort zone and in a very different environment. I was open-minded and I knew, if nothing else, I would learn something. To this day, one of the best decisions I've ever made was taking that leap of faith.

I spend most of my time in the southern coastal city of Ashkelon with my teammates, friends and roommates, most of whom are college-aged men's and women's athletes like myself. In Ashkelon we have our national training center and the first lacrosse-specific-lined field in the Middle East. As well as training and playing competitive lacrosse daily, we are also given the shot to try our hand at coaching youth teams all across the country multiple times per week. This is my favorite part of living in Israel. Although coaching did not come naturally to me at first, I worked at it and realized there are few things more rewarding than seeing a kid fall in love with the game just as you had at that age. Whether it's teaching them a stick trick or just being present at practice, it means something to these kids and you can see it in their faces. In return, sometimes they'll invite us to Shabbat dinner or teach us Hebrew. I'll take all the help I can get!

Aside from lacrosse, we are also given the resources to develop professionally while aiding in the internal aspects of running a nonprofit. Whether it be fundraising, graphic design, leadership development, you name it, we're learning it. We also get to hear from and interact with some very influential people in sports and the Jewish community at large in our guest speaker Zooms. Building those connections continues to open doors and provide invaluable opportunities for us.

Another great part of living here is the time we get to explore the country, it's history and our interests. We often do day or overnight trips, which help bring everyone closer together, and we get plenty of time throughout the week to try new things like surfing, Krav Maga or whatever it is we may be interested in.

From the moment I first arrived in Israel, it's felt like home. To go from barely having any Jewish friends to having a whole group of young Jewish lacrosse players that I now consider to be family is something I'm eternally grateful for. In being part of a mission bigger than myself, my sense of Jewish pride has grown exponentially, and the stories, lessons and relationships we've built here will be something I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

Please email any information to be published in the next *Jewish Reporter* to Ashley Musser at ashleymusser@flintfed.org or call the FJF office at 810-767-5922.

**Next Reporter
deadline is July 16th**

Russ & Sheryl Deutsch Announce LIFE & LEGACY GIFT!



Russ and I have been committed to the Flint Jewish community for a number of decades, since moving here in 1985. Russ often speaks about making the world a better place, and we have both sought to better our local community through social justice and other actions. We are sincerely hoping that all of our collective efforts will seek to ensure that the Flint Jewish community survives, and even more importantly, thrives for many years to come. Thank you for the opportunity to give back to a community that has given us both so much.

Questions? Call or email any of our LIFE & LEGACY team members: Harold Steinman, Jeff Himelhoch, Dr. Brian Beck, Leonard Meizlish or Steven Low. We will be featuring other members of the community who have left a LIFE &

LEGACY GIFT in upcoming issues of the Jewish Reporter and the Blast! We hope you will join the Life & Legacy Society Members and sign your letter of intent today!



Be Remembered Forever by the Flint Jewish Community with a Gift in Your Will, Trust, Retirement Account or Life Insurance Policy

Alabama Woman, 101, Visits Jerusalem Holy Sites Virtually by Israel 21c

Romay Davis from Montgomery, Alabama, has always loved to travel. And at the grand age of 101 she can now tick off another place from her destination bucket list, having recently visited Jerusalem's holiest sites using cutting-edge virtual reality technology.

For a little under an hour, Davis was transported to the sights and sounds of the Old City of Jerusalem, courtesy of The Holy City Immersive Experience created by the Tower of David Innovation Lab that allows users to wander through the area's holiest sites.

The Western Wall, Dome of the Rock, Al-Aqsa Mosque and Church of the Holy Sepulcher were all captured using both volumetric scanning and virtual reality filming by an interfaith team of Jewish, Muslim and Christian innovators.

3D video and audio technologies allowed the team to capture real environments in detail, and through exclusive relationships with key local religious figures they were granted access to the holy sites.

These sacred sites are presented in an all-access way and are bookmarked by their holiest events: the Orthodox Easter Holy Fire ceremony celebration at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Ramadan prayers at Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Priestly Blessing at the Western Wall.

Davis is an avid traveler but has never made it

to Israel - the nearest she got was neighboring Egypt, from which she caught a glimpse of the country many years ago.

A community advocate, Davis is a World War II veteran, a former model and fashion designer and an employee at her local grocery store. She earned her black belt in taekwondo at the age of 70.

A marvelous experience

She participated in the virtual tour of Jerusalem through "Wish of a Lifetime" from AARP, which grants wishes to senior citizens in recognition of their special accomplishments and contributions.

"It has been a marvelous, marvelous experience," Davis says of her virtual tour. "It is the capture of reality, that's what it is. It makes you think you are participating. I enjoyed it like you have never enjoyed anything in your life. I've never seen anything like it."

Her favorite part, she says, was the prayers. "I was watching people pray. If you look at it for a long time, you'd think it was real and you can put your hand on the people, on the brick, and touch the artifacts."

This past April, the three Abrahamic religions are celebrated Passover, Easter and Ramadan in the same month. In any other year, this would mean that tourists from all over the world would flock to Jerusalem, but Covid-19 travel regulations had a city that is unusually empty.



Russell F. Deutsch, MBA

Financial Consultant
CA License# 0M83299
russell.deutsch@equitable.com
Tel: (810) 733-2800
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STAYING FOR GOOD by Rebecca Caspi

Whenever he called me from the United States, my uncle asked the same question, "Do you think you're going to stay in Israel?" As the decades passed, the question turned more and more into a jest. And now that I've lived in Israel for almost forty years, including marrying and raising a family here, it's pretty clear that I'm here for good. And I mean that last phrase in two senses—not just that I'm here permanently, but that I'm contributing to the vibrancy and vitality of my adopted homeland.

I've felt that profound sense of pride ever since I started working for the Jewish community in Israel in 1991—first for the Joint Distribution Committee, and then, since 2007, in my current role as the director of the Israel office for the Jewish Federations of North America. And I've experienced it especially deeply lately, as Israel was under relentless rocket attack from ruthless terrorists for two nerve-wracking weeks in May, and as my staff and I at JFNA worked around the clock to manage Federations' emergency response and to keep the North American Jewish community up to speed on all the breaking news, up to and including the ceasefire that was finally declared.

It was also crucial to us to inform the Israeli public of the wave of antizionism and antisemitism that crashed upon North American shores in the wake of the conflict between Israel and Hamas. Promoting understanding and building awareness about the different challenges faced by American Jews and Israel helps us all to stay connected through thick and thin.

What was also truly fulfilling was the opportunity, just a few days after the ceasefire had been declared, to host the first senior leadership mission to Israel since the pandemic began. Their high-profile trip came on the heels of an emergency fundraising campaign by Federations that raised more than \$3 million to aid the victims of the bombings and the first responders. It included meetings with former Prime Minister Netanyahu and new Prime Minister Naftali Bennett. It featured a visit with an Israeli woman in Ashkelon whose house was ruined by a direct rocket hit in her living room and a tour of a neighborhood in Lod where violence between Israeli Jews and Israeli Arabs jeopardized long-standing relationships that are now being painstakingly rebuilt. The delegation's message of love and support was heard loud and clear throughout the length and breadth of the land.

That visit was followed just a week later by one by the Israel Travel Alliance--a JFNA-convened collection of both Jewish and Christian organizations that sponsor trips, many of which are geared to young adults, to the Jewish State. We are working with the Israeli government to ensure that, by the end of the summer, more and more North Americans will have had the opportunity to visit Israel and deepen their own connections to the people and the land of Israel—some may even decide, as I did, to make Israel their home.

So, am I staying? You'd better believe it. I'm staying for good. (*Article originally ran in the El Paso Jewish Voice*)