

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

## **William Helmreich Oral History Collection**

**Interview with Elias Epstein**  
**January 22, 1990**  
**RG-50.165\*0020**

## PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of an audio taped interview with Elias Epstein conducted by William Helmreich on January 22, 1990 as research for his book *Against all odds: Holocaust survivors and the successful lives they made in America*. The interview was given to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct. 30, 1992 and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

## ELIAS EPSTEIN

### January 22, 1990

WH: Are you involved with any *landsmanschaften*? (organization of people from the same home town)

EE: I was involved with the Radomsko Society where I'm from. In fact, they came to the boat to greet me because I was the vice president of the society that was organized in Germany right after the war. Today, however, there are very few people left who belong.

WH: What do you do now?

EE: I manage a sales force of people who sell jewelry to retailers around the country. My job is to inspire the people to see jewelry. I motivate people and I sell them concepts. Once they buy my concept, they go out and see the product themselves.

WH: How many children do you have?

EE: Two. My son was born prematurely and has brain damage and emotional problems as a result. He is in a group home in Long Island. He went to special schools. I have a daughter who has a PhD and is an expert on the Constitution. She has two children and, unfortunately, she is divorced.

WH: How far did you go in school?

EE: Well actually, I studied medicine in Germany after the war, but I didn't finish. I'm glad I went though, instead of selling on the black market, because it broadened my horizons.

WH: How were you able to adjust after the war?

EE: I made up my mind never to look back, only forward.

WH: Among your employees, do you see any differences between the Asians and the Jews?

EE: They are not as excitable as we are. You can't read their faces and maybe they're more cunning than we are.

Conclusion of Interview

**Interviewer Notes**

Throughout the interview Mr. Epstein shows me awards and honors he has received for the work he has done for his company. He has worked there for forty years and is very proud of his accomplishments.