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The Outskirts of Hope: A Memoir of the 1960s Deep South

Author reveals family's journey to the segregated American South

AUSTIN, Texas – The 1960s in the South was a time of turmoil, change and struggle for equality. Jo Ivester and her family – one of only two white families and the only Jewish one in all-black Mound Bayou, Miss., in 1967 – had a unique, front-row view of racism in America.

Now, almost 50 years later, she's used her mother's journals to chronicle the family's experiences. Ivester's memoir, *The Outskirts of Hope: A Memoir of the 1960s Deep South* (She Writes Press, April 2015), recounts the positive effect her mother had on the community. From escorting her students to Memphis, Tenn., where they attended a movie and, for the first time in their lives, sat in the main theater rather than the "colored" balcony, to risking her life to march with her students in the aftermath of Martin Luther King's assassination, Aura Kruger encouraged her students to reach their full potential and ultimately she inspired an entire community.

Ivester was 10 years old when her father transplanted his young family from a suburb of Boston to a small town in the heart of the Mississippi cotton fields, where he became the medical director of a clinic that served the poor population for miles around. Ultimately it was not Ivester's father, but her mother – who became a high school English teacher when the family moved to the South – who made the most enduring mark on the town. In *The Outskirts of Hope*, Ivester weaves together her mother's stories and those of her own childhood to paint a vivid portrait of her family's time living and working in Mound Bayou during the height of the civil rights movement.

Booklist said, "This is a sensitive and powerful memoir of racial change in the South in the 1960s." *Kirkus* wrote, "What makes this book particularly valuable is its vivid depiction of the abhorrent consequences of legalized segregation. What gives it heart is the window it opens to the personal journeys of mother and daughter. An important, riveting history lesson that, unfortunately, is still relevant today."

The Outskirts of Hope was the 2015 Winner of the Writers' League of Texas Award for Non-fiction and the 2015 Winner of National Indie Excellence Award for Autobiography. It recently received the Silver Finalist Award in the 2015 – 2016 Sarton Women's Book Award for Memoir. The e-book made *The Wall Street Journal* top 10 best-seller list.

Jo Ivester spent two years of her childhood living in a trailer in Mound Bayou, where she was the only white student at her junior high. She finished high school in Florida before attending Reed, MIT, and Stanford in preparation for a career in transportation and manufacturing. Following the birth of her fourth child, she began teaching, first as a substitute math teacher and then as an adjunct professor at St. Edward's University. She is available for speaking engagements and is currently working with her transgender son on her second book, *Once a Girl, Always a Boy*, an exploration of his experiences growing up in a world not quite ready for people like him.

For more information, please visit www.joivester.com.

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