

Irwin Goldstein

TWO GREAT HOPES

Irwin (Arman) Goldstein was born the youngest of eight children on June 10, 1926 in Vlachovo, Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic). Irwin's father, David, came to the United States in 1927 to find work. He went from job to job but never failed to send money home. When the war began, he could not return to Czechoslovakia. He died of a heart attack in the U.S. in 1943.

Following the German seizure of Czechoslovakia in 1938, Vlachovo was given to Germany's ally, Hungary. As a Jew, Irwin could no longer attend school, and his older brothers who served in the Czech army were transferred to the Hungarian army and then demoted to forced labor. When Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, they became human mine sweepers locating and detonating bombs. All three were killed.

In 1942, Irwin was sent to a labor camp in the forest where he did back breaking work, felling and hauling trees. He escaped after six months and returned home. In March 1944, following the German occupation of Hungary, Irwin and his family were sent to a brick factory where they worked in mud up to their knees. Then, Irwin, his sisters, mother, nieces and nephews, were forced onto a cattle car and sent to Auschwitz.

Upon arrival, the prisoners were selected for life or death. Irwin was deemed fit, but his mother; his sister Rachel and her six children; his sister Henchie and her eight children, and his sister Feigie were sent to the gas chambers.

When a call went out for carpenters, Irwin volunteered even though he had no experience. He was transferred from Auschwitz to a succession of camps in Germany. As the front neared, Irwin was among the prisoners sent on a two-week

death march before being loaded onto a cattle car and sent to Bergen-Belsen.

The camp had no food or water, disease was rampant, and corpses were everywhere. The interminable roll calls drained Irwin of his remaining strength. When he collapsed, the guards tossed him onto a heap of corpses. Somehow he found the strength to stand and join the prisoners assigned to drag the bodies into ditches, douse them with kerosene, and set them aflame. His act of nearly superhuman will saved his life.

Irwin was liberated on April 15, 1945. He was 18 years old, weighed 75 pounds, and had typhoid fever and tuberculosis. He spent two weeks in a makeshift British hospital before being evacuated to a Swedish hospital where he spent a year and a half. There he learned that only his sister Gilda had survived.

At the age of 20, Irwin married Hanal Szuster, a fellow survivor. Shortly after their daughter Ruth's birth in 1948, the family immigrated to the United States. Irwin worked days and took classes at night at Brooklyn College. In 1954, the couple had a son, David, but Irwin's joy turned to grief when Hanal died ten days after childbirth. Irwin was a widower with two small children. He had no choice but to place Ruth in the care of friends while David was placed in a foster home.

A year later, Irwin married Frances Palmer and reclaimed his children. The couple enjoyed a wonderful life together until Frances died of cancer in 1992. Irwin was again blessed by meeting a wonderful woman, Freda Gleitman, also a Holocaust survivor. They married in 1994 and share a life centered on their children and grandchildren.

"I was nine years old. I had to learn quickly and grow up fast because death was always present."



Rena Goldstein (Braunstein)

EIGHTEEN MEANS “CHAI” - LIFE

Rena Braunstein was born to Marcus and Lola Braunstein in Stryj, Poland (now Ukraine) in 1933. An only child and grandchild, Rena was doted upon by her parents and maternal grandparents.

Following the onset of war in 1939, the Germans briefly occupied Stryj and then relinquished it to the Soviets. In July 1941, following Germany's surprise attack on the Soviet Union, they reoccupied Stryj. Jews were immediately targeted and Rena's beloved grandparents were killed in the first deportation.

To save their child, Marcus and Lola made the agonizing decision to give her to a childless gentile family outside the city. Rena studied the Catholic catechism and learned that she must never speak Yiddish. Friends of her parents took her to the couple. Although they were kind, Rena could not bear life without her parents. She pleaded unrelentingly until the friends brought her back.

The next months brought more frequent raids. The family slept in their clothes and often hid in the basement with other families. One night Rena witnessed a mother accidentally suffocate her baby when its cries threatened to betray their hiding place.

In 1942, all the Jews of Stryj were sent to the ghetto. Rena experienced constant hunger. One day she had only a pickle to eat, the last one left in the barrel; her parents had nothing.

Fearing that the ghetto would be liquidated, Rena's father and a few companions secretly prepared a bunker, a basement below a basement, in their old house. Her father bribed the guards to allow Rena and her mother to leave the ghetto. Before he could join them, the ghetto was closed and he was deported to his death.

The bunker was meant for six or eight people, but thirty-five, including eighteen women, ten men, and seven children, hid there. One of the women prophesied that they would somehow survive because eighteen means “chai” or life in Hebrew. Courageous gentiles risked their lives to drop bread through the chimney. After sixteen months, their clothes began to rot away. They suffered from painful heat rashes, unrelenting hunger, and the terrible stench from the hole that served as their latrine.

They emerged from hiding when Stryj was liberated by the Russians in August 1944. Rena's mother remarried, and a few months later, Rena, her mother, and her stepfather, who had also survived in hiding, went to a displaced persons camp in Bamberg, Germany. At a dance there, Rena met David Goldstein, who fell instantly in love with her. When David went to the U.S. in 1947 to live with his aunt in Chicago and Rena went to Israel two years later, it seemed unlikely they would ever be together. It was David's aunt who reunited them, telling her nephew that he would always wonder what could have been if he did not send for the woman he loved.

In May 1950, Rena, barely seventeen years old, arrived in Chicago. She was away from her mother for the first time and knew only a few words of English. They lived with David's aunt and attended school. They married in October 1950. Their daughter, Flora, was born in 1952 and a second daughter, Sandi, in 1955. In 1963, the family moved to Los Angeles.

Every day Rena remembers her parents and their determination to save their only child. It is part of the legacy she has passed on to her two children and four grandchildren.

Zelda Gordon (Grodzienska)

D O N ' T F O R G E T U S

Born in the historic city of Grodno, Poland (now Belarus), Zelda Gordon was sixteen years old when war changed her life forever. Her four older brothers and two older sisters were married with families of their own. As the baby of the family, Zelda had a wonderful childhood in a home filled with love and laughter, respect and responsibility. On Fridays, before Shabbat, Zelda helped her mother deliver food to those less fortunate. She excelled in her studies and was one of two Jewish girls admitted to the city's prestigious public college. War ended her dream of continuing her education.

As part of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the Soviets occupied the city in September 1939 and Grodno was annexed to the Soviet Union. In June 1941, on the first day of Operation Barbarossa, the German army moved into Grodno, and in November two ghettos were established a short distance apart. Zelda had family in each.

Zelda joined the Zionist resistance, engaged in acts of sabotage, and tended secret vegetable gardens that provided much needed food. In two separate raids, in November 1942 and January 1943, thousands of Jews, including all of Zelda's family, were deported to the death camps of Treblinka and Auschwitz. Zelda hid to avoid capture, but in February 1943 tear gas forced her out of hiding and she was deported. She knew that all her family was dead.

Her youth spared her from the gas chambers at Treblinka. With some 100 young women, she was sent to Majdanek and then to a Lublin labor camp where she sorted through mountains of clothes taken from the Jews.

When Zelda became ill with typhoid fever, luck again was with her. The strain she contracted was prevalent within the army

and doctors, desperately seeking a cure, selected Zelda as a test subject for a new drug. It worked and Zelda recovered.

In her next camp, Blizyn, Zelda was briefly reunited with a cousin, Ely Grodzienski. From Blizyn she was sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Ordered to dig potatoes out of the frozen ground, Zelda grew steadily weaker. She feared that if she were sent to the gas chambers all memory of her family would be obliterated. Only her will and her friends kept her going.

In January 1945, Zelda was put on a train to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany. The conditions in the camp were horrific: no food, no sanitation, and no one to bury the dead. Typhus and dysentery were rampant.

Liberation came on April 15, 1945 with the British army. Zelda remained in the camp since she had nowhere else to go. She was surprised when two men came looking for her. They told her that they had survived Dachau because of her cousin Ely and that he had sent them to find her and bring her to Munich. It meant the world to Zelda to know that someone cared for her.

Ely and Zelda registered for three destinations: the U.S. where Ely had a brother in Los Angeles; Sweden where he had a sister, and Palestine. They agreed that they would go to whichever place accepted them first. It was the U.S. where they arrived on September 16, 1946.

On December 29, 1946, Ely and Zelda were married, and in 1950 their daughter Frieda was born. Zelda rejoices in her role as mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, sharing with her daughter, granddaughters, and great-granddaughter the traditions, values, love and determination that were her family's lasting gift to her.



*"I can still hear my mother's voice saying 'Zeldele,
think of us, don't forget us. I know you will survive.'"*

**"All of us who survived are not just regular people,
we are miracle people."**



Lola Gross (Pariser)

MIRACLE PEOPLE

Lola Pariser was born on December 5, 1926 in Pilica, Poland. She was the youngest of five with three sisters, Sara, Marka, and Pola, and one brother, Hershel. Lola's parents were Orthodox Jews who owned a store which sold men's shirts and women's lingerie. In 1936, the family moved to the more cosmopolitan city of Sosnowiec, but they returned to Pilica two years later. With antisemitism on the rise, they thought they would be safer in a place where they were well-known. That was not the case.

Following German occupation in September 1939, Lola's father and brothers, easily recognizable as Orthodox Jews, were routinely humiliated by German soldiers who made them pick up horse and chicken droppings with their bare hands. The heartbreak of what he experienced contributed to Lola's father's death in 1940 at the age of only forty-nine.

In 1942, the Jews of Pilica were deported. Lola's mother, also forty-nine, was sent to the death camp Treblinka. Her sister Sara refused to be separated from her newborn baby and was sent to her death in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Lola was sent to Neusalz, a sub-camp of Gross Rosen, where she worked twelve hours a day in a factory making thread and spinning it onto spools. Rations were meager; there were long roll calls, and frequent beatings.

Lola remained at Neusalz until January 1945 when the Germans liquidated the camp, sending the prisoners on a death march. Lola suffered from the bitter cold and from terrible blisters especially after she wore through the soles of her boots and had to walk barefoot through the snow. Eventually, the prisoners were loaded onto cattle cars and sent to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, an overcrowded dumping

ground for prisoners from many camps.

On April 15, 1945, Lola awoke to the miracle of liberation. She came to think of this date as her second birthday at age nineteen. She was terribly ill from malnutrition and from the shock to her system of eating the rich food which the British soldiers made the mistake of giving the starving prisoners. Lola spent the next months in the hospital where she recovered from typhus and malnutrition.

Through a distant cousin, Lola learned that her sister Pola had survived the war and was at the Föhrenwald displaced persons camp. Lola soon joined her. They were the only members of their family to survive.

At a dance, Lola met survivor Sam Gross. Sam, a clumsy dancer, frequently stepped on Lola's feet until she suggested that instead they sit and talk. Their conversations led to love and the two married in 1946 in a double wedding with Pola, her sister.

In May 1949, after waiting three years to gain a visa, the couple and their baby daughter, Sally, immigrated to the United States. They settled in New York, worked hard and saved much of what they earned, even when it meant living on very little. Both attended night school classes and Lola gained her high school diploma. Their second child, David, was born in 1951.

In 1971, the couple took a vacation to California and fell in love with the sunny climate. They moved to Los Angeles and were later joined by Pola and her husband. They built a strong circle of friends, most of whom were Holocaust survivors. Sam passed away in 1993 and Pola in 2007. At the center of Lola's life today is her family. She is the proud mother of two, grandmother of ten, and great-grandmother of five.

Max Leigh

SKILL AND OPTIMISM

Max Leigh was born in Dresden, Germany on February 17, 1920. His parents, Ludwig and Faiga Leschgold, were Polish émigrés who moved back to Warsaw in 1924 with Max; his older sister, Rosa, and younger sister, Ruth.

Max's father made children's clothing in a small workshop in his home. His parents dreamed of sending Max to the university to become a doctor, but they couldn't afford to do so. Instead, at fourteen, Max entered a vocational school where he learned to be a machinist. This skill would prove crucial to his survival in the camps.

For a Jew, even in pre-war Poland, life was often dangerous. On one occasion, Max and his girlfriend were attacked by four gentile Poles as they were sitting in the park.

The German occupation of Warsaw in September 1939 brought the family extreme hardship. They sold everything they owned in order to buy food. One day Faiga returned home missing a tooth. When Max questioned her, he learned that she had sold her gold tooth so the family could have a meal on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year.

In August 1940, Max was ordered to report for forced labor. He was sent to Tyszowce in southeastern Poland but was allowed to return home in early December. In May 1941, he was summoned to forced labor at Strzyzow where he carried heavy bags of cement for road construction. In the next camp, Pustkow, his training as a machinist proved life saving. Instead of doing exhausting manual labor, he was assigned to be an auto mechanic working for German civilians outside the camp. His fluency in German earned him a measure of respect and better treatment. In 1942, he was assigned to new a work detail constructing a sub-camp.

Max was sent to Auschwitz in June 1944 and from there to Gleiwitz III, a sub-camp of Auschwitz. His experience as a machinist again proved incredibly beneficial. Max was assigned to a workshop supervising prisoners who were building a chamber to paint and dry bombs.

In January 1945, as the Soviet army approached, Max was moved to Blechhammer. He escaped for a brief time but was captured and sent to Gleiwitz. In late January, he was transported by cattle car to Dora-Mittelbau where he worked on the V-2 rocket. In early April, this camp too was evacuated, and Max was transported to Ravensbrück and then to Wöbbelin. He was liberated by the U.S. Army on May 2, 1945. Max was the only member of his family to survive.

Max stayed briefly in Lubeck and Hamburg before going to a displaced persons camp in Bergen-Belsen where he lived in one of the former guard barracks. In the camp he met his future wife, Rosaline, whom he married in December 1946.

Max and Rosaline came to the United States in 1949 with help from the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles. Max learned English quickly and once again drew upon his skill as a machinist to find a job. He worked at a company that manufactured airplane parts and later for the Burroughs Adding Machine Company. In 1970, he began a new career as a men's clothing salesman.

Max and Rosaline were married for fifty-four years until Rosaline's death in 2000. Still energetic at 89, Max is married to his second wife Enna. He continues to rely upon the optimism which, along with skill, was his greatest asset for survival.



"Since the beginning, I knew I was going to make it."

"I was terribly ill with typhus, but somehow I jumped off the barge and swam ashore. My cousin couldn't make it. He called to me 'Beba, remember the date.'"



Beba Leventhal (Epstein)

A DESPERATE SWIM

Beba Leventhal was born Beba Epstein in Vilna, Poland (now Vilnius, Lithuania) in 1925. Her father was an assistant bank manager. Beba had a younger sister and two younger brothers. She attended a distinguished private Jewish school and enjoyed sports, especially swimming. Her ability to swim would one day save her life.

When the Soviets occupied Vilna on September 19, 1939, the family's life changed dramatically. Banks were nationalized, and her father lost his job. Beba's school was closed, but she was allowed to attend public school where courses were now taught in Russian. In July 1940, Lithuania, including Vilna, became a Soviet republic.

On June 24, 1941, two days after Germany attacked the Soviet Union, Vilna was occupied by the Germans. Jews were now required to wear an identifying Star of David.

On September 6, Beba and her family were ordered into the ghetto. A few weeks later, Beba's father arranged for her to go into hiding outside the ghetto with a gentile family. Letters from her family reported that their situation was steadily worsening, but Beba became even more worried when the letters ceased. She returned to the ghetto to discover that her parents and siblings were gone. She learned later that they had been killed. Beba moved in with her aunt and uncle and their two children.

When the ghetto was liquidated in September 1943, Beba was sent by cattle car to the Kaiserwald concentration camp and then to a camp in Riga that manufactured airplane and submarine parts. When the approaching front necessitated the factory be moved, Beba and the other workers were moved as well, but when the machinery failed to arrive, the prisoners

were sent to the Stutthof concentration camp near Danzig (now Gdansk). The conditions there were horrific. Beba became very ill with typhus.

On April 28, 1945, the Nazis liquidated the camp and divided the prisoners into small groups. Beba's group was placed on a barge. The seas were rough and Allied aircraft, mistaking the barges for enemy ships, repeatedly bombed them. For five days the prisoners had no food or water as the boats circled. Some became so desperate that they drank sea water. Then, as the barge approached the Baltic coast, the guards ordered the prisoners to jump into the water and swim ashore. Some were shot in the water, but the guards reserved most of their bullets for those too weak to jump off the barge. Beba's cousin was one of them.

After she reached shore, Beba hid with Russian POWs until British soldiers found her on May 3. She received care at a hospital near the Danish border and then in Sweden.

Beba's only relative was an uncle living in New York who paid her way to the U.S. She found work as a translator and social worker for the Jewish community. Beba met her future husband, Lee Leventhal, who lived in Mexico City, when he was visiting with his father. They were married in San Antonio, Texas on August 5, 1948, and Beba joined Lee in Mexico City. When he was accepted as a graduate student at USC, the couple moved to Southern California where they raised their two children, Mary, who became a physician, and S. Michael, who became an attorney. In 2008, Beba and Lee celebrated their sixtieth wedding anniversary, a wonderful occasion made possible by a girl's desperate swim for freedom.

Doris Ostrow (Grinbaum)

MALA'S SHOES

Doris Grinbaum was born on March 26, 1928 in Sosnowiec, Poland. She was the youngest of five siblings, with two brothers, Romek and Szymek, and two sisters, Jadzia and Hela. Her father, Tojwie, owned a factory that made oatmeal and processed coffee.

In September 1939, life changed with a knock on their door. Two German soldiers entered and ordered the men to assemble outside. Doris, Hela, and their mother, Ruchla, watched in horror as all the men in their building, including Romek, Szymek, and Tojwie, were executed.

The shock of losing her husband and sons drove Ruchla into a deep depression. At the age of eleven, Doris became the provider for the family while her sister Hela cared for their mother. The Germans took everything of value from their home but allowed them to remain until the fall of 1940 when they were moved to a building near the factory where they worked. In early 1943, Doris and her sister Hela were deported to Gleiwitz, a sub-camp of Auschwitz. The two would never see their mother and married sister Jadzia again.

In January 1945, Doris, Hela and many other prisoners were loaded onto cattle cars and shipped west. The sisters decided to jump from the train even though they risked being shot. Doris leaped, plunging into a river. Hela, who jumped later, was convinced that her sister had drowned.

Doris survived the plunge, but was captured by the Germans who took her first to Buchenwald before ordering her to Bergen-Belsen where she was to be hanged as an example. When a blizzard made it impossible for their train to Bergen-Belsen to move forward, the guards ordered the

prisoners to march on foot. Doris, whose shoes were weighted down with snow, could not walk and told the guards to shoot her, but an older woman prisoner, Mala, a friend of her sister Jadzia, refused to let her to die. She exchanged shoes with her, pulled her up, and made her walk.

At Bergen-Belsen, Doris escaped execution but was assigned the gruesome task of removing dead bodies from the barracks and stacking them on top of one another. She and Mala contracted typhus, but they survived to be liberated by the British on April 15, 1945.

Doris thought that none of her family had survived. She had no reason to return home and so remained at Bergen-Belsen, which became a displaced persons camp, where she worked in the hospital. She married survivor Izek Schnaper a few months later. One day she received the miraculous news that her sister Hela was alive and living in Bologna, Italy. Doris and Izek traveled there at once. After Doris gave birth to her daughter Rose in 1946, the two couples moved to Magdeburg and then to Berlin, Germany. Izek never recovered from the camps and passed away in 1948. Doris and Rose moved in with Hela and her husband.

In 1949 Doris married survivor Henry Ostrow. They moved to the United States in 1952, and Doris gave birth to a second daughter, Sharon. The couple settled in Los Angeles where they opened a restaurant. Doris learned English from her customers who were charmed by her pronouncing boysenberry pie as "poisonberry."

Doris remained in touch with Mala, who moved to Florida, until her death in 2008 at almost 90.

"I couldn't go on. I told the guards to shoot me. Mala refused to let me die. She gave me her shoes and took mine, lifted me out of the snow, and made me walk."



"My mother believed that when you change where you live, you change your luck. The doctor said there was little hope I would recover, but my mother insisted I would. Miraculously, I did."



Renee Petlak and Anna Webb are sisters.

Renee Petlak (Rubinstein)

A CHANGE OF LUCK

Renee Petlak was born Rifka Rubinstein in Wyszkow, Poland in 1934. The youngest child of Leib and Tauba Rubinstein, she had two brothers, Aaron and Abraham, and a sister, Anna.

A few days after Germany attacked Poland in 1939, German planes bombed Wyszkow. Renee was too young to understand why her parents made the sudden decision to leave their home.

The entire family, including four-year-old Renee, walked all night to reach the city of Stok, only to discover it was occupied by the Germans. They escaped by sheer luck.

The Rubinstens eventually made their way to Bialystok in Soviet-occupied territory. There Leib faced a risky choice—to accept Soviet citizenship and stay in Bialystok, knowing that the authorities might never permit them to leave, or be deported to a Siberian labor camp. His refusal to accept citizenship proved to be the right decision.

The family endured a ten day journey by cattle car to Siberia. The brutally cold winters and the harsh conditions in the camp taxed their limits, but they found strength in one another. In 1943, the Soviets allowed them to leave. When their train reached Jizzakh in eastern Uzbekistan, a center of trade in central Asia, Leib decided this was where the family would begin a new life.

Renee, however, became desperately ill with typhus and dysentery. The doctor held out little hope for her recovery, but Renee's mother was convinced that a move would change their luck. This time her mother proved to be the prophetic one. Once they reached Samarkand, Renee's health began to improve.

To support their family, Leib and Tauba made and sold clothing. Often the family had barely enough food to survive.

Renee went to school, but the name calling and threats against her as a Jew made her dread going.

After the war, the Rubinstens returned to Poland, but they never dared go back to Wyszkow to reclaim what was theirs. Renee spent eight months at a school run by a Jewish organization before she was smuggled out of Poland and into Germany. Her parents joined her a short time later, and the family moved to a displaced persons camp in Bamberg where Renee's sister Anna and her husband were living.

The family spent three years in the DP camp. Compared to Poland the camp seemed like heaven to Renee. In 1949, Renee, her parents and brothers immigrated to the new nation of Israel. However, her parents, Orthodox Jews, opposed their daughter serving in the military, and in 1952, Renee left Israel and went to Frankfurt, Germany where one of her brothers was living.

In 1955, Renee's sister Anna, her husband, and two children immigrated to the United States. When Renee visited in 1960, Anna persuaded her to join them in Los Angeles. There she attended Fairfax High School and focused on learning English as quickly as possible.

In 1961, at a singles dance, Renee met her future husband, fellow Holocaust survivor Charles Petlak with whom she shares a passion for dancing. Renee and Charles married in 1962.

Renee's life has been shaped by many journeys, from Poland to Siberia to Uzbekistan to Germany to Israel and finally to the United States, but no matter where she has lived her love of family has remained a constant, a deeply held value she has passed on to her three sons and six grandchildren.

*Joseph Rotter*_(Z'L)

ONE - WAY STREET

Joseph Rotter was born on January 24, 1925 in Dej, Romania to Isador and Giselle Rotter. He had two older brothers, Eugen and Alexander, and two younger, Emeric and Ernest. In the evening, the brothers would gather around the oil lamp while their father, a shoemaker, worked, and their mother read aloud.

Joseph attended elementary school for seven years and trade school for two. When he was fifteen, in late August 1940, the northern part of Transylvania, including Dej, was transferred to Hungary. The next year, Joseph moved to Budapest, as his two elder brothers had done, to live with his maternal grandmother and find work.

In March 1944, Germany occupied Hungary and a few weeks later Jews were mandated to wear the Yellow Star. Joseph sometimes removed his when he needed to buy food or wanted to watch the latest German propaganda film. He knew he would be shot if discovered.

In May, Joseph was ordered to report for forced labor. He worked in sweltering heat rebuilding bombed out railroad yards. As the Soviet army advanced and the German and Hungarian armies retreated, the prisoners worked day and night, sometimes with bombs falling around them. Joseph made up his mind to escape. One night he and a friend slipped away in the darkness and hid in a stable. In the morning, they discovered that the Russians had occupied the area and they were free.

Joseph's first priority was to locate his family. By train, wagon, and on foot he made his way back to Dej. He rejoiced when he found his brother Eugen who had survived years of brutal forced labor.

From Dej the brothers went to Bucharest. There Eugen fell in love with and married a Romanian girl, leaving Joseph to continue the search for their family on his own. In Budapest he was reunited with his brother Emeric. Joseph later learned that his parents and his brother Ernest had died at Auschwitz. His brother Alexander had lived to be liberated but had died of malnutrition and disease shortly after.

Joseph made the decision to leave Europe. He traveled to Bamberg, Germany where he worked at the displaced persons camp as a driver for Mae Friedman, the regional director of the American Joint Distribution Committee. Without an American sponsor, Joseph faced a long wait to immigrate to the United States, but Mae was so impressed by the young man that she persuaded her family in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to become his sponsor.

In May 1949, Joseph arrived in the U.S. He worked at the factory owned by Mae's family until he was drafted into the army in 1950. A year later he shipped out to Korea where he was assigned to the post office in Pusan. He was discharged in 1952, returned to Pittsburgh, and then moved to Los Angeles.

Joseph met his future wife, Mimi, in August 1954 and they were married in February 1955. They are the parents of two children, Marc and Gail, and are the grandparents of four. Joseph's brothers Eugen and Emeric and their families also immigrated to the U.S. and became citizens.

Joseph worked as a plumber until he was badly injured in a job accident in 1968. He then became a realtor until his retirement in 1996. In spite of all he endured in his youth, he regards himself as lucky, blessed with a wonderful family and the opportunity to live freely as a Jew.



"I have always looked at life as a one-way street. Do not look back and do not complain."

"I walked the streets looking for my father. I would see a man coming toward me and my heart would beat faster. Then sadness would overtake me as a stranger walked by."



Dana Schwartz (Schapira)

THE DAISY THAT STARTED THE WAR

Danusia Schapira was born in Lvov, Poland in 1935. Her parents, Sid and Lusia, worked for Sam Safier, a wealthy entrepreneur who ran the national lottery. Dana was an only child with a large and loving extended family.

On September 1, 1939, Dana was playing in the park while her nanny talked with a friend. When she spied a beautiful daisy, Dana disobeyed the rules and sneaked over the fence to pick it. At that very moment the ground shook from a powerful explosion. Only four years old, Dana believed her act of disobedience had started the war.

Her parents decided to leave Lvov. They reached the Romanian border before turning back. Under Soviet occupation, life was difficult but bearable.

In June 1941, Germany launched a surprise attack on the Soviet Union and German troops marched into Lvov. Six months later, all Jews were ordered into the ghetto. Dana wept as she left behind her precious dolls and teddy bear. The ghetto meant hunger and fear, and for a little girl, the baffling disappearance of those she loved, including her uncle and grandmothers. Dana learned to hide and to keep quiet.

Knowing that it was only a matter of time until they would be deported, Dana's father bribed a gentile farmer to hide Dana and her mother in the countryside. They suffered hunger, loneliness, and constant terror of being discovered as Jews. Dana nursed her mother when she had painful gallstone attacks and prayed each day for her father. Her prayers were not answered; her father was sent to the Janowska Road concentration camp where the guards used prisoners for target practice.

Dana and her mother were liberated in July 1944. One of the Russian soldiers who gave them a ride to Lvov took pity on them and gave them an amazing gift—a delicious can of meat called Spam that had been sent to the Soviets by the U.S. For Dana, liberation would be linked to the taste and smell of Spam.

Their search for family proved fruitless. They spent a year in Bytom in western Poland where Dana started school. Hoping to immigrate to the United States, Dana's mother tracked down her former employer, Sam Safier, who was living in California. He agreed to be their sponsor. In Sweden, where they had moved to await their visas, Dana's mother met and married a visiting American businessman and Holocaust survivor, Ben Grey. Dana and Lusia came to the U.S. as his dependents. Two years after their arrival, when Dana was only seventeen, her mother died of cancer.

Sam Safier, her parents' former employer, became Dana's mentor and surrogate father. He paid her tuition, room and board at UCLA. At a party soon after she graduated, Dana met her future husband, Wilbur Schwartz, a physician, who had served in the Navy during the war. Dana and Wilbur are the parents of three sons, a lawyer, a doctor, and a sports anchor, and the proud grandparents of five.

Dana became a teacher, a psychotherapist and an interviewer for the Shoah Foundation (now the USC Shoah Foundation Institute). By helping survivors tell their stories she gradually came to terms with her own and with the loss of the father she loved so much.

Rachel Schwartz (Gastfreind)

A M O T H E R ' S R E M I N D E R

Rachel Gastfreind was born in Warsaw, Poland on June 20, 1931. She had two older brothers and one older sister. Her father owned a mattress factory, and the family lived comfortably with an apartment over their business and a cottage in the countryside.

When the family returned from vacation at the beginning of September 1939, they found a city gripped by fear. No one was prepared for the bombs that fell day and night and the rapid defeat of the Polish army. When the Germans occupied Warsaw, the family lost both their apartment and their business. In October 1940, they moved to the ghetto. They were always hungry but found comfort in being together.

The family lived in constant fear of deportation. The children were taught to hide wherever they could—in a barrel or behind a door—if they heard boots approaching.

On April 20, 1943, the first night of Passover, the Germans launched a massive raid, and the family was seized. At the train station, the men and women were separated. Rachel never saw her father and two brothers again.

Rachel, her sister Henrietta, and their mother Sara were deported to Majdanek. Rachel, not quite twelve, and Henrietta, fourteen, were ordered to one side, and their mother, only forty-five, to another. The girls lived; their mother went to the gas chambers.

The girls spent about a year in Majdanek working in the fields and in a munitions factory. In March 1944, the Germans evacuated the camp. Thanks to Rachel's quick thinking, the sisters stood with a group of young women who were transported to the munitions factory at Skarzysko-Kamienna. Other groups went to their deaths at Auschwitz.

In late 1944, Rachel and Henrietta were moved to Buchenwald. Their German supervisor at the munitions factory took

a liking to them and sneaked them extra food. It was the only kindness Rachel ever experienced from her captors.

On April 7, 1945, the prisoners were sent on a death march. They walked for weeks with almost no food or water. They ate grass and slept in fields. Rachel hallucinated from hunger and was unsure if the Russian soldiers and nurses she saw were real or imaginary, but they were real, and the girls were liberated.

They made the difficult journey, hitching rides in army jeeps, back to Warsaw only to learn that none of their family had survived. A Jewish organization placed the girls in an orphanage with the goal of bringing them to Palestine as soon as possible.

In the days before they were separated, Sara had reminded her daughters that they must always remember the names of their two married aunts in Detroit, Michigan. When the Red Cross visited the orphanage, the girls gave them their aunts' names. They responded at once that the girls should come to them.

A Jewish organization smuggled the girls out of Poland and into Germany where they stayed at a displaced persons camp until their passage to the U.S. was arranged. They arrived in New York in August 1946 and were taken by train to Detroit.

Their aunts believed that the girls should try to forget the past. The sisters immersed themselves in American culture and learning English. Rachel, who arrived knowing no English, graduated from high school at the same age as her peers.

Rachel married at nineteen and had two sons. She is now the grandmother of two. Her sister Henrietta, still living in Detroit, is the grandmother of five. They remain devoted to each other, talking weekly on the phone and seeing each other frequently. As their aunts had hoped, both sisters have lived their lives with optimism and joy—and they have never forgotten the past.



"Our parents told us to remember that we had two aunts in Detroit. We had their names, no addresses, but the Red Cross found them."

"Within my memory of the madness of war remains a vision of two angels, two Righteous Among the

"Last month, June 2009, my second cousin drove to the city of my birth, Chemnitz in Saxony, Germany. She visited a beautiful Jewish cemetery, the park of my first childhood memory, and found a head stone with my mother's name. Sara Ida Steuer died on August 15, two days after giving birth to me. The discovery of my mother's grave filled me with gratitude. It not only validated her presence in the world, but it validated my own. My life has come full circle."



Idele Stapholtz (Steuer)

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

Idele Stapholtz was born Ida Steuer in Chemnitz, Germany on August 13, 1926. Her parents, Polish Jewish émigrés, met and married in Germany. When Idele's mother, only eighteen, died of complications from childbirth, Idele was placed in the care of a woman whose own child had died at birth. Her father, a teacher, visited often, sometimes taking her with him to the cemetery where her mother was buried.

When Idele was four, father and daughter moved to Recklingshausen in Westphalia. Idele lived with the Jacobsons, whom she called "uncle" and "mama." She grew to love them and their four teenaged children. Idele's father visited each day until the Nazis forced him to return to Poland.

The Jacobsons promised to look after Idele until her father could return with the documents allowing the two to emigrate to the U.S. where her father had relatives. Jews themselves, the Jacobsons believed they were safe since "Uncle" Jacobson had fought heroically in World War I.

When Idele was tormented at school by classmates who called her a "dirty Jew," the Jacobsons decided to send her to a Jewish children's home in the Rheinland, but the home was destroyed on Kristallnacht, November 9, 1938. A few days later she was taken to Cologne and then sent on a Kindertransport to Brussels, Belgium where she arrived on January 5, 1939.

A Catholic family, Madame Marie Goossens and her daughter Germaine, gave Idele a home. When the Germans occupied Belgium in May 1940, the Goossens went to extraordinary lengths to protect Idele. When she needed a tonsillectomy, they arranged for a doctor to perform the surgery in their home on the kitchen table. When Jews were ordered to wear the Yellow Star, a clerk at city hall told

Germaine not to register Idele as a Jew. Germaine followed the advice which later saved Idele from deportation. The director of the Catholic High School, a nun in the order Les Dame de Marie, Madame Eulalie, accepted Idele as a student knowing she was a Jew. Idele's best friend, Annie Lannoo, and her parents knew Idele's secret and, in spite of the danger, welcomed her to their home during summer vacations.

On September 3, 1944, Brussels was liberated. For Idele, joy was tempered by concern for the Jacobsons and her father from whom she had not heard since 1941. She learned that the Jacobson children were safe but that "Uncle" and "Mama" Jacobson had died in a concentration camp. She was told her father had joined the Polish underground, had been caught by the SS, and was sent to a death camp in 1942. She could learn nothing more.

Idele remained with the Goossens. In July 1947, she traveled to the U.S. to meet her father's siblings. When they encouraged her to stay and attend New York University, Idele, who had fallen in love with America, accepted. Two months later, Idele met her future husband Ben Stapholtz. When the couple married in 1949, Ben insisted they go to Belgium so her "aunts" could bless their marriage. The Goossens gave her only one piece of advice—"learn about your Jewish heritage and have a religious Jewish family."

Germaine visited Idele many times and Idele's two daughters considered her their grandmother. In 1993, with her friend Annie by her side, Idele unveiled three plaques at Yad Vashem naming Germaine and Marie Goossens; Monsieur and Madame Lannoo; and Madame Eulanie, as Righteous Among the Nations.

Michael Telerant

MY FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Michael Telerant was born the only child of Hirsh and Emma Telerant on November 1, 1937 in Vilna, Poland (now Vilnius, Lithuania). Michael's parents owned a large business which sold cloth, buttons, and other goods for men's and women's clothing. When Vilna came under Soviet control in September 1939, the business was appropriated and turned over to the employees who remained loyal to the family and chose them (Hirsh, his brother, and father) to run the business. During this time Hirsh was able to exchange his paper currency for gold coins which he buried in the Jewish cemetery.

On June 24, 1941, the Germans occupied Vilna. In September, the Telerants were ordered into the ghetto. They had only thirty minutes to leave their home. Michael, his parents, grandparents, as well as his uncle, his wife and their child, all shared a small apartment. His father's work permit brought the family some protection from deportation, but unexpected round ups were a constant danger.

Michael's maternal uncle, a ghetto policeman, introduced his father to a man with connections to farmers outside the ghetto. A deal was struck. Since the man knew farmers willing to hide Jews but had no money of his own, Michael's father agreed to pay for his family as well. Hirsh secretly dug up the gold coins he had hidden, and the two families, twenty-two people in all, fled the ghetto in September 1943. The Telerants went to one farm and their acquaintances to another. Michael's grandparents and uncle who remained in the ghetto were later deported and killed.

The farmer's fee was exorbitant for a claustrophobic space under the floorboards in the barn. Michael never left the

hiding place. There was little food since the farmer could not arouse suspicion by selling less produce than usual. Nonetheless, there were rare moments of pleasure, as when the farmer gave Michael a small clay whistle in the shape of a chicken. It was stuffed with bread so no sound would escape.

Greedy for more money, the farmer hiding the second family betrayed them to the Germans. The Telerants were now in grave danger but were able to escape to another farm. For the next months, they hid in a space only ten feet by six feet.

After their liberation by the Soviets, they returned briefly to Vilna before traveling west, eventually reaching Italy where they stayed in a villa with thirty other families. For five years, supported by the United Nations Relief Organization and the American Jewish Agency, they waited for a visa. Meanwhile, Michael's mother made contact with family members in St. Louis who agreed to sponsor them. They arrived in St. Louis in 1949 and later moved to New Jersey.

At the age of twelve and knowing no English, Michael started the first grade. He was determined to catch up with his age group as soon as possible. He succeeded and went on to graduate from Boston University with a degree in psychology.

Michael moved to California in 1968 and married the next year. He became an attorney. His daughter Holly followed in his footsteps and became a public defender while his daughter Robin became a physician.

The clay whistle, its sound always silenced, sits today on Michael's mantle, a reminder of the time when a small boy lived in constant fear and danger.

"I started my first day of school right after Thanksgiving. It was my first day of school ever. I was twelve years old."



"The dresses we wore were very dear to us.
They were all we had left. They represented home.
At Auschwitz-Birkenau they took even those."



Sally Wasser(Kuperman)

H E R S I S T E R ' S P R O T E C T O R

Sally Wasser was born Sara Kuperman on January 25, 1923 in Szydlowiec, Poland. Her parents, who owned a fabric store, gave Sally, her older brother, and four older sisters a home filled with love and laughter and instilled in them their own strong values of respect and compassion.

Sally was sixteen when the German army occupied Szydlowiec. As a Jew, she was prohibited from attending school and her parents lost their business. To feed their family, her parents sold their furniture and even their clothes. On one occasion, her father, easily recognizable as an Orthodox Jew, was stopped by a soldier who publicly humiliated him and brutally cut off his beard before tying him to the back of a truck and dragging him through the streets.

In 1942, Sally and her sister Rachela, eight years older, were sent as forced laborers to the Hermann Göring Werke munitions factory in Starachowice where their brother Jacob already worked. They learned later that all the other members of their family had been sent to the death camp Treblinka. The sisters found it almost impossible to go on, but they knew that would be their parents' wish.

In July 1944, the sisters were sent in an overcrowded and stifling cattle car to Auschwitz-Birkenau. When they were ordered off the train, Sally felt relief until she saw the prisoners with shaved heads who looked like ghosts. She had little hope of survival.

After they passed the initial selection, the sisters were stripped of their dresses—their last tangible reminder of home—their heads shaved, and tattooed with a number. They were assigned to backbreaking road labor. Sally worked with socks full of mud and with clogs that caused terrible blisters, but

she knew that the alternative to work was death. It was at night when she dreamt of home that she felt she lived.

In January 1945, the sisters were sent on a death march to Bergen-Belsen. When her sister Rachela became too weak to continue, Sally tried to support her and keep on marching. Two friends pushed Sally aside and shared the burden of carrying Rachela. Without them, neither sister would have survived.

Sally and Rachela spent the next three months battling starvation and disease in Bergen-Belsen which had become a dumping ground for prisoners from many camps. They were liberated by the British on April 15, 1945.

With nowhere to go, the sisters remained in Bergen-Belsen which became a displaced persons camp. They were overjoyed when they were reunited with their brother Jacob who introduced Sally to his friend, Harry Wasser. Sally and Harry married in 1946 and their son Martin was born the following year. The Red Cross sent Rachela, very ill with tuberculosis, to a sanatorium in Switzerland where she gradually recovered.

Sally and Harry arrived in the U.S. with their infant son in November 1949. They knew no English, but they were determined to succeed and to become citizens of the country they immediately loved. Sometimes Harry worked three jobs to give their son and daughter, Brenda, born in 1950, as many opportunities as possible. In 1954, Sally and Harry became U.S. citizens.

Rachela, whose health remained fragile, joined her sister in Los Angeles. Sally's children and grandchildren treated Rachela as a second mother and grandmother, and she always joined the family for holidays and weekly Shabbat dinner. Sally remained her older sister's protector and best friend until Rachela's death in 1989.

Anna Hitter Webb (Rubinstein)

FAMILY AND FAITH

Anna Hitter Webb was born Chana Rubinstein on May 9, 1928. Her parents, Leib and Tauba, had three other children, two boys, Abraham and Aaron, and a girl, Rifka.

Soon after World War II began, German aircraft bombed Anna's village of Wyszkow, forty miles northeast of Warsaw. Anna's parents decided to leave their home and go east to Soviet territory. The entire family, even Anna's elderly grandmother and little sister, walked.

When they reached the city of Stok, they learned the Germans were already there. Everyone was ordered to assemble in the market place. Anna assumed they would be shot, but miraculously they were permitted to leave. It would be the first of many close escapes.

They next made their way to Bialystok in Soviet territory where Leib had to decide whether to accept or refuse Soviet citizenship. Acceptance meant the possibility of never being allowed to leave; refusal meant deportation to a Siberian labor camp. He chose future freedom.

For ten days the family traveled by cattle car to Siberia. In the labor camp they experienced great hardship, but they felt fortunate to be together. Even Anna, only twelve, worked. She was glad she could help feed her family.

In 1943, the Rubinstens were released and allowed to travel by train. They settled in Samarkand, Uzbekistan where Leib and Tauba supported the family by making clothing which they sold at the local market. When Tauba fell ill, the family went hungry. Anna, Abraham, and Aaron begged soldiers passing through the train station to share their rations. Many found it impossible to refuse the beautiful young girl. The children often returned with enough bread, butter, and cheese to sustain the family for several days.

At sixteen, in 1944, Anna fell in love with Jewish émigré Joseph Hitter whom she married the next year. When the war ended, Anna, Joseph, and Anna's family returned to Poland, but Anna and Joseph realized they had no future there, so in 1946, they crossed the border into Germany. In the Bamberg displaced persons camp Anna gave birth to their first child, Steven. Later the family moved to Frankfurt where their daughter Sabrina was born and where Joseph became a successful businessman, dealing in European art, antiques, and jewelry.

When Israel achieved statehood in 1948 Anna's family immigrated. Hoping that he might yet find family members, Joseph chose to remain in Germany where he eventually was reunited with his brother.

In 1955, Joseph and Anna moved to the United States. They settled in Los Angeles and became part of a strong community of Holocaust survivors. Anna was thrilled when she convinced her sister Rifka, now Renée, to join her in 1960.

Joseph suffered a severe heart attack in 1974. To support the family, Anna began a jewelry import business while also caring for her husband until his death three years later. Through vision and hard work she made her business into a multi-million dollar corporation.

In 1993, Anna married fellow Holocaust survivor Max Webb whom she had known for forty years. Dedicated to *tikkun olam*, healing the world, they are renowned for their philanthropy. Anna Hitter Webb has received many awards and two honorary doctorates, from Bar-Ilan University and Tel Aviv University. Hers has been a life shaped both by struggle and by unfailing devotion to family.

"Compared to those in the concentration camps, we were lucky. It was still a hard life. I was only twelve, but I helped out a lot. I was proud to help my family."



"My life was a precious gift given back to me for the purpose of giving to others."



Max Webb

FIVE YEARS AND EIGHTEEN CAMPS

Max Webb was born Menashe Weisbrot on March 2, 1917 in Lodz, Poland. Max and his twin sister Lola grew up in a large family with five siblings, including four sisters and one brother. Only Max and Lola survived the Holocaust.

Although the family had little material wealth, their home was rich in Jewish faith and tradition. Max's schooling ended after only a few years since his help was needed to support the family. He became a popular dance and ice skating instructor.

This life ended when the Germans marched into Lodz on September 8, 1939. When Max saw German military trucks going to a Jewish hospital, he followed them and witnessed a scene of unforgettable horror as soldiers tossed babies from upper story windows to the pavement below. He ran home to tell his family that they must prepare for the worst.

The next day Max was arrested by the Gestapo and sent to the notorious Seieradz prison. He spent the next five years in eighteen different camps, narrowly avoiding death many times. In one camp, he was ordered to dig graves in frozen ground before filling them with the bodies of his fellow Jewish prisoners. When the graves were nearly full, the guards shot six of the twelve grave diggers and ordered the remaining six, including Max, to add their bodies.

In 1943, Max was sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Here he met a fellow prisoner, Nathan Shapell, who would become his lifelong friend, business partner, and surrogate brother.

By ingenuity and luck, Max and Nathan escaped death in one of the final Auschwitz selections in the winter of 1944. They survived five Auschwitz sub-camps and a brutal death march that took them to camps at Fürstenstein, Reichenbach, and Gross-Rosen before their liberation by the Russians in

Waldenburg, Germany on May 8, 1945. Of the 60,000 prisoners who began the march, fewer than 1,500 survived.

Max and Nathan returned to Reichenbach to find Nathan's sister Sala, Max's future wife. The three traveled by foot to the displaced persons camp Munchberg in the American zone where Max miraculously discovered his twin sister Lola, the only member of his immediate family to survive.

Max and Nathan now turned to helping their fellow survivors and honoring the dead. They located space, built housing, and worked with the authorities to find and unearth mass graves, giving the dead proper burial in a local Jewish cemetery.

In 1951, Max and Sala immigrated to the United States, settling eventually in Los Angeles where they were joined by Nathan, his brother David, and their families. Max, Nathan, and David, founded S & S Construction which became one of California's largest and most successful land development companies.

Max and Sala had two daughters, Rose and Chara, and three grandchildren. Max lost his beloved Sala in 1990. His financial success enabled him to found the Max Webb Family Foundation through which the Webb family has supported organizations in both the United States and Israel. His accomplishments and generosity have been recognized with many awards, including honorary doctorates from Bar-Ilan and Tel-Aviv Universities. In 1993, he married fellow Holocaust survivor Anna Hitter who shares his commitment to philanthropy and to *tikkun olam*, healing the world.

For Max, now in his 90s, the memories of the family members he lost remain vivid. Seeing his life as a precious gift, he has honored their memory by his devotion to Judaism and by his generosity to those in need.

Sally Wolfe (Nieroslawska)

S I S T E R S

Sally Nieroslawska was born in Lodz, Poland to Samuel and Dora Nieroslawska. Sally had three sisters: Susan, Jenny, and Esther. Her father, born and educated in St. Petersburg, met her mother on a business trip to Lodz and fell instantly in love. They married in 1915, but World War I prevented his returning with his bride to Russia. The couple remained in Lodz where Samuel established a successful textile business.

Sally and her sisters had a wonderful childhood. They went to a private school, had piano lessons, and spent time with their large extended family.

War abruptly ended this life. Sally's father lost his business; the girls could not attend school. Fortunately, Susan and her new husband had already left Poland for England, but the rest of the family was ordered into the overcrowded ghetto where Samuel contracted tuberculosis and died in 1943.

With conditions in the ghetto unbearable and fearing that they would be sent on separate transports, in early July 1944, Sally, Jenny, Esther, and their mother voluntarily reported for deportation. They distrusted the Nazis' promise that they would be sent to a labor camp and treated well, but they believed that volunteering was their only chance to stay together.

Their worst fear was realized. Instead of a labor camp, they were taken to Auschwitz-Birkenau. In the initial selection, their mother was sent to the gas chambers. After a brief time in Auschwitz, the sisters were transported to Bergen-Belsen where Sally contracted scarlet fever. Her face became red and swollen - a sure death sentence if the Germans saw her, but Jenny and Esther refused to lose their sister. They kept Sally upright through the roll calls and looked after her until she improved. Without them, Sally would not have survived.

When the Germans selected sixty women for a labor camp,

Sally was chosen, but her sisters were not. Now it was her turn to intervene for her sisters. She boldly went to the officer in charge and in the perfect German she had learned in school asked him to allow her sisters to go too. Miraculously, he agreed.

The sisters were sent to Geisenheim where they worked at a Krupp factory that manufactured airplane parts. They were warned that a single mistake would be judged treason, punishable by death.

On April 11, 1945 the camp was dismantled and the prisoners marched without food or water to Allach, a sub-camp of Dachau. In late April, the sisters were among the prisoners ordered onto a train bound for the Alps where the SS planned to throw them down a mountainside. Their lives were spared when U.S. soldiers arrived on April 30.

The girls were taken to the Feldafing displaced persons camp. The Red Cross contacted their sister Susan who had moved to New Jersey from England. She began the paper work to bring her sisters to the U.S.

In the DP camp, both Sally and Jenny fell in love with young men, each of whom had lost his own family. They married in a double ceremony attended by the entire camp on March 26, 1946.

Three months later, with their sister Esther, they came to the United States. Sally and her husband Elliott settled in Los Angeles where Elliott had a relative. They learned English and found jobs. Sally attended extension classes at UCLA, earned a graduate degree, and became an executive with Bank of America, while Elliot had a career at 20th Century Fox Studios. They had two sons, James and Robert, both of whom became physicians.

Susan, a talented artist, passed away in December 2002. Sally and her two sisters, Jenny in Florida and Esther in New Jersey, remain as devoted to one another today as they were when they were girls.

**"My mother's last words were, 'Children, don't cry.
I'll be back soon.'"**



"I dreamed of sitting at a table with a big loaf of bread.
Bread! That was my dream."



Rose Woznicki (Rozenblum)

A D R E A M O F B R E A D

Rose Rozenblum was born in Koziegłowy, Poland in 1924. She was the youngest child by ten years and was doted upon by her brother, two sisters, and parents. Rose's father was a prominent member of the community who was often called upon to settle disputes.

Rose's education ended with the start of war in 1939. In 1940, the family was forced to leave their beautiful home for a one-room dwelling by the cemetery. One day, Rose's sister Gela, believing no one would recognize her as a Jew, dared to remove her Star of David to walk outside and enjoy a bit of freedom. An acquaintance betrayed her and Gela was killed. Rose's brother, Srulek, who tried to escape from the ghetto, was shot.

In 1942, the town's Jews were deported. Rose was separated from her family and with other teenage girls was loaded onto a truck and driven to the nearby ghetto in Zawiercie. There she was put to work making uniforms for the German military. In August 1943, most of the workers, including Rose, were sent to Auschwitz.

At Auschwitz, Rose was shaved, tattooed, and given uncomfortable wooden clogs and a dress much too large. Each morning the prisoners were marched to an ammunition factory. It was difficult to walk in the clogs, but Rose knew that if she fell she would be attacked by the vicious dogs. The prisoners assembled bullets from sunup to sundown with only a brief break for a small piece of bread and a watery bowl of soup.

Eventually Rose became too weak and malnourished to work. Only a sympathetic supervisor who allowed her to spend the day hiding between stacks of crates, and her friends, who

carried her from the barracks to work and back again, enabled her to survive. One friend refused to give up on Rose even when it seemed she would never get stronger. She traded her meager ration of bread for a little hot water and a bit of garlic to rub on Rose's bread in the hope that they would revive her. It worked and Rose began to recover.

In January 1945, as the Soviet army neared Auschwitz, the prisoners were sent on a death march. Rose was among those liberated by the Soviet army at the end of January.

After a brief stay at a displaced persons camp, Rose and her friend Helen, a few years older, traveled to Frankfurt since there were rumors that survivors had found family members there. In her heart, however, Rose knew that her family had gone directly to their deaths in the gas chambers of Auschwitz.

Helen was more fortunate and was reunited with her older brother Ben. She set about convincing Ben and Rose that they were meant for each other. Six weeks later they married, and in 1948 Rose gave birth to their only child, Louis.

In 1952, thanks to an affidavit of support from Ben's uncle in Baltimore, they came to the U.S. They spent three years in Baltimore and then, seeking a warmer climate for their son's health, moved to Los Angeles. Helen and her husband were already living there and so the close friends were reunited. Rose's husband, Ben, passed away in April 1985.

Today Rose basks in the love of her son and two granddaughters. The dream she had as a starving prisoner is now a reality—there is always a large loaf of bread in her kitchen.

Siegfried Halbreich (Z'L)

1909 - 2008

PRESIDENT
OF THE "1939" CLUB
1976 - 1978



IN SADNESS WE REMEMBER OUR MEMBERS

Frances Franklin

Siegfried Halbreich

Bernhard Holland

Karl Josephy

Joachim Komet

Lili Majzner

Israel Rosenwald

Jack Silvers

Joe Rotter

MAY THE FAMILIES BE COMFORTED WITH ALL WHO MOURN IN ISRAEL.
THE LORD GIVETH AND THE LORD TAKETH AWAY, BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD.