

Jordan Linkow – 2014 Daniel R. Ginsberg Leadership Award Acceptance Speech

April 27, 2014, Washington DC



Good evening and thank you for this tremendous honor. My name is Jordan Linkow and I would like to start off by thanking some of the people who made this evening possible. First, I would like to thank Karyn Ginsberg Greenwald and the Ginsberg Family for creating this award. I would also like to thank the members of the selection committee as well as Scott Levin and Sue Parker Gerson for your nomination. I would remiss not to thank the staff of the Mountain States Region as well as Shayna Alexander without whom I would not have become as involved in the ADL as I am today. And lastly, I would like to thank my mom, dad and sister for their undying love and continued support throughout the years.

I would like to take everyone back to the summer of 2001 when I had the opportunity to tour the Warsaw Ghetto followed by a number of Nazi extermination camps. As my religious group and I walked through the remnants of the Ghetto, people yelled ethnic slurs, spit in our direction and verbally threatened bodily harm. For the first time in my

life, I was experiencing blatant Anti-Semitism and hatred due to my religious affiliation. Several days later, I walked into and more importantly out of Auschwitz-Birkenau holding hands with my first cousin, Alyce Blum. At that moment, I had the privileged and also the weight of honoring so many individuals and families that had never had that opportunity. Equally important I was proving the incredible resiliency of the Jewish people and of the human spirit. From that day forward, I knew it was my duty to fight to abolish hatred and discrimination; However, I felt completely lost in how to accomplish my mission. Ten years later I found the Anti-Defamation League, I found my platform and I found my voice.

Many of you here tonight are at the start of your ADL journey and I speak to each and every one of you when I say the ADL is a medium from which you can change the world. Today we stand on the forefront of so many important issues, from our work in education, cyber bullying, and counter terrorism to our work in law enforcement training, Civil Rights, interfaith dialogue and many more. While we have made great strides in all of the above areas, there is still a great deal of work ahead of us. Take the time to learn about each arm of the organization and I challenge you to pick whatever strikes a chord and become involved. Sit on committees, plan events, join your regional boards. Make a difference and I will tell you from personal experience you will not be disappointed. We sit here tonight 101 years after the formation of this organization. While the world has changed greatly over that period of time, hatred, bigotry and inequality are still thriving. Never forget that we are all bound by our human experience and the platform before you provides the opportunity to secure justice and fair treatment for all. Please join me

in pursuing our mission so that we and the generations that follow can paint the sunset with brilliance. Thank you very much.