Edith’s War - The Life and Times of a WW II Red Cross Worker & a Lifelong Champion of Social Justice

Wednesday, May 29, 2019 | DVM ‘56 Equine Complex

Coffee and Conversation at 10:00 am, program begins at 10:30 am

Abstract

Besides Rosie the Riveter, many women played an important role in winning World War II. One woman, Edith May Witt, served her country for three years by joining the Red Cross as a staff assistant (or “club woman”), first in Oran, Algeria, and then in Italy. Edith was also a talented writer and left behind a rich archive that illuminates the wartime experiences of civilian women. In her words:

“We worked long hard hours with sometimes a day off a week. I was always tired, high on excitement, adventure, joy and sorrow, amid thousands of people, mostly men. I got to know more about my country and about Americans than I had ever known before and I loved them dearly.”

After her death, Peter Witt, Edith’s nephew, painstakingly sifted through papers and letters to provide a nuanced and annotated portrait of the war through one woman’s extraordinarily perceptive eyes. Importantly, he found that Edith’s devotion to service did not begin or end with the war. From marching to Selma with Martin Luther King Jr. in 1965 to building community organizations in San Francisco in the 1970s to push for decent and affordable housing, Edith Witt remained a tireless advocate for social justice. Edith’s story is a welcome contribution to the social history of World War II and an inspiring tale of one woman’s life of advocacy and service that encourages readers to embrace thoughtful action in their own lives. Join us for a recounting of the powerful role played by women in WW II and the interesting life of Edith Witt.

About the Speaker

Peter Witt is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Recreation, Park & Tourism Sciences at Texas A&M University. For 14 years, he held the Bradberry Recreation and Youth Development Chair. Peter is the author of seven books and numerous academic articles deal with youth development issues. Peter also has a deep interest in family history, which led him to writing Edith’s War about his aunt Edith and her overseas WWII Red Cross experiences. In his spare time, Peter gives presentations on Inuit Art and pictorial travelogues about overseas travel undertaken by he and his wife, Joyce Nies.

RSVP by Thursday, May 23rd to facultyretirees@tamu.edu or 979-862-2761
Please include first and last name for you and your guest (if bringing) for nametag(s)