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Prime Stage Theatre and the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh Present a World Premiere Production of *Perseverance*

(Pittsburgh, PA – March 17, 2023) Each year through the power of theatre and partnerships Prime Stage Theatre and the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh engage the world in education, understanding and actions against the atrocities of genocide. This year's enGAGE production is a live and virtual performance adapted from the book ***Perseverance: A Holocaust Survivor's Journey from Poland to America***.

The world premiere of ***Perseverance*** brings to the stage a powerful memoir of healing and renewal. Few visitors to the G&S Jewelry Store in Pittsburgh's Squirrel Hill neighborhood during the 1960s and 70s were aware that the cheerful proprietor, **Melvin Goldman**, had spent his teens enduring the horrors of Auschwitz before arriving as a penniless refugee in postwar Pittsburgh intent on reshaping his family's destiny.

The book, ***Perseverance: A Holocaust Survivor's Journey from Poland to America*** provides an absorbing tale about an incredible human being, **Melvin Goldman**. But, it also tells a beautiful story of his daughter, **Lee Goldman Kikel**. Through her journey co-writing the book she discovered more about her father, giving her a greater understanding of who he was and what he had endured, and the importance of sharing it with the world.

*"My father's incredible legacy evolved over time. For nearly four decades, he created custom jewelry. His unique talent and creativity shined through for his customers and friends. Each piece was as special and unique as the individual for which it was created. His passion and care was, indirectly, part of countless special occasions throughout Pittsburgh and extending well beyond Western Pennsylvania. Unbeknownst to his customers, the Melvin they knew came from a much darker past. A proud immigrant, he was born to a traditional Jewish family in Poland, witnessed the horrors and atrocities of the Holocaust, and endured unimaginable pain and anguish. He carried this darkness on his shoulders all his life. Melvin spent time in his office reflecting on this darkness. He reflected on his experiences by recording his story onto cassette tapes. This preserved his memories and the stories of family members that easily could have been lost forever. Chaim, Balcia, and the Goldman and Ceder families are now remembered because of my father's foresight. L.E. McCullough's adaptation brings my father's character to life, while weaving strands of darkness and light as the play progresses. Audiences will leave with a renewed sense of hope, said **Lee Goldman Kikel**.*

Adapted for the stage by **L.E. McCullough**, the play depicts Goldman's irrepressible spirituality, unflagging love for humanity and perseverance as he worked to replace darkness with light, one shop patron at a time. Playwright **L.E. McCullough** has written over 150 plays on historical topics but believes his adaptation of *Perseverance* may be his most important effort yet.

Jason Kikel describes listening to cassette tapes recorded by his grandfather, Melvin Goldman, chronicling his childhood and story of survival. He described being able to see this manifest on stage as a true gift.

*“My grandfather survived an incomprehensible hell on earth. He set foot in the United States with nearly nothing, and gradually built his own American Dream. McCullough’s theatrical adaptation of this story follows Melvin’s journey, highlighting his strength and resolute faith in humanity,” said **Jason Kikel**, Melvin’s grandson.*

*“One day, over thirty years ago, I said to Melvin, ‘Melvin, you look good.’ His response was, ‘I look good on the outside, but I’m rotten on the inside.’ Later, I realized that Melvin, after all these years, was coping with the agony of his Holocaust losses, his family and his youth. Every day he persevered, giving his life value,” said **John Kikel**, Melvin’s son-in-law.*

As antisemitism is on the rise around the world hate is all too soon normalized. Survivors remind us of the importance of hope. They experienced and witnessed the darkest time of humanity. They did not give up and after the war they fought to create new lives for themselves. Their hope gives us a moral obligation to carry that hope forward in the world. We celebrate their perseverance as an example they set for us all.

All Prime Stage performances are accessible to everyone. To ensure quality with our Sensory Inclusive performances, Prime Stage Theatre is the region’s only theater company to attain Certified Sensory Inclusive status through KultureCity, a leading nonprofit recognized nationwide for using its resources to affect change for those with sensory needs. The Hazlett Theater, where Prime Stage Theatre presents its production, is ADA accessible.

Perseverance

Based on the book by **Melvin Goldman** and **Lee Goldman Kikel**

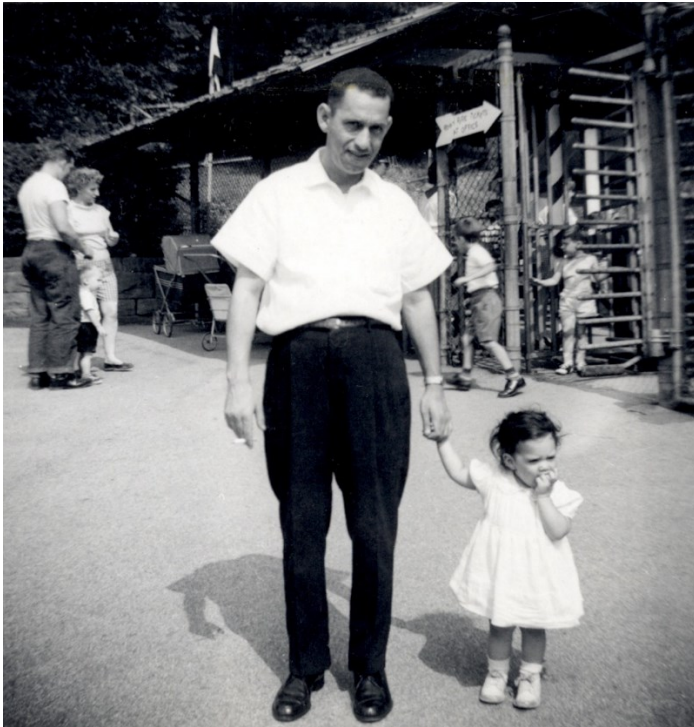
Adapted by **L.E. McCullough**

Directed by **Art DeConciliis**

- April 15 – 16, 2023
- IN PERSON PERFORMANCES: Saturday, April 15, 8 pm and Sunday, April 16, 2:30 pm
- April 24 – May 7 – RECORDED STREAMING tickets go on sale in mid April for viewing. Streamed performance includes audio description and closed captions.
- Suitable for ages 13 through adult.

Purchase tickets: [AudienceView Professional \(ovationtix.com\)](https://www.ovationtix.com)

Link to register your class for the recording streaming student matinee: [2022 - 2023 Prime Stage Student Matinee Reservation Request Form \(google.com\)](#)

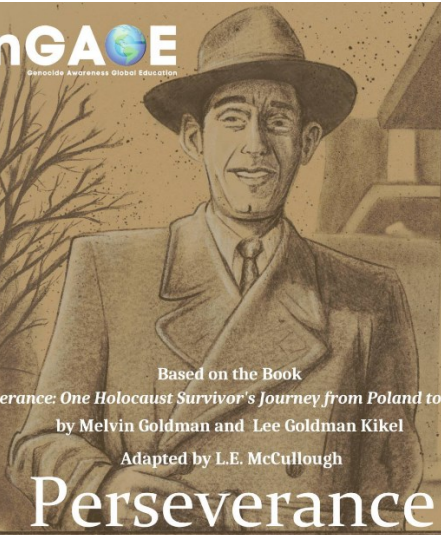


Melvin Goldberg and Lee Goldberg Kikel at the Pittsburgh Zoo
Photo credit: Lee Goldberg Kikel



Melvin and Mildred Goldberg in their jewelry store in Squirrel Hill
Photo credit: Lee Goldberg Kikel

enGAOE
Genocide Awareness Global Education



Based on the Book

Perseverance: One Holocaust Survivor's Journey from Poland to America

by Melvin Goldman and Lee Goldman Kikel

Adapted by L.E. McCullough

Perseverance

Directed by Art DeConciliis

April 15 and 16, 2023

at the New Hazlett Theater Center for Performing Arts
6 Allegheny Square East, Pittsburgh, PA 15212

prime
stage

THEATRE HOLOCAUST
CENTER OF
PITTSBURGH

Recorded Streaming

beginning April 24 - May 7, 2023

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