



“You can’t hide from the truth”

is a statement often said by those older and wiser than me. I had the pleasure of meeting Rita Cosby. as part of her NE OH-Western PA book tour sponsored by the Kosciuszko Foundation, Ohio. On **February 8th** Cosby's appeared at McKay Auditorium, Beeghly College of Education at Youngstown State University to present a talk at the invitation of Youngstown State University Journalism Department, the Society for Collegiate Journalists and the Polish Arts Club of Youngstown.

This well-known journalist and author chased the truth, embraced it, and in her book, *Quiet Hero, Secrets from My Father's Past*, she captured the truth on paper and told the story of her Father and the time he spent in his homeland of war-torn Poland and the terror he faced as a young man during World War II. To say that Rita is an accomplished speaker is an understatement. We all know her as an avid reporter covering stories from around the world for a variety of news stations. However, as I sat in the audience in YSU's McKay Auditorium, I listened to her talk about her Dad. She had told the story so often, she didn't use notes. But as the story unfolded, it was as though she was sharing it with friends she had known for years, instead of with a room full of strangers.



She started speaking, saying that she never had a relationship with her Father because of her parents' divorce when she was a young child. Her Dad left and she didn't even know of his whereabouts for many years. She knew he had some type of secret in his past that he never talked about. She said she



wondered so often what was the truth about the scars on his body and how he got them as such a young man. A tattered suitcase found after her Mother passed away, held the truth about her Dad's life and the secrets he kept so guarded. She searched for her Dad, found him, and what unfolded was a father-daughter bond based on the stories he shared with her; and she, in turn, shared with the world. There was never a moment of boredom as she entwined the history of the Polish Nation with her Dad's personal story. Many of us had tears in our eyes when she talked about his young age at 15 when he started

to work in the Polish Resistance. But then Rita's face would light up as she told us of stories of 150 young Polish soldiers fighting the Nazis with only 2 or 3 rifles to share. She would comment, "and you think you've had bad days!" We laughed with her; not that war is funny, but she captivated us with her storytelling.

Everything did have a "happy ending." She and her Father reunited, and she shared her pride in him for all he did for Poland with us. He returned from the war, reunited with his daughter, returned to Warsaw with her, and now, at age 85, can talk openly of the truths and secrets he kept buried for so long.



After having spent a day with Rita, first at dinner at *Café Cimmento* before her speaking engagement at YSU and later as we all watched her television interviews together, I found her perfectly charming and so full of fun. She not only talked about her life; but she also questioned us about all our Polish activities and our backgrounds. She even joined us at St. Stan's Church in Youngstown for an early AM



pierogi making event. She pitched right in making potato balls for the pierogi and laughing with the ladies. She and her companions enjoyed a lunch of pierogis, took photos and then she was off to Pittsburgh for another speaking engagement!

I enjoyed Rita so much, as did we all. Please look for a copy of Rita Cosby's book, *Quiet Hero, Secrets from My Father's Past*. It is an extraordinary, very well told story. It is worth reading and worth remembering the story of the Polish Resistance and the stories her father told—an amazing hero, quiet no more. -- *Marianne Poprik*



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