**HMS Sister Nancy Linenkugel - transcript**

**Speakers:**

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel - Sisters of St. Francis of Sylvania, Ohio**

**Cori Silbernagel – Director of Collections & Exhibitions, the Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust & Humanity Center**

**Lisa MacVittie** 00:00

I'm the last survivor of the Holocaust in our family.

**Jackie Congedo** 00:04

Behind the words, pictures and artifacts in the museum are people whose stories of survival and hope come alive to inspire new generations of upstanders. One by one, these stories stir the soul. Can they really be hopeful

**Bella Ouziel** 00:20

Mine was 40018. My sister was 40017

**Jackie Congedo** 00:27

Holocaust survivors, their descendants, liberators, champions of justice and courageous upstanders ask only this, "hear my story," so that the lessons they teach will echo for generations.

**Elisha Wiesel** 00:39

I will never meet someone else like my father. But there are many of us who if we come together, can keep his voice alive.

**Jackie Congedo** 00:46

These stories will change you they will move you to action, inspiring the best of humanity every day. I'm Jackie Congedo. And today's conversation is with Sister Nancy Leinenkugel. In the 1970s as a young Franciscan nun, Sister Nancy taught eighth grade language arts at a grade school here in Cincinnati. A lesson on the Diary of Anne Frank caught her students attention sparked questions that she couldn't answer. She leaned in with a spirit of curiosity and wrote a letter seeking information about Otto Frank Otto of course, was Anne's father, and the only member of the Frank family who survived the Holocaust. What happened next made such an impact on sister Nancy. She sat down to tell us about it 50 years later. Hosting today's conversation is Director of Collections and Exhibitions here at the center, Cori Silbernagel.

**Cori Silbernagel** 01:40

All right. Well, sister, Nancy, I'm so happy that you came to visit us today and took the drive here. It's been a few years since we met, we met in 2017. I had not been working very long at the Holocaust & Humanity Center. And at that time, I really felt I felt connected to learning about the stories of, of Holocaust history within our community. And it was such a joy to meet you, because you brought a story to us. That that was quite different than the stories of Holocaust survivors that had settled in our community. So I'm thrilled that you're back today to share a little bit more about that story. Before before we get there, though, can you tell me a little bit about about yourself?

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 02:38

Certainly, Cori, it's, it's a delight to be here. And thank you so much, and congratulations on the gorgeous, meaningful, impactful powerful Holocaust & Humanity Center. It is such a treasure for not only just Cincinnati, but I'm sure it's got great reach. Well, I'm a Franciscan sister Catholic sister. My mother house is in Sylvania, Ohio, which is up by Toledo Northwest Ohio, just right up 75. And I've started off as an eighth grade teacher, and then I have done a number of things in my life. I've been a hospital CEO, I've been a college president, a university Dean, and just three years ago, I was elected to be the congregational minister of my order, which in other term could be mother superior, but we don't really use that. And so now shifting back to my very first job you might say in the in the convent was I was an eighth grade teacher here in Cincinnati at St. Ann school, over in Colerain Township, Groesbeck. Today, I believe it's called Our Lady of Grace school because several schools merged. So I was teaching eighth grade language arts, and of course, 13-14 year old school children, in reading, get to do a part of the Diary of Anne Frank. So we did that. And it was in our reader, a great excerpt from it with some lovely pictures. Not so beautiful pictures, but lots of things to stimulate the students to really read it, not just say they read it. You know how 13 year olds can. So we're going through the diary and one student said to me, "Sister, is this picture true?" And I looked at the picture and here it was a group of skeletal emaciated prisoners in striped, ugly outfits trudging along in a snow covered road and the caption was, these persons survived Auschwitz and and Otto Frank's father, Mr - or Anne Frank's father, Otto Frank could have been in this group, and he is still living today in Basel, Switzerland. So a student brought this picture to me and said, "Is this true? Is he still alive? Could somebody still be alive after all that?" I had never thought of that before. So I looked at the copyright on the reader. Now, the year was 1974. I mean, this is ancient history. Now, the copyright on the reader was 1968. And I thought, well, could that be that Mr. Frank is still alive after such an experience. Now, in those days, there was no internet, on your phone in your pocket that you carry around with you, you can instantly look up anything. I didn't know what to do so and I had no access. So I went to the library, the Cincinnati branch library right there in Groesbeck. And the librarian was very sympathetic. And she, I took the picture and they said, Is this true? How would I find out? So she tried a number of avenues? And finally said, Well, you know, Sr, I have no idea either, but the diary was published by Doubleday. So why don't you just write a letter to Doubleday? And maybe they know. Okay, so I write a letter to Doubleday and inquire about Mr. Frank's existence. And then I forgot about it. Life went on school year went on, we went on to other things in the reader, and it must have been a couple of months later, two months, at least. And I receive in the mail, a very thin onion skin, airmail envelope with the return address, s. Ch. Weiz, she writes. And I thought, well, what is she fights? I have no idea. And as addressed to me, right there in Cincinnati, so I carefully opened it up. And it is a letter from Mr. Frank himself, saying that double day had forwarded the letter that I wrote, yeah.

**Cori Silbernagel** 07:19

Wow, that must have been so exciting to you couldn't believe it? Tell me a little bit about the letter that you wrote to double de what? What did you include in that letter? What did the students want to know?

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 07:33

They wanted to know if he was still alive. And so I told them the name of the reader, we were using the copyright, and that it had an excerpt from the diary. And here's the picture. I'm not sure I'm sure I didn't photocopy it or anything, because we didn't do much of that, sir. In those days. We had mimeograph machines back then. So, anyway, I just asked, what was what was his status? Is he still alive? Wow. Yeah.

**Cori Silbernagel** 08:02

What did he write back?

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 08:03

Well, he wrote, he wrote back and there's, that Doubleday had forwarded my letter, and he's something like, I'm very much alive or whatever, and living here. And since you're a teacher, maybe I could suggest, whatever whatever that. So get this letter. And I think now, I am an eighth grade language arts teacher, which means I must teach them how to write a letter. So that "Ah, ding! I've got his address. I've got some information about him. I've got the fact, oh, yes. He's very much alive. And he is living in Basel, Switzerland." So we launch into a letter writing lesson, how to do the date, how to do the inside address, what do you say this is a professional thing. How do you close and all that? So I did that as a project in language arts and the students. They were pretty much mostly interested. Now. St. Ann's was a very large school for of each grade. So there were four 8th grades. I had homeroom of one 8th grade. And then there were three other rooms. So but I would see those students all day. Yeah, at different times. So that meant 120 students who were learning about this. And so I gave them the choice. If they did a very neat handwriting job on their letter, and if they did a beautiful job, perfect inside address on all, then I would consider sending their letter to Mr. Frank, that that very letter to him. And so, about 20 or 30 kids decided that they wanted to do that. So I got stamps. We just instead of putting it all in one envelope, it was more fun for them. to write his name on the envelope, put an airmail stamp. So those all went off. And we didn't think about it anymore. And then he sent back a very large composite letter answering all their questions, which they asked all kinds of questions. Wow. And so then they were satisfied. But then I kept writing back and forth to him. And then that started a friendship and we were able to make a trip.

**Cori Silbernagel** 10:31

Yeah. Oh, I'd love to hear about that. First, though, tell me if what were some of the questions that the students asked him in their letters?

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 10:41

The main question was, do you still have the number on your arm? And what was it? I mean, a terrible question for you. But you're 14 and you are curious about that. That was one of the first things he wrote my number was for one to seven or I can't remember exactly, yeah. Questions about well, how did you survive every day in the annex, because the food wasn't very good, couldn't go to a restaurant, and he had to be quiet all the time. And questions more practical questions.

**Cori Silbernagel** 11:13

What do you think? Why do you think the students felt connected to Anne Frank, and her story?

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 11:23

I think mainly her age. Yeah, that she was 13, 14, 15. She got the diary for her 13th birthday and had started writing and it was she really wanted to be a writer. And so some of the students who were really good with words, and they liked English, they could identify with that. But then we would talk about, imagine, in the morning, when you get up, you cannot make noise, you can't scrape the chair, walk around, you have to be quiet all day long. And then when people leave the office building in the evening, then maybe you could move around and talk just to, for them to think about what that would have been like. It was very compelling to them - picturing themselves.

**Cori Silbernagel** 12:16

Interesting. Yeah, I do think that sharing personal stories like like the story of and all of those that were in the annex, it helps us all understand. Right? Absolutely. It can shed light in ways that history book cannot. I think it's amazing that, you know, today and Frank and Otto Frank to our these internationally recognized, important figures of history. What was that the case then to? I'm curious as you're teaching, you know, the Diary of Anne Frank, decades ago, was she so well recognized? Did... was there this international fame, that that that family is recognized with today?

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 13:15

Well, it was starting. Auschwitz was liberated in 1945. So Otto did survive that, remarried a woman who had the same fate of her family as he did, and so they got together I think they married in around 1952. But one of the helpers in the secret annex was Miep Gies, who was such a wonderful friend - talk about loyalty and endangering herself, and the other helpers, endangering themselves to bring food and all well, after the Frank and others family were found discovered in the annex and taken out his his briefcase saved him because it said he was a soldier, a German name, officer, I'm not really sure exactly, but so when the Nazi person that came in some thought, "Oh, he's a high ranking person." So they didn't just shoot them all then and so they they left, but they left it in a mess. They ransack the whole place. So Miep went up later, was looking around at things, collecting things for the family and found the diary and papers and all day. So when she gave that to Otto, he did not want to do anything with it at first because it was just too painful. She encouraged him because Anne had wanted to be a writer and she was a good writer. Thinking of being 13, 14, 15 and if you're just writing in your diary all the time. You're not really writing a novel or a mystery story or something like that. It was just a lot, little bit different. But Otto knew of his daughter's real love for writing. And so it took some convincing by Miep for him to actually take a look at the diary, read it. And then others encouraged him to publish it. So when that was all done that was in the, like the early 50s. Okay, and then it became popular, I believe the play. I'm fuzzy on the year, but it might have been in the late 50s.

**Cori Silbernagel** 15:29

I think you're right. Yeah.

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 15:31

So here we are. This the year is 1974, when I'm with these 8th grade students, so I would say that the diary still had quite a bit of appeal, and was quite popular. Perhaps more than today. I'm not in the teaching scene anymore today. So I'm not sure yeah, what students?

**Cori Silbernagel** 15:53

Yeah, interesting. Thank you for sharing about that. So. So, Otto writes back to the students, were they just thrilled? I mean, this is a real world lesson that they're receiving and one that they hadn't expected. And you hadn't expected?

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 16:10

Well, absolutely. I just didn't know what to think. I lived in the convent with at the school. We had two sisters, and two late teachers in every grade. So eighth grades, two sisters times eighth grades, 16 Sisters, plus the principal, that's 19 plus the librarian. That's 20. So there were 20 of us sisters living at the parish, convent, and they were all enthralled with this whole thing. Sure. And they just were so taken with imagine it was a student question that started this. Aren't you glad that you thought about it? And as teachers? Are all 20 of us? We were really just devoted to those students. It wasn't just a job and well, Oh, time is it now. And oh, gosh, out, you're ready to go home? Whatever. No, it was a - we call it a ministry. And we just all taught. Now, I didn't stay in eighth grade teaching because I was invited to do other things in my ministry. But we have plenty of our sisters who spent 50, 60 years in the classroom, because of this very philosophy of "How can you be the best for the students?" So Cori, if I had ignored what that student asked, just think of, life would be different. And I could have dismissed that person signal. I don't know. What do you think? No, probably? Oh, I'm sure not know. So when that response from Otto, but I was more impressed with Doubleday, because they just didn't toss the letter in the basket. Yeah, I have forever wondered about that as a company. Is that part of their philosophy? Is that how they treat potential book buyers and all because now I'm thinking very positive thoughts about Doubleday, but that they took the time to forward it. And then Otto Frank took the time to receive it. And it just all came together.

**Cori Silbernagel** 18:24

I would love to know who who was the person it Doubleday that received the mail that day?

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 18:29

Yes.

**Cori Silbernagel** 18:30

What, whose desk did it end up on? And again, you know, I wonder, I wonder how many letters Otto was receiving from from others, right? Around the world. But that he - I think it speaks to his his character as a good person. And

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 18:51

absolutely,

**Cori Silbernagel** 18:52

that he took the time to write back. And then to write back again. And you you had, you had started to tell me that you continued writing with him.

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 19:04

Yeah.

**Cori Silbernagel** 19:05

So tell me a little bit more about this, this friendship that developed over time?

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 19:13

Well, the students were satisfied after the letter that the main summary letter that he sent, and they all wrote to him, what they will wrote to him and then the summary letter came and they were satisfied. So I kept it up as correspondence and with mail, you know, it wasn't instant email. It was write a letter, put it in an envelope, postage, send it off, weeks, a month. Then we exchange our letters. He would send me pictures and it was just a really a wonderful opportunity. And it was more of a focus, he and I. Not so much Anne - was not the main attraction anymore. It was just seeing him as a good, good person. And so an opportunity came up for a tour, or a trip to Zurich. Now this one of our, I told you, we have 20 sisters there. Yeah, one of the sisters had been a Bowling Green State University alum. And she got a brochure in the mail, the Flying Falcons were going on a tour of Zurich and Switzerland, and the alum could go and bring anybody else. So the sister who got this, showed it to me and said, "Do you want to go to Switzerland?" And I said, "What?" And she goes, "No, I'm not going. But you could go because you're related to me. You could get in on this. So why don't you think about it"

**Cori Silbernagel** 20:52

and you can meet this person

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 20:55

Absolutely - So it all worked out my sister, I have four brothers, one sister, I'm the oldest. And my sister was in high school at the time. Here, I'm 24, 25. And she's eight years younger. She's in high school. And so my folks felt that she should go with me on this opportunity. So we went to Switzerland and spent mostly the the headquarters with Zurich. And then we did spend a day with with them in their home in Basel. But it was exciting correspondence leading up to that to go there. And the last letter he wrote to me, he said, Now when you get to Zurich, ring me up, here's my phone number. And we'll make plans. I'll tell you what train to take, and what to do. So we get to Zurich. I'm just, I'm in a habit. I'm a nun. My sister, she's in high school. We're just two American tourists, loose in Switzerland with the Flying Falcon group. Of course, yeah. But we didn't really have to do anything with them. Because they knew we were we're just talking about like, Oh, this is what we're doing. This is what we're doing. And so we get over there. And after a day, I did call him up, ring him up. And he answered, just sounded like you're your grandpa. Just, so, you know, it's special person. So he said, "Now you're going to take the train from Zurich to Basel, you take it at 10 o'clock, on the 31st." I'm not sure if that was Wednesday, or Thursday, I think it was a Wednesday. And so then, "You'll get to Basel at 11. I'll be waiting for you. You'll know who I am. Because I'll wear a white cap. And that will be then I'll take you to my house." So in those days of the early 70s, I was not a real crafting person. But I did make copper tooling. It's just a very simple technique where you're working with thin copper sheets, you tool, front and back designs, then you put a sulfur compound, so it turns black steel wall, you rub it and it takes off the high parts and it's so you've got a neat thing. And then you nail it on to a board that you paint black. Well, I was having good success with some of these things as gifts. So I thought well, I'll make one that's the Magen David. So I did. My dad cut out for me the wood of the Star of David and so then I just designed and put pieces in so I created a gift for him. But I didn't want to wrap it up and have it in a box in my suitcase. So what I did was I took a folded up box, wrapping paper, tape, ribbon, and the gift all in my suitcase.

**Cori Silbernagel** 24:05

That's so thoughtful,

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 24:06

and then we get over to Zurich, talk to him, Otto, on the phone. So the day before we met him took out all my items. Tissue paper prepared. That's right. Yep, just Yeah. It was pretty. It was a pretty good sized gift. And the wrapping paper was red, white and blue for America. So we take it on the train and I remember distinctly getting off the train at 11am he looking for a fellow in a white cap. Spot him right away. He came right up to us. Now of course, I don't know if I even sent a picture but he figured I must be the none. So he took the gift and he carried it under his arm the whole way. We walked a little bit through the train station went to a what street Her, rode that a little bit over to his neighborhood. And then we went, but he carried his own gift the whole way. It was just sweet.

**Cori Silbernagel** 25:09

Yeah. So you went to - He brought you to his home?

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 25:14

Yes. Yes.

**Cori Silbernagel** 25:15

Opened the gifts and and how did you spend your day?

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 25:18

Well, as soon as we get there, so if we arrived at about 11 in the Basel train station, and we got with different delays are walking and getting on the streetcar, and all it was probably about 1130 or 1145. His wife Fritzi had lunch already for us. So we were in his dining room, Otto, Fritzi, my sister Maryanne and me. And we just had a delightful lunch and conversation. I couldn't tell you what the lunch was, I was too excited. Just to talk to him. And just to be there in his presence and looking around at oh my gosh, it was just incredible. So then after lunch, we talked for just a little bit. But then he said, Now Fritzi and I always have to take a siesta. In the afternoon. Now he spoke beautiful English. So we're gonna go take our siesta and you make yourself at home. Here we are strangers from America, in their home.

**Cori Silbernagel** 26:22

The first day you've met in person.

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 26:24

That's right, we had just had a meal together. And we're talking so they go off, take a siesta. And here we are. So I'm we're looking around and I had like a camera. I borrowed my dad's camera because I don't even own a camera. And I'm taking pictures is everything. But I distinctly remember a book case a built in bookcase in his living room. Not real big, just a few shelves. But the books on it were amazing, because they were in several languages. Some books were in German, I could tell from the title, French, perhaps more Dutch, because you have the circle and the lines through the letters. And then there were books in English, too. So we just sat there and took a book and flip through the pages and all that. And then I don't know, half hour or so later, they appeared and said, Well, now you've had arrest, we've had arrest, let's take a tour. So we went on a walking tour of their neighborhood, just walked down the street and went to a little cafe not far away and just had a bite to eat. Then he they took us through the city of Basel. And I remember the river and they said now when you look over this river, it's Germany over there. I'm not sure if it was the Rhone or the Rhine. I'm not a great historian. But I have a picture of them that they were looking across into Germany. And I always wondered what they were thinking as they were doing that. But then a fascinating thing, though, was they pointed out a Catholic church that was along the the area where we were walking. And so he said there's there's a Catholic church. I know you would be interested in that. I said, Oh, yes, of course. But the neatest thing was, we were facing a side stained glass window. And the bracing on the outside made the Star of David on this Catholic church. Talk about tying things together. It was just breathtaking. Yeah. Wow. And so then it was about time for us to get on the train again. And so they went with us on the train. We sat there in our seat. We talked to them a little bit. And then we bid farewell, gave hugs and they took off in our train took us back to Zurich.

**Cori Silbernagel** 29:02

Wow. So, so when you came when you came home, how, how has your life changed from from this visit?

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 29:13

Well, I was so taken by the goodness of Otto Frank. The thing I remember most about him is that he said, "Do not hate. If you hate, nobody will know you hate them. But you'll be miserable." And I always thought that was the most wonderful thing because if anybody had a reason to be hateful. Look what happened to him. The camps, just the fate of the Jewish people in general. What happened to his daughter and his whole family. They were in that place for two years. When you add up everything, if you have a reason to hate, gosh, you'd be the one. But he just kept insisting that doesn't get you anywhere. Yeah, that doesn't help anything. Nothing. So when I came back, I thought that boy, that's my, that's my part of my new gospel. I need to Yeah, I need to spread that and just just live that to not be hateful.

**Cori Silbernagel** 30:26

Yeah, yeah, that's beautiful. I think I need to live by by that, too. It's incredible to think about how, you know, despite everything that he had been through in his life, that much later in life, he had so much hope and an optimism. Or it sounds like it at least that he did, he had hope for, for a better humanity.

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 30:56

He absolutely did.

**Cori Silbernagel** 30:56

And that's definitely a lesson that we that we can all hold close today. And we should.

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 31:02

I'm wondering if people think that it was, he was just riding on Anne' fame that because the diary was published, and it became such a popular thing, if he was riding on that, and he really wasn't. That was a sad, sad chapter in his life. But the beauty was, he and his wife gave it they know, they knew she wanted to be a writer. So they gave her the means to work on that craft and be a writer. So she was and you know, she's, you know, wasn't living to see the fame and the, the distribution of her book, but it did happen. But you know, he just became a person in his own right. About not hating and about surviving, and about being gracious. And somebody like me, who wrote and student eighth grade students from Cincinnati, Ohio writing to him. He had, he took time that was important for him, having us as guests in his home for that day. Now, he died five years later. He died in 1980. And this was 1975. He was older man, then I don't remember his exact age. But to he could have said, "Oh, well, you know, that's fine. You're coming from America? Well, I don't have time for you. And I've got more important things to do, or I'm going to be in Amsterdam this day, or I'm going to be whatever. No, it just, he was just so gracious and grandfather-like. Someone that you would trust. Totally trust, and appreciate being around.

32:52

Yeah. And you continued to talk with him and his wife after? Yes. How did how did your friendship continue after the visit?

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 33:03

Well, I would keep writing back and forth about how much we enjoyed things and send him pictures and so forth. So up toward 1980- 79 and 80, when he was getting more frail, we didn't really correspond that much. And I remember seeing a picture of him in in a newspaper that announced his death. And he just looked very different than when I remember. He was more robust. But he was more, you know, death-like in his appearance, hate to use that word. And then Fritzi, though she lived for, I think about 11 more years or so. She died in 1991. So she and I kept corresponding, and now and then she'd be on vacation. And she'd send me a postcard from someplace that she had been. So she never forgot. And I never forgot. But then I believe in her later years, she had some dementia situations.

**Cori Silbernagel** 34:07

Yeah, yes. Yeah. changed. Yeah. So when we met for the first time, several years ago, you shared with us a scrapbook that you created. That captured photos from this trip, the letters that were written over the years. We have it with us today, and I'm wondering if you if you can walk me through it and show me the things that you saved?

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 34:33

I certainly can, Cori. Before I do that, let me just say that when it came to thinking about what should be the future of this notebook, I had a couple of choices. I could have just let it go to my own communities archives, but then it would be in a drawer somewhere and nobody else would know about it. So because the school that started all this Colerain Township, Groesbeck, St. Ann's school is in Cincinnati, I just felt that the Holocaust & Humanity Center was a better direction to go. And you were also gracious and you were happily wanting it. So here we are, and have it. So yes, I can, I can see what we have today. Just a couple of early pictures. December 17, 1974, was the first letter that Otto wrote to me because of getting the letter from Doubleday. And so then in January, so it took from December, to the end of January,

**Cori Silbernagel** 35:52

yeah, a whole month

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 35:54

to have the students write and he wrote, "You probably know that 29 of your students wrote letters to me, I was very pleased, so forth, I enclose my answer." So then, his response, the main letter to the students was, he wrote, This is dated January 26, 1975. "Dear young friends, let me thank you very heartily for the kind letters you wrote me, showing so much true feelings and sympathy for Anne and all of us who were hiding in the secret annex." And he goes on to say, "How life was in the secret annex Anne herself described so well, that I could not do it better." So and he just talks about the fate of Jews, and that he has kept, he says, "I kept contact with a number of them who lasted after the concentration camps. I advised and tried to help. Of course, I built up my business again." So he's really selfless, and thinking about others. So then in the book, it has a calendar that he sent me a few pictures of Otto in his second wife, Fritzi.

**Cori Silbernagel** 37:18

Did he send these photos to the students so that they would

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 37:24

No he did not.

**Cori Silbernagel** 37:24

okay,

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 37:25

they were just in a little calendar put together. And then we continued March. The opportunity came along. Oh, July 6, "Time passes quickly in the date of your departure is approaching, we can imagine you're looking forward to the great adventure. We returned from Amsterdam. And we're satisfied with the work done by the Anne Frank foundation. This week, we're going to Amsterdam..." just like we would go to.

**Cori Silbernagel** 37:53

Yeah, yeah.

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 37:55

from Toledo to Cincinnati, or

**Cori Silbernagel** 37:57

well, and, you had mentioned earlier that he had this grandfather type of spirit.

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 38:04

Yeah.

**Cori Silbernagel** 38:05

And presence, and I think. I think that comes out in this letter, because he he's just thrilled that you're you're taking an adventure. That you're having... experiencing life.

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 38:17

Absolutely. Absolutely.

**Cori Silbernagel** 38:19

It seems that he was he was just genuinely happy and excited for you

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 38:24

He was. And my sister and I were just two little people in the whole big universe of folks that were interested in him wanted to meet him. Wanted to think about the diary. So it was amazing. And this picture is just, I had a habit on then. And my sister, so yeah, there we were. And then my sister pretty much took these pictures. He's carrying the gift.

**Cori Silbernagel** 38:48

Oh, I see that.

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 38:49

Yeah. Right. And so my sister or I took pictures, but we were out in his backyard. Look at that picture. He's just such a that's a grandfather - gave me a berry from one of the bushes. So it's just really something. And then just more pictures out there. Had an opportunity to be on this in his side porch. He autographed a book that he gave us, which I think I gave you all to at some point, and then September wrote, both Fritzi and Otto signed it, about a thank you for being there. This was that one picture was published in the paper Catholic Chronicle. And then I wrote this was the general superior or Mother Superior then who worked the okay for me to do this. And that was the report I did for the whole congregation. And just continued correspondence with him through '78 As you can see, and you Oh, and then there's the Life magazine in March of '79 had an article about Anne Frank that she would be 50. That year. I didn't even pay attention that this was out. I didn't get the magazine or subscribe. Well, I remember I was a student in health administration at Xavier University. Then a lady in the grocery store, or a lady in a theater just said, you know, there's a story about Anne Frank in Life Magazine, I just got one at the grocery store. So I thought, Oh, I better get one side, zoom over to the grocery store. I see a whole bunch of them on the rack. The title of the of the Life magazine had it on the caption. And Frank would be 50. So I didn't even look at it. But I grabbed it, bought it took it home. Then as I'm reading it, there is a picture of Otto Frank standing in his office with the Magan dab. And I made on the wall saying that a sympathetic sister from America made it and I thought, Oh, my God. Fabulous. So then he died in August of 1980. So what a different appearance than he had before. And then there was just some other correspondences. Fritzi wrote, continued to write. And these are different things that she kept writing. I have moved locations by then. But Fritzi I am thinking of you off and off on disregards. And then in 2000, I happened to take a trip back to Europe. And we saw Dachau and just included some pictures from that. And a stone that I picked up. I had forgotten these were in here. But yeah, so anyway, and there's another stone, it's still intact. But that was just such a incredible thing. And then, oh, this is from 97. I was already hospital CEO, and the story was of interest. So that was in the Toledo Blade. And there we are.

**Cori Silbernagel** 42:17

Well, thank you so much for sharing this scrapbook with me. You know, one of the one of the things about this entire story that's really meaningful for me, and is memorable for me having having heard it, you know, years ago, something I've always kept in mind. Is, is your connection with with Otto Frank, someone who had an entirely different life of experiences across across the world. What do you what do you think was important about that connection for him? What was important to you? Why, why did it exist in the first place?

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 43:00

Well, I at first was wondering that myself, because he gets so many inquiries. He's a worldwide known figure. And to be so gracious and responsive to just little Oh, me back here in Cincinnati, Ohio was, was just mind boggling to me. But as I thought about it, and as life has rolled along, and so now I can look back almost 50 years later, to say this was really something while a student's questions started it, and if I hadn't gone in that direction, this would probably not have happened. So taking the the the opportunity that the student is important, and what the student has on his or her mind is important. Well, from that starting point, so the diary was the starting point. But as things went on, it was just between Otto, Fritzi ,and myself, seeing me as he used the adjective sympathetic at one point as your, your sympathetic Sister, you and your sympathetic sister came to visit us, and that's true. But I was more taken with him as the person that he is - all of this that happened, thrust him into the limelight. But what he did with it was just be a beacon, take that limelight and make make it a beacon for the world of peace and of goodness, and not hate anybody. So I - What did you see in me? Perhaps, the fact that I was an educator, and maybe I could continue doing that. And even if you're not in a classroom, there's not a day that goes by that you don't teach somebody something.

**Cori Silbernagel** 45:02

Yeah. Well, and I wonder if he maybe felt the same way about you, that you as an educator, and a good educator, you were were also a beacon of peace and and hope for future generations. I think you're too modest in - truly, I think you're too modest in, in the impact you had on the students, and I greatly admire your commitment to education. And just the notion that you, you took the extra step for your students, I think that that is, is a lesson of putting in a bit of extra time really changes so much for just one student or a classroom of students? You know, those, those 20-some students got to participate in this amazing lesson that connected them directly with Otto Frank, an experience that very few people have have had. So I do think perhaps he felt the same way about you.

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 46:27

Well, Cori, thank you for your very kind thoughts. One of the words that you have outside in the museum is a quote from Al Miller that says, bullets didn't start the Holocaust. But words did. And I think about that. Just because you never know, the way you say something to somebody or what you say to somebody can change so much. They just words, you just never know what words are going to do for you. People remember, not so much what you say but how you made them feel. And I think that was what I did.

**Cori Silbernagel** 47:13

Yeah, yeah. I think that's beautiful. Thank you so much for sharing your story with us today. This is an incredible, incredible story that we love to share as often as we can. And I feel really fortunate that I got to hear the story again from you. Because every time we speak about this, I learned something new gain new perspective. And I hope that I'll carry that into my own storytelling. So, thank you.

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 47:46

You're welcome. I know you will. And that just confirms for me that the Holocaust & Humanity Center is the right place for this so that it will live on. Yeah, who knows inspire somebody else?

**Cori Silbernagel** 47:58

Thank you. This is a treasure for our collections, because it it is the vehicle in which we can share this story. So thank you very much.

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 48:10

You're welcome.

**Jackie Congedo** 48:11

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