

My father's life spanned most of the 20th century, and he was a participant in many of its major historical events. Born in Latvia in 1909, one of his first memories was being taken to see Tzar Nicholas II. Unfortunately, nature called and the Tzar passed by while his mother was taking him to the bathroom. His chagrin at missing the Tzar undoubtedly helped stimulate his lifetime interest in history. During WWI, his family was forced to leave Latvia because Jews were not welcome in his town. They went to Vitebsk, a shtetl, and then to Kharkov in the Ukraine, where he experienced the Russian revolution. They returned to Latvia in 1920, and he and his two brothers and sister grew up in Riga's Jewish community. Regarded as unwelcome strangers in Latvia, the Jews developed their own community organizations and institutions. He attended a Jewish school and when he was ready for college, left Latvia to go to France where he attended the University of Montpellier and then medical school in Paris. He relished telling tales of his life as a starving foreign student in medical school. Upon returning to Latvia, he was immediately drafted into the Latvian army. His Latvian was a bit rusty, and he mistakenly volunteered for the army ski troops. He did not know how to ski, but with his indomitable spirit, he braved the snow and wolves and taught himself the skills he needed to stay upright. There was no future for a young Jewish doctor in Latvia, and as Nazism reared its ugly head, he left Latvia for the United States where he had relatives in Philadelphia. He came to this country with no knowledge of English and foreign medical credentials which were not accepted in the U.S. He started his career selling Christmas trees and then working as a delivery boy in a pharmacy, where he met my mother while delivering a prescription to her nephew. My aunt Ida, my mother's sister, helped him get a job as a research assistant in a laboratory. After my parents married, my mother sent out 200 letters to hospitals all over the country applying for an internship which he had to repeat to be certified in the U.S. He received one acceptance, from St. Peter's hospital in New Brunswick, NJ, which was run by a French order of nuns. When WWII started, he immediately enlisted and requested that he be sent overseas. He did not know what was happening to his family, but he knew that they were in great danger. His unit was shipped out without him, because a perforated eardrum he had since childhood became infected. He blamed my grandfather's prayers for reactivating this childhood condition on the day he was due to be shipped out. He spent the war stationed all over the U.S., as a physician in military psychiatric hospitals, actually often in greater danger from violent patients than his army unit was since they saw no combat action overseas. In 1945, before his discharge, he received a letter from my aunt, who had been released from Bergen Belsen concentration camp, telling him his brothers and parents had perished in the holocaust. It was one of the defining events of his life, which shaped his subsequent feelings. The army established him professionally. He went to work as a physician in a VA hospital in New Jersey, where he established a private practice in psychiatry and for many years worked with the New Jersey State Diagnostic Center at Menlo Park as a forensic psychiatrist, specializing in the psychopathology of homicide. He wrote three books and

many articles on this topic. He was also Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the Robert Wood Johnson school of medicine, N.J.'s state medical school. He was professionally active til the last decade of his life, which he spent here at Martin's Run. My father wanted to leave us something of himself, and after his retirement he wrote his autobiography, where he chronicled in loving detail the great and small events of which he had been a part. In his last years, he took great comfort from having people read his autobiography to him, which made him, as he said, feel alive.

My father's greatest gift to us, however, was his values, which deeply affected all of us. One of his outstanding traits was his compassion. He was a physician who truly cared for his patients, empathizing with them, never too busy to take a call or treat for free a person who could not pay. He was also one of the most tolerant individuals I have ever encountered. Racism was simply not a word in his vocabulary. He respected everyone and valued each person for what he or she was internally. His parents' tragic deaths left him not bitter but rather committed to making sure that such horror should not happen again, to anyone, not just to Jews. Responsibility and courage were other traits that distinguished him. Once, he had another psychiatrist bring him someone who had confessed a brutal murder. This psychiatrist did not want to get involved. My father, convinced the man would kill again, turned him into the police and then testified in his defense, arguing for institutionalization rather than capital punishment. He usually testified for the defense in such cases. Intellectual curiosity and a love of learning were among his most distinguishing characteristics. He spoke seven languages fluently, was a voracious reader—preferring ancient history and Russian literary classics-, loved classical music and was in every sense of the word a Renaissance man. Nothing escaped his interest, from the smallest details of his family's lives to major world events. Finally, as all of us know, he was totally committed to his family. He was a wonderful husband to my mother, his wife of 57 years; a caring brother to his sister Adele, a terrific father; and a superb grandfather, whose grandchildren were the joy of his life.

He was a man who approached life with gusto and lived it to its fullest. We gather today to mourn his death, but also, to celebrate his life.