Elizabeth Wyka: I want to take this opportunity to welcome everyone to the Backstrom Holocaust Survivor Lecture Series. We are very fortunate to have with us today someone who has witnessed and survived the horrors of the Nazi Holocaust. I’m hoping that you will come away from this lecture with something meaningful, something that you can remember, and hopefully the spirit to do something in the future to prevent genocides from happening again to any form of humanity, anywhere in the world, at any time. So, without further ado, I want to welcome Dr. Hersch Altman.

Hersch Altman: Thank you. I was asked to speak to you today about a subject that is very important to me. That is what happens when we let prejudice, bigotry, and hatred run rampant. I know what happens because I’ve lived through a period and by some miracle survived from prejudice, and bigotry, and hatred where there's evil. I am Holocaust survivor.

Hersch Altman: None of us is born prejudiced or bigoted or hate mongered. We learn it. We learn it from our friends, from our relatives, and from our families. So, it’s probably foolish of me to think that I could come in here and in a mere 45 minutes or 50 minutes convince you to give up any prejudices, should you have any.

Hersch Altman: It does not necessarily mean that the Holocaust or a genocide has to happen to the Jewish people. We Jews do not have a monopoly on prejudice. Here are a couple of articles. I'd just like to read a couple of excerpts for you. More than a million people were butchered during what the Clinton Administration described as an effort by the Hutu Government to exterminate the Rwandan Tutsis. That sounds like it came out of the globe just yesterday, or maybe it was the day before. Rwanda is prepared to mark the '94 genocide. Next week will mark the 10th anniversary.

Hersch Altman: Look what happened to the former Yugoslavia. When I first heard the expression ethnic cleansing, my hair stood on end. Because all I could think of, when Hitler said 50, 60, 70, 80 years ago, he said, [foreign language 00:03:26], he meant it against the Jews. But as I just showed you, that does not necessarily have to mean that the Jews have a monopoly on it.

Hersch Altman: How does all this start? Do we start hating everybody who’s not from our country, or those who are from our country but maybe from a different part of the country? Hate those who have different color skin or different color hair? Or
hate those who pray differently than we do, or don't pray at all? Do we finally begin to hate people in our own family who are different than we are?

Hersch Altman: And so, when you go home tonight, I'd like you to think not about the man who stood in front of you today, but I would like you to think about a little boy. A little boy who at the age of 10 saw his father and the entire [inaudible] of his hometown taken by the very heavy guard like the worst of criminals and taken to the local jail. And for the next two days, this little boy circled the walls of this jail, hoping to see his father again. The father he loved so very much.

Hersch Altman: But he wouldn't, because when he got there on the third day, the jail was empty. It would be that morning, they were all taken into the nearby woods, shot, and buried in a mass grave.

Hersch Altman: Think about a little boy who at the age of 12 lost his entire family. His father, his mother, and his three sisters. They were all executed because the crime that they have committed was having been born Jewish.

Hersch Altman: Think about a little boy who at the age of 12 or 13, who should have gone to school and come home to a warm family, have a warm meal, sleep in a soft bed, but instead he was always on alert and running for his life, because he too was committed to die. And for some miracle, he was always one step ahead of his executioners.

Hersch Altman: Think a little boy who through the months of July and August, when the heat was the worst, he was hiding in a field under the hot sun, with no water and just a hard loaf of bread, praying for rain. Because he needed the rain to cool his body and be able to sip some of the water off the stalks of wheat. And then when night came, he had no clothes to change to. He was all wet and cold and still hungry.

Hersch Altman: He would risk his life and sneak into a barn, into a farmer's barn, dodging wild dogs and everything. And he would dig himself deep into the hay and stay there two or three days until the clothes on his back were dry.

Hersch Altman: And in the middle of the day when he'd get so lonely, he would climb to the top of the hay there, make sure there was nobody in the barn, and then look for a crack in the barn wall and look at children his own age, out there laughing and running and playing. He would look up to his God. He came from a very religious family. He would up to his God and say, "God, why me? Am I not made of the same flesh and blood that these kids are out there? But it has to be that I'm ugly and treated unfairly?"

Hersch Altman: There were times where he wanted to cry so badly, but he couldn't cry anymore because he had no tears left to cry. Let me share with you just one day in this little boy's life. It was Yom Kippur in 1942. It was exactly one year since my
father was killed. I got up early that morning, and to the flickering light of the Memorial Candle, I was reading from the Book of Psalms.

Hersch Altman: And my oldest sister came running in and told us that there was a razzia, or a raid going on outside. What that meant was that any Jew who was caught during a raid was loaded into a cattle car and taken to either an extermination or a concentration camp.

Hersch Altman: Mother called us together, the four children, and she told us that she had made arrangements with a Gentile woman on the outskirts of town, to take [Chanchai 00:08:45], my youngest sister and me and hide us until after the razzia.

Hersch Altman: Of course, Chanchai I didn't want to do. We cried, we said we wanted to stay together with mother. But she had a good reason. She said, "If we're caught, we will all get killed at the same time. At least some of us will survive."

Hersch Altman: Now, it didn't take much effort for two little kids who knew the town very well to get out of town. But unfortunately, by the time we got to the outskirts, the streets were already blocked by the Gestapo. There was a field, an empty field which ran along the road. Chanchai and I decided, "Maybe we can just sneak through the fields and get by the Gestapo."

Hersch Altman: But unfortunately, there was this Polish woman and neighbor, a woman who lived next to this friends, so to speak, for years. She was out there gloating and happy to see her neighbors being rounded up to be taken to the slaughter. She pointed us out to the Gestapo. And two soldiers came running after us, after two little kids within their guns drawn. And they took us back into town with a dozen other Jews.

Hersch Altman: They brought us to this large area, which was surrounded by walls, by buildings on two sides, and an SS with machine guns on the other two sides. And we were told to sit on the ground and anybody who dared to stand up would be automatically shot. And before the day was over, two people were shot to death because of some reason they didn't stay sitting down.

Hersch Altman: As the day wore on, more and more people were brought to this area. We were one of the early ones, one of first ones to have been brought. So, they pushed us further and further against the wall, until I found myself leaning against the wall.

Hersch Altman: This was the middle of the afternoon, or early afternoon actually. I was tired and hungry and scared. So, I put my head against the wall and started to doze. And my hand felt something, felt like a little window leading to the basement. I showed it to my sister and she and I tried to open it, pull it open, but unfortunately we were two little kids and couldn't do it.
Hersch Altman: So, my sister suggested to this man who sat next to me, if he and I tried to pull it open while she blocks us from view, maybe we'll have a lot more success. And sure enough, he and I, a couple of pulls and we opened it.

Hersch Altman: As soon as people saw the window open, they started sliding down into this basement. I wanted my sister to go first and she said to, "No, Hersch, you must go first. Because with our father now dead, if you don't come back, mother will have a very, very difficult time with it," and she pushed me towards the window.

Hersch Altman: And there I found myself in the darkness of this basement. People kept sliding down and I kept calling her name and I heard was, "Shut up! Be quiet! They're going to hear you." But none of those voices were my sister's. She was still sitting out there, blocking the window from view so other people can slide in.

Hersch Altman: I finally had to make my way out from this basement, and there was some sort of lumberyard or something in the backyard. There was many of them, and which we saw them as hiding spaces. But unfortunately, by the time I got to these places, they were all full of people already. And they kept telling me, "Go away. Go away, there's no room for you here." Even though I was the one who first opened it up, but there's no room for me.

Hersch Altman: The last place I looked in, there was this old man with this yellow beard. He looked up at me and I'll never forget that face. He looked up at me with those red eyes and pointed at a fence. And in Yiddish he said, "Look. Run, my child. Run." I don't know how, but I scaled the wall and jumped.

Hersch Altman: I was no more than 300 or 400 feet away from the wall when I heard two shots. And when I turned around, there's the body of this man falling to the ground. Because by that time, the Gestapo have noticed the escape and two soldiers came around the building in the car just as he too tried to jump to safety. Whether they didn't see me or they thought I was a little Polish boy, they did not stop me. I don't know why.

Hersch Altman: That afternoon, my sister and several thousand other Jews were loaded into cattle cars and taken to concentration camps, where they perished. I never saw or heard from my sister again.

Hersch Altman: There was nothing spontaneous about the Holocaust. It just didn't happen. Somebody just didn't turn a switch and say, "Here's the Holocaust." It really happened as far back as Hitler coming to Poland. And it started in 1933 with street riots. In 1938, Kristallnacht, which they call The Night of Broken Glass, where all of the synagogues in Germany were now up in flames.

Hersch Altman: Then the Nazi regime went viral. It defined Austria in '38, Poland and Czechoslovakia in '39, France in '40. Suddenly all of Europe was under the Nazi reign. Britain was alone and Russia was its ally.
Hersch Altman: And then when Italy declared war on Russia in 1941, the real slaughter began. First, the formed [foreign language 00:15:25], machine gun squads. These machine gun squads would go from village to village and from town to town, round up the Jewish people, dig mass graves, and bury them. The classic one is the Babi Yar Ravine just outside of Kiev, where 32,000 men, women, and children were shot by machine guns in two days.

Hersch Altman: Last summer, my wife, two of my three children, and I were in Kiev. And while we were in Kiev, we went to the Babi Yar Ravine. It's still a fairly deep ravine and it's not overgrown with trees and shrubs. But when I looked into that ravine, I tried to put a face to that human body that held that machine gun and pulled that trigger. I tried to put a face on that officer who walked down that ravine with his shiny boots, and pushing people in whether they were dead or alive.

Hersch Altman: But you know what? I could not put a face on any of these. I could not imagine that there was a human being who can pull a trigger and shoot innocent men, women, and children. But still, the machine gun... By the way, you're probably wondering about why was I in Kiev. I had the need to go back to my hometown, where I was born, at this point in my life. And my hometown is now occupied by the Ukraine. It's part of Ukraine, and so is Kiev being the capital. But to get to my hometown, I had to through Kiev.

Hersch Altman: But anyway, the machine gun was not efficient enough. So, the modern technology of Germany went into play and murder factories were established for tens of thousands of people to be gassed dead and their bodies were burned in the giant crematorium.

Hersch Altman: And throughout occupied Europe, trains were coming in by the tens of thousands of men and women and children, of all stages of life, of all ages. Doctors, lawyers, teachers, carpenters, students. They all had one thing in common: they were Jews and had to be killed.

Hersch Altman: Even the military, the German military took a second look to Hitler's need to exterminate the Jewish people. Trains that were so badly needed at the front, to haul their wounded away and to bring food an ammunition to the front, where we were, because it was more important for Hitler to bring the Jews.

Hersch Altman: I was born in Poland. When the war broke out in 1939, I was eight years old. I lived in a fairly nice community, with a good number of Jews and synagogues. There was still one war, by the way, standing up for one of the synagogues that I can remember. It is now a monument protected by the Ukrainian government.

Hersch Altman: I went to public school in the morning and went to a religious school, which we called a [foreign language 00:19:45] in the afternoon. I remember drudging through the snow because there were no plows and nobody to actually carry the [inaudible] books.
Hersch Altman: I think it was a healthy community, a happy community. The first two years of the war, Poland was between Russia and Germany. And my hometown was fairly occupied by the Russians. From the German occupied Poland, refugees kept coming. These refugees were mostly men who ran away or were able to run away. They tried to tell us about some of the early atrocities, what the neighbors did, all that. But the Jews in my hometown, "These are exaggerations. Besides, this cannot happen here. These are our friends. They'll protect us."

Hersch Altman: My father was a fairly successful merchant. He said, "I've been doing business with these people for years. We have nothing to fear." Why did these neighbors turn on their friends? Why were they so eager and willing to cooperate with the Nazi peoples. Why did this Polish woman stand out there, happy to see her neighbors rounded up and pointing out two little kids who almost made it to safety? Even now, 60, 70 years later, the hatred of Hitler and his fascist followers still remains, the psychological admiration.

Hersch Altman: The question often arises, why did they take so long? 15, 18, even 20 years after the war was over before schools started teaching about the Holocaust, or before synagogues started observing a day of remembrance of the Holocaust. I think it is because it took us survivors that long before we were able to talk about it.

Hersch Altman: I was so good in hiding who I was, where I came from, why I spoke with an accent, that I lived with three men through four years of dental school, and it was not until they were invited to my wedding that they learned who their roommate, Hersch, really was. That's how I good I was. Of course I did not want to have to talk about [inaudible 00:22:33].

Hersch Altman: I feel so badly now that even my own family, during their growing years knew nothing about their father's past. They knew that I was a Holocaust survivor, because it was a subject that was never talked about in my house. Even today, the only time I talk about it is in a setting like this, or when I go to different schools or synagogues, but not on a one to one basis.

Hersch Altman: It was my oldest daughter, Rosalyn, who put a first crack in the heavy wall that I built around myself. She was a freshman in high school and she asked her history teacher to invite me to speak about the war and the Holocaust. Not myself, the teacher had claimed, just in general. I found myself in a dilemma. I didn't want to say no to her, but yet, I knew it would be much too painful, much too difficult for her.

Hersch Altman: So once again, I used my ingenuity. I obtained a photo strip on the Holocaust, which was accompanied by a tape. And all I had to do was push a button and I did not have to talk about it. That became a yearly occurrence and as time went on, it became a little easier and I started introducing the photo strip and then I'd talk about it, and finally a little but about myself.
Hersch Altman: Furthermore, I think it took the free world that long to realize that the perpetrators of the Holocaust were not a group of terrorists, but an organized government, a nation that prided itself on its culture. And its culture commended universal respect. A nation that gave birth to Beethoven and Scheler and Gaeta, also gave birth to Auschwitz and Dachau and Buchenwald. Gas chambers where tens of thousands of people died daily and the bodies were burned in the giant crematorium while the rest of the civilized world stood by silently.

Hersch Altman: It is now a well-known fact that President Franklin Elanor Roosevelt refused to acknowledge and focus on the issue of Nazi genocide. Do you know Hitler offered one million Jewish to Great Britain in exchange for 10,000 trucks. And the British government said, "We can't do that. What are we going to do with one million Jews?" It's such a painful thought to me, because I can't help but think, "What if Hitler had done this? What if Great Britain had accepted Hitler's offer? Maybe my sister, Chanchai would have been one of the million and be alive today."

Hersch Altman: Even as late as 1944, the allied bombers were forbidden to bomb the concentration camps, or even the railroad tracks leading to the concentration camps. They could have saved tens of thousands of people, because the influx would have slowed down. But they were told, "This is not our war. If you have any extra bombs, drop them into the ocean. Not on the concentration camps."

Hersch Altman: So, can we afford to let these same nations to allow themselves such a forgetfulness? If I may quote Edwin Burke who said so eloquently, "All that is necessary for the forces of evil to win in this world is for enough good people to do nothing." That is why I'm so glad to see all of you here today. Because I am proudly the last generation of Holocaust survivors. And if we're no longer here, who is going to say [inaudible 00:27:27]? Who's going to remember what prejudice and bigotry and hatred can do?

Hersch Altman: Let me share with you another story, how neighbor can turn against neighbor. It was in the fall of 1944. I was hiding with about a dozen other Jews in the forest. The forest was not far from a Ukrainian village. The reasons the peasants left us alone was because they thought we were very heavily armed, so they only know the extent of our ammunition. It consisted of two revolvers, two bullets each. No one ever really tried and we didn't know if they worked or not, but we did have sawed off shotgun with an adequate supply of bullets.

Hersch Altman: And the men would go around in different parts of the forest during the course of the day and just shoot off with the gun. So, the peasants saw there were lots of us with lots of ammunition. About in the same time, the German government decreed that all the churches are to turn into their brass bells. The German government, the machinery, they must have been running out of brass. And when the soldiers came to this particular village, to this particular Ukrainian village to collect the bells from that church, they couldn't find any because the peasants had hidden them.
Hersch Altman: They became quite upset until one of them, one of these farmers, one of the neighbors came forward and said, "I'm going to take you to a place where there are Jews hiding, and you can take them back into town. They'll give much bigger rewards to you than the two brass bells that you did not find here."

Hersch Altman: Fortunately for us, we had a lookout on the edge of the forest and he saw the trucks approaching the forest. He came running in saying, "The Germans are coming! The Germans are coming." And we all dispersed deeper into the forest. Fortunately by the time the soldiers approached our area, they didn't find any of us. But they did collect whatever few meagerly possessions we left behind, poured some gasoline on them, and lit them on fire.

Hersch Altman: I lost two very dear things as a result of that. One was the only pair of shoes that I owned. With winter approaching and my shoes being fragile and they were the only pair that I had, I tried to save them as much as I could and I walked around barefoot. That was on the warmer days. But the bigger loss that I lost that day was the only picture that I had of my family. Whenever I was highly scared, but especially when I was lonely, I would take that picture and go off and sit down under a tree, looking at my beautiful sisters' faces and my mother's gentile face. But what I remember the most are my father's eyes, that looked back from that picture and told me that I must survive. I must survive because some day, I may have to bear witness of one man's inhumanity to his fellow neighbors. And yes, I've sure you've heard that there are voices out there now that say that the Holocaust never happened.

Hersch Altman: I'm going to read you a little excerpt here. The same day I saw my first horror camp, I visited every nook and cranny. I felt that it may be my duty to be in a position from then on to testify about these things, in case there ever grew up at home the belief or assumption that the stories of the Nazi brutality were just propaganda. Signed, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander of the UN Forces. But yet there are still voices out there who say that the Holocaust never happened.

Hersch Altman: If you saw the movie Schindler's List, it was out a few years ago, there was a scene where a Nazi officer takes the revolver out from his holster and puts a bullet through the head of a pregnant woman. He stands there and watches the blood and the brain discolor the white beautiful snow around her, and he just walks away. And there are those voices out there who say that this still could not have happened, that it's nothing more than a figment of Spielberg's brilliant imagination.

Hersch Altman: I'd like to go back to January 1943, when my mother and two sisters were still alive. My mother and my two sisters and I were hiding... Around that time, we were in the ghetto. We already had a ghetto that time in our town. Again, mother had mad arrangements with a farmer, that if she sends word to him that there is an razzia being predicted, that he will come and pick us up and hide us in his farm. It was getting there towards the end and they were predicting some big razzia. So mother sent word to [Mifal] to pick us up after sunset.
Hersch Altman: And one by one, we snuck out of the ghetto. By the way, the punishment if they catch you coming out of the ghetto, again was immediate death. But this having been a little smaller town... So, the ghetto was not as guarded as some of the larger ones. You've heard of Warsaw, Krakow, and Lodz. We met Mifal on the outskirts of town and he put us into his sleigh, covered us with blankets and hay and drove us to his farm.

Hersch Altman: He built an ingenious hiding place in his barn, which was just big enough for the four of us to lie side by side or sit, but of course not high enough to stand up. But it was probably a blessing, because we only had one blanket between us, so we needed the body heat to keep us warm.

Hersch Altman: As predicted, two days later, there was a very, very large razzia and thousands of people, including a number of my family, extended family, were caught and taken to concentration camps. The next day after the razzia, mother said, "We really need to go back and get back into the ghetto," because Mifal's fees were rather high and she needed to save her savings.

Hersch Altman: But again, she said, "Let's go back in twos, so if we're caught, we don't all go together." She and I went first. Mifal brought us back to the same place where he picked us up and we successfully snuck back into the ghetto.

Hersch Altman: Next day we get up before sunrise and we expect my sisters. So, we wait and we wait, but they did not appear. Of course we realized that something much have gone wrong. Mother again risked her life and ran out into the farmer's market, which was adjacent to our ghetto. And all she heard there was people talking about these two beautiful Jewish girls who were this morning shot at Mifal's front door. How can any of us feel or empathize with a mother who just heard two of her children were killed?

Hersch Altman: She arrived back into the ghetto with her hands waving in the air and crying, "They killed me. They killed me without a knife." And when she reached the door to our building, she collapsed. We carried her upstairs. We lived on the second floor in one room with two other families. And she stayed in there for about two or three days, barely eating or drinking, just repeating their names over and over again.

Hersch Altman: But then she would get up early every morning before sunrise and go to the window, hoping that it was nothing more than a dream, a bad nightmare. But when reality finally set in, she decided that she has to bring her two children back to town where she can give them a Jewish burial, something she could not give her husband or her youngest daughter. She found somebody that was willing to go and exhume their bodies and bring them back to the cemetery.

Hersch Altman: She also paid off for the Shmeerah to go out to the cemetery in daylight. It was there that I saw the bodies of my two sisters, each with a bullet hole in their head, inflicted by Nazi arms. I can't possibly cope with the magnitude of The
Holocaust. It's an event unparalleled in human history. It's a story so complex and statistics so numbing that it just escapes from [inaudible 00:38:24].

Hersch Altman: If I who lived through it find it now difficult to believe that such atrocities could happen, that one human being could do this to another, it is of course presumptuous of me to think that I can make anybody here feel.

Hersch Altman: A number of years ago, my wife and I went to Poland. I went to Poland, because I wanted to see the farmer who hid me out the last few months of the war. It was in his attic that I was liberated. Of course, we must not forget when we talk... We talk about the Holocaust and all the bad people. We much not forget that there were some good people. There is a forest in Israel that is called The Forest of the Righteous. There were some good people. He was one of them. But unfortunately, very, very few.

Hersch Altman: I particularly wanted to see his two children. His two children were my age at the time when I was hiding in their house. And again, I wanted to thank them for having the courage to be silent and not to tell that there was this little Jewish boy hiding in their attic.

Hersch Altman: And while we were in Poland, we went to Auschwitz. And no matter how many pictures I've seen or books I've read about Auschwitz, it was not until I was actually there that I could realize the extent of the human destruction that took place. I can't put into words how I felt when I first saw those infamous railroad tracks converging onto this little gate, with the inscription above it, "Arbeit macht frei," meaning, "Work makes free."

Hersch Altman: And when I walked through the gate, I had to touch it. I had to touch it so I could prove to myself that it was really in existence. It was really real. And through this little gate, three million plus Jews, and some non-Jews too, went through. And only small handfuls came back out alive.

Hersch Altman: How can you put into words the pain you feel when you see a mound of human hair estimated to weight seven tons? Because the Nazis would shave the heads of their victims before they would put them into the crematorium. Maybe they didn't mind the smell of flesh, burning flesh, but they did mind the smell of burning hair.

Hersch Altman: How can you describe the pain you feel when you see a room with tens of thousands of little baby shoes, whose victims were gassed in the gas chamber? Pictures of mutilated bodies that were the end result of Nazi experiments, like those of Dr. Mengele. Men who had taken the oath of healing would do experiments to see how far a human body can take, and some of them didn't even look human anymore.

Hersch Altman: To that extent, I couldn't stay there any longer and I asked my wife if we should leave. But on the way out, this Polish woman opened a concealed door and she
said, "Come in here." We walked in and it was a dimly lit room. And inside that room in the center of the floor, there was a crypt, an illuminated crypt. And in that crypt, there was a the Star of David surrounded by broken pieces of marble. And as we were gazing into this crypt, out of the darkness came the chanting, which translated [foreign language 00:42:44], which means, "A merciful God who lives up on High and is full of compassion." Now, with that, I could not contain myself any longer and I started to cry.

Hersch Altman: Where did Jews get enough strength to be able to say, "Heavenly God who lives up on High and is full of compassion," in a place where three million of our brothers and sisters were so brutally murdered? When this prayer was over, my wife suggested that we say another prayer that we say after our dead. It says, "Magnify and sanctify, be the name of the Lord." We say that on the anniversaries of a death.

Hersch Altman: In that particular moment, I could not bring myself to say it. Magnify and sanctify, be the name of the Lord. And with my face wet with tears, I walked out of the building. My wife joined me a few minutes later. No words passed between us as we continued walking the street of Auschwitz. And then we saw a little sign with an arrow pointing to gas chamber and crematorium. The palpitations that I felt when I first saw those railroad tracks became tenfold.

Hersch Altman: When I reached the iron door leading into the gas chamber, it took me a few minutes before I had enough courage to go inside. But once inside, it was an innocently looking room. It looked like any big shower room that you can see in a gymnasium or a health facility. But I knew that out of the spigots in the ceiling did not come hot and cold water, but Zyklon number two, the deadliest of poisonous gases, developed especially for this purpose, the Nazi camps.

Hersch Altman: As I stood there, I wondered how many tens of thousands of people stood in the very same place that I was standing in, but they did not breath the air that I was breathing. They were breathing Zyklon number two. And in my mind's eye, I could picture the naked body embracing the naked body next to him or her. And together they were screaming out, "Oh, Lord, our God, help us." But those iron doors were shut so tight, neither God nor man could hear.

Hersch Altman: At that moment, all I wanted to scream was, "God. Oh, God. Why did preserve this?" And then I entered the adjoining room, which was the crematorium, and I saw of others and in my mind's eye I could see those large flames engulfing these poor, innocent, naked bodies, who just moments before were sacrificed [inaudible] It became very clear to me that no matter how I feel, how painful it may be for me, the thought of another Holocaust, I must go out and speak to people like you. Because history has a way of softening tragedy and grief and to blur the rough edges of pain, even if inflicted on a monumental level.

Hersch Altman: Future generations will be better served if we take steps today to preserve the truth, no matter how painful it might be. We must instill in ourselves and in our future generations a simple saying, "Never again." So, when you go home today
and tomorrow and all the tomorrows after tomorrow, remember the words that the great American Henry David Thoreau, "It is never too late to give up our prejudices."

Hersch Altman: Sorry about that.