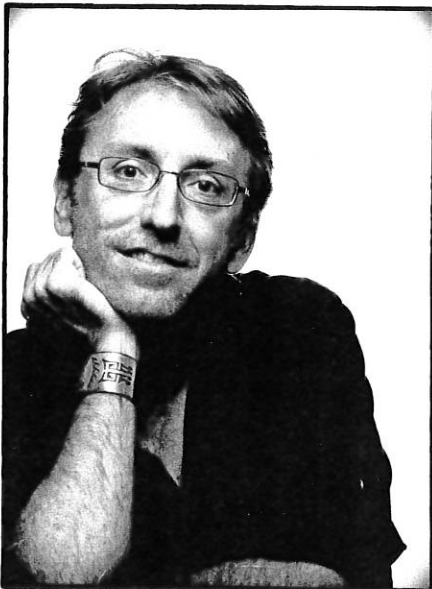


“I Witness”

Erik Kellar –Artist Statment

When starting the portrait project, “I Witness” photographing Survivors and Liberators of the Holocaust, I knew instantly that the process had to be in black and white. I wanted to strip away the trappings of color photography and show each person’s soul. Gentle gestures and looks reinforce the seriousness of the subjects, but I also wanted everyone’s own personality to shine through. The lighting was simple and direct and all the portraits were done over four days in my studio. I spent time listening to each person’s experience to try to understand who they were and how to photograph them. Each subject’s story touched me. As difficult it was to hear their stories, I found myself honored and enjoyed meeting each individual. The common theme I found amongst each person was their kindness despite being in the Holocaust and a strong desire to share their experiences with future generations. I am a native Neapolitan and moved back to my home in 2000. As a former editor of the Naples Daily News



one of my greatest pleasures is being part of my community, adding to the story of Naples and being able to continue to add to this community’s story. I serve as a witness and am able to document the human condition so that everyone shares in society’s joys and ills. I will never fear the people that try to blind the eyes of humanity for the truth can never be concealed. It was both an honor and privilege to be part of this project.

Erik Kellar