



Florence and Laurence Spungen Family Foundation

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www.spungenfoundation.org

*A Foundation to support projects and research in medicine,
Jewish culture and causes special to our local communities.*

Florence(d) Laurence(d) Carol Debbi Danny Glenn

How and Why Danny Spungen Acquired the Nazi Scourge Exhibit And Donated it to the Foundation

I have been a collector all my life. I think I started collecting rocks and minerals first because my uncle was a famous geologist (Dr. Alfred A. Levinson) and remember doing school projects using them. Other influences:

- My father traveled a lot and would bring home little gifts that I liked to save.
- I started collecting coins very early on.
- My parents would not buy me a dog so I liked books on dogs. Honestly, I remember "borrowing" a lot of books at a store called "Turn Style" in Skokie.
- I remember collecting baseball cards, specifically in 1969 when the Chicago Cubs were doing very well (but of course lost)....
- My Grandma Sarah, Aunt Helen and Uncle Oscar gave me old USA coins.

But, the key collecting moment in time: In the summer of 1973 when I was 12 years old, I was watching the cartoon Scooby Do on TV with my brother (Glenn). I yawned and felt a "snap" in my neck. It really hurt! I told my mother and she told me to take a nap upstairs. I remember she had a friend downstairs and I later came down crying. She put me in her car and took me to Evanston hospital and I complained every time she went over a bump!

I ended up staying in the hospital for about 8 days. I remember that I refused to go to the bathroom in bed pan. I would instead call my dad who then drove from his office on 1818 South Wabash in Chicago to carefully walk me to the bathroom because the nurses would not let me! I really don't remember to what extent but I had to wear a neck brace over the summer.

To keep me busy, my father when to his brother's home (Uncle Kenny) and got an old stamp collection of stamps and "first day covers" they both collected when they were young. This is what really laid down the foundation for my passion of stamps and other philatelic/numismatic related items.

In high school I entered a work-study program. I actually applied to a few different jobs that the school helped me with but I really wanted a job at the stamp and coin department at Marshall Fields in Skokie (now Macy's at Old Orchard/Westfield Mall). At first Mrs. Betty Mohr rejected me because she thought I was too young and also maybe because she thought I would take the customers for myself.



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Ken Lawrence explained that the piece was part of an exhibit that he took around the USA to areas where Neo-Nazis would march. He would set up the exhibit in the local schools and churches to say the Holocaust did exist and that what the Neo-Nazis were doing is very wrong.

Ken explained that he was working on selling the exhibit to a group associated with the Holocaust Museum in Michigan.

I like museums and had no knowledge of how museums work...but I blurted out (with no facts to back it up) that museums will not properly respect/appreciate the exhibit and if they show it, it will be short term and then put in storage making it impossible for 99.999% of the people to get access to it.

I convinced Ken to sell to me...stating that we would both be taking a risk. I told Ken that I knew nothing about the Holocaust, but I will do "something" and keep the Ken Lawrence name associated with the exhibit. That "something" was the unknown risk!

One of the first things I did was approach our Foundation Members about becoming the custodian of the main exhibit that Ken Lawrence built. We all agreed that it was important Ken's original (famous) sixteen frame exhibit stay intact and not broken up (sorry kids). In 2008 the Foundation formally accepted the exhibit to be available to all researchers, students and interested parties by the internet and by exhibiting the material in a variety of educational and public venues.

This journey began in June 2007. Now, 8 1/4 years later, we have facilitated incredible learning experiences and permanent memories with the exhibit and the survivors that come along to tell their story. Explore the many news articles, photographs and video clips at www.spungenfoundation.org

On behalf of the Foundation,

Danny Spungen