
Paul Schatzberg

In his long life's journey thus far, Paul Schatzberg has become a scientist, a scholar, a sage, and a steward. Born in Vienna in the decade before Hitler's march into Austria in 1938, he experienced first-hand the beginnings of the tragedy of the Holocaust. And it is this experience that has left an indelible imprint deep in the recesses of his heart and soul.

As a youngster in Vienna's primary grades, Schatzberg personally witnessed anti-Semitic taunts. By March, 1938, anti-Semitism had escalated to such a level that he and other 4th grade Jewish boys were transferred to a school designated only for Jewish children. By August, the Austrians had confiscated his father's retail shoe store and the family apartment. There were restrictions at restaurants and movie theaters. "I had blond hair and blue eyes," recollected Schatzberg, "so my father gave me money for the movies and told me I could go by myself. There was a new movie house called NON-STOP because it never stopped showing a film. But now a sign on the entrance door said 'Jews Forbidden.' I went in there, but I was scared."

As dangers intensified daily, his parents fled Vienna and joined a cousin in Antwerp, Belgium, hoping to eventually emigrate to America. U.S. quota restrictions limited the entry of Jews born in Poland. Since Austria was the birthplace of Schatzberg, his mother and brother, the U.S. granted them permission for entry by December, 1939. But his father, who had been born in Poland, would have to wait.

Schatzberg, his mother, and brother Walter made their way to New York. "We were out of harm's way," he recalls, "we were safe." The three would settle with relatives in Baltimore. Five months later, Germany attacked Belgium and Schatzberg's father and thousands of others were deported to a detention camp in southern France. He eventually escaped and found shelter with relatives near Marseilles. In the summer of 1940, Schatzberg's mother finally heard from her husband. With continued pressure on immigration bureaucrats from the district's congressional representative, Schatzberg's father arrived in the U.S. in October, 1941.

And so began Schatzberg's American assimilation. Fluent in German and knowledgeable in Flemish, he mastered English quickly. His interest in chemistry blossomed at the age of 13 when he received a chemistry set as a gift. He would shyly perform experiments for family and friends, transforming the colors of the chemicals in the set's test tubes.

In high school he worked part-time during the week and full-time in the summer in the reference department of the Pratt Library. "How I loved that job," he said. "I got to go through the whole library; there were stacks and stacks of books. The Maryland



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Academy of Sciences was on the second floor with all kinds of science exhibits and buttons you could push, and there was a big telescope on the roof.”

Garnering a full-time, four-year, competitive state scholarship, Schatzberg majored in chemistry at Western Maryland College, now called McDaniel College. After graduation in June 1951, he landed a position as an entry-level chemist at the David Taylor Research Center in Annapolis. With his brother pursuing a degree at St. John’s College, Schatzberg began participating in the Great Books discussion groups. “The college was having seminars in the King William’s room on Mondays and Thursdays for two hours,” he recalled. “I loved it.”

Finding the love of his life, Schatzberg left Annapolis for two years to follow his girlfriend, Toby Isaacs, to Duke University where he would complete a master’s in chemistry. Now married to Toby, who was expecting their first child, he was drafted into the U.S. Army and spent two years in Pine Bluff, Arkansas.

Returning to Annapolis, Schatzberg worked for 38 years at the David Taylor lab. The bulk of his career would be spent as a steward of the earth, helping to develop processes and systems that enabled the U.S. Navy to meet environmental regulations worldwide without diminishing the military readiness of the fleet.

The breadth, scope and complexity of the Navy’s environmental protection program expanded during the 1980’s and 1990’s, with Schatzberg eventually assuming responsibility for exploratory engineering development, working with Navy laboratories nationwide. He published many papers, produced three patents and participated in numerous high-level conferences, seminars and symposiums, traveling abroad on behalf of the Navy. In 1987 he received the prestigious *Melville Award*, the David Taylor Research Center’s highest honor for distinguished scientific achievement. In 1995 he retired as a full-time Navy scientist, but continued to work part-time for the next nine years as a consultant, supporting the Navy’s environmental protection program.

Schatzberg’s life has taken many twists and turns. In the 1960’s he became an activist for civil rights, picketing, and participating in sit-ins for desegregation. He was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Anne Arundel County Human Relations Commission during the 1970’s. With a strong interest in community service, he served as President of the Tyler Heights Elementary School PTA and the Annapolis Senior High School PTA. And in recent years he has tutored Hispanic children at Tyler Heights Elementary School.

Schatzberg’s love of the humanities flourished during his career and he completed a Master of Arts in 1985 from St. John’s College. “I learned that the texts we read, the thoughts of the greatest minds in Western civilization, were the teachers,” he said. “All of them addressed issues concerning the human condition, the struggle to understand the purpose of life, the nature of existence, and our response to the events that are common to most human lives.”

He then became a part-time graduate student at Baltimore Hebrew University, studying biblical literature, Jewish history and philosophy. Later, Baltimore Hebrew University would sponsor him as an instructor for the Elderhostel Program where he would teach Holocaust History.

A firm believer in fitness, Schatzberg exercises daily and can be seen traveling to and from Quiet Waters Park on his recumbent bike. His interest in hand