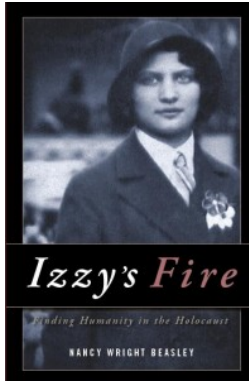


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When the leaves begin turning orange and yellow, I'm reminded of my beloved parents, both of whom were born in the fall.



Nancy Wright Beasley

Author of *Izzy's Fire*

Distant Memories Relived - October 2015

“... but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. – Isaiah 41:30

When the leaves begin turning orange and yellow, I'm reminded of my beloved parents, both of whom were born in the fall: my father, on October 15, 1913, and my mother, on October 22, 1919.

Their effect on my life, especially my love of education, is immeasurable, made even more remarkable by the fact that my father was illiterate and my mother was pulled out of the sixth grade by her parents, never to return, so she could help fend for younger siblings during World War II. A relentless reader, she always regretted not getting more education.

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parents spent their lives encouraging their four children to attend school. My father's words still ring in my ears: "Get your education. Once you got it, can't nobody take it from ya."

After my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer, I moved to Richmond in 1994 to help care for my parents. The ensuing years gave me a different perspective on life, inspiring me to, more or less, seize the moment. I was talking with my mother one day in the summer of 2000, as I contemplated attending my first National Federation of Press Women conference, scheduled for Alaska. She encouraged me to go, saying I'd never regret it. How right she was.

During the last night of that conference, I ended up sitting beside Jim Gottstein, a local lawyer. During the meal, Jim asked about what I was writing. After admitting that I was struggling to write a book about Jews and the Holocaust, he sat stock still for several minutes, laid his fork down, looked straight into my eyes, and said, "You finish that book. My stepmother was liberated from a concentration camp." The evening ended with him making me promise to send what copy I'd written and to stay in touch.

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Over the next five years, we would occasionally e-mail, although I was fearful of telling him how little progress I'd made. About 2 a.m. one morning, I awoke (disturbed again by the book and how much work was left to accomplish). I walked the floor, made a cup of tea, and headed back to bed, having made the decision to just stop spinning my wheels and trying to do the impossible. I was exhausted with the effort. By then, I was a full-time graduate student at VCU, and it was obvious my mother's days were numbered. I just didn't think I could finish the book. Feeling relieved with my decision to cease and desist, I decided to enjoy my tea and check my e-mails. A singular message, without a signature, stared back at me from the screen: "Don't you dare give up!"

The hair stood up on my neck when I realized it was from Jim Gottstein, especially since there is a four-hour time difference between Virginia and Alaska. The message not only inspired me, it also made me wonder if I'd

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As you know, I did finish the book. True to his word, Jim invited me back to Alaska as a speaker for the Alaskan World Affairs Council and other venues. I thought I had died and gone to heaven when they “put me up” (as my Daddy would say) in a grand hotel with an open view of snow-capped miles stretching for miles and flew me to Juneau for presentations, as well as giving me a week-long tour of Denali and other Alaskan delights.

I relived those memories over lunch with Jim Gottstein last month, when I attended another NFPW Conference in Anchorage, almost 15 years to the day from when we first met. Now a legal advocate for mental health issues, Jim and his wife, Nancy, laughed when I told them the e-mail story. Jim doesn’t remember sending it, but he was thrilled to learn about it and also delighted to learn that I had written a second book, *The Little Lion*, which was being adapted for the stage.

We parted with the knowledge that we would, indeed, continue to stay in touch. I’m sure I’ll continue to recall the memories we shared again, especially when the leaves begin turning orange and yellow again.

Nancy Wright Beasley
Author, Journalist

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Little Lion on stage
Swift Creek Mill Theatre
Jan 28-Mar 5, 2016

This world-premiere drama
by playwright Irene Ziegler

THE LITTLE LION

The Little Lion, my latest book set in Lithuania during WWII, will be available by mid-November.

Also in November, I will be offering two presentations for Dr. Melvin Macklin, associate professor of English at Ferrum College. Dr. Macklin

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is based on my forthcoming book.

will be using *The Little Lion* in the Holocaust course he teaches at Ferrum, as well as a similar one in the community at Temple Emmanuel in Roanoke.

I'll be happy to reserve an autographed copy of *The Little Lion* for you. Print and e-books can also be ordered through [Amazon](#)/[Barnes & Noble](#).

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For photos and other information regarding the author,
see www.nancywrightbeasley.com.

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