

How did you get together with your parents? And then we're going to wrap up.

Yeah. We couldn't go anywhere because we couldn't get a passport. We didn't have any papers to get anything. And so we didn't. But my father had three brothers in America. And they wrote to the Czech Republic to find out if anybody-- and it really came on my name. We got \$25 or whatever. And then we asked where they are. And they were in Bucharest, in the capital of Romania.

And both of our husbands went to get them. And my father, when he came, he said, I'm going to annul your wedding. He said, you are really-- at 16, you get married? And my husband talked to him. I didn't talk to him because I knew I wouldn't do nothing. And he didn't annul the wedding. He let us be. And so we were married.

I'm going to turn back to Erika in just a couple of moments to close our program. There's just-- if we could spend the afternoon-- we've just touched the surface of what Erika has described. But she would then live under communist rule and became the first person to be legitimately released from behind the Iron Curtain and has a story of appealing to Khrushchev that is just extraordinary before coming to this country in 1960. And with all of Erika's talk about her education or lack thereof, I might mention that one of her grandsons just graduated number one in his engineering school at Columbia-- and just a remarkable, remarkable family.

So before I turn back to Erika, I'd like to thank you all for being here and joining us, remind you that we'll have First Person programs each Tuesday and Wednesday until the end of July and then Wednesdays only in August. So if you can come back, we would love it. But you can also access podcasts of our programs, as we mention on the museum's website, and also through iTunes.

Our next program will be next Tuesday, June 14, when our first person will be Mr. Al M¹/₄nzer, who was born in the Netherlands. He survived the Holocaust by being hidden with an Indonesian family in Holland. His parents survived, but his two sisters perished at Auschwitz. So hopefully, you'll come back for another First Person program at some time. It's our tradition at First Person that our first person has the last word. So on that note-- and when Erika finishes, she's going to hustle. I will hustle her down the stairs, get her up there so she can sign copies of Echoes of Memory. Erika?

I would like for everybody, young and old, but especially the young ones, to understand that the Holocaust should never, ever happen again. Because I don't have, really, the words to tell you. And it's very good that I didn't find anybody who cried because, you see, when I started to talk, the first time, I cried the whole time. Now, I almost cried too. But I don't want to because I don't want to.

It should never, ever happen again. And if the kids-- the world is not all right yet. You know what's going on in-- around the whole world now. I wanted to say just one place. It's not one place-- all over it's going on. And the kids should know that it happened. And you have to talk about it and make sure that it never, ever happened again, that it should never, ever happen to no place in the world. Because it was so bad. Bad is nothing-- terrible. It should never, ever happen again at all. That is my most wonderful, wonderful plea to you, to make sure that it never, ever happen again.

Because when it happened-- I didn't tell you the worst things. My grandparents died in the ghetto. And how they died? Because they wouldn't eat. They were very religious and they wouldn't eat anything. Whatever I brought, I always brought, my mother gave to the kids. And they wouldn't eat anything, even if she gave them. And they passed away. It was-- we-- I lost an awful lot of family.

The first year I was here, I wanted to read about it. I wrote down about 70-- I said the first and second. And I couldn't read anymore because I cried. And I never, ever tried to do it again. Because you see, when I see you, I just want you to know that it can't ever happen again, never. It should never, ever be close to it. And cry, you don't have to. I cried my eyes out enough for everybody. Now, we should just laugh and make sure that we know the Holocaust was. And it won't ever happen again. And I would like to take-- but we don't have time for questions.

No, we don't. But people can come when you're up there and chat with you up there.

OK. When I'm there, I will answer any questions you have. And thank you very much for being here. Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you very, very much. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you.