

FAITHFUL FRIENDS

Holocaust Survivors tell their Stories

Memories of their Childhood Pets Remain Vivid & Heart-touching.



Sonja Alaimo was a child in Yugoslavia, where her early years were full of promise. With the German invasion, her family escaped to the Dalmation Coast and spent four years of interment on the island of Korcula. Due to negative political developments in Yugoslavia, return was not possible. Hence, Sonja's family went to Italy to work and study and wait departure to the U.S., where they eventually settled in New York City. After a career as a corporate CEO, Sonja retired, and she now paints and sculpts.



Joyce Clemens was born and raised in The Netherlands where dogs are considered to be members of the family, are taught good manners and are welcomed in restaurants, theaters and department stores. Joyce and her husband moved to Georgia in the 1970s. After their sons were grown, Joyce made dog training her career, becoming certified as a Master Obedience Trainer. Using positive reinforcement to train dogs and their companions for a long-lasting partnership is her primary goal. She specializes in psychiatric service dogs, especially important for vets returning from war.



Lya (Leventhal) Galperin was born on February 14, 1931 in Faleshty, Romania. During the war, she and her family were taken to different gettoes in the Ukraine. They immigrated from the Soviet Union in May of 1981 to the U.S. She lives with her son, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren in San Francisco.

Irene Markley was born in 1925 in Munkacs which was then part of Czechoslovakia. In 1938 it became a possession of Hungary. In 1944 the Germans came and by May of 1944 Munkacs was declared free of Jews, all having been put in a ghetto and sent to Auschwitz. While her family lived in the ghetto, Irene escaped two times, finally reaching Budapest where she lived under a Christian name, as did her brother and one sister. Her parents and other sisters died in Auschwitz. Irene met her future husband in 1945 in her home town and they were married that year. In 1949 after living in Displaced Person's (DP) camps, she and her husband moved to the United States.



Kurt Moses survived the Holocaust, married Doris Rothschild in 1955 and they had two daughters, Wendy and Michelle. Kurt settled in Harrisburg, PA. During the Holocaust, he was separated from his family by the Nazis in 1942 and sent to two concentration camps and then finally to Auschwitz until 1945. His father was killed at Birkenau. Then in 1947, with the help of an uncle, he was reunited with his mother and sister in New York. Despite the horrors and nightmares that he suffered during the Holocaust, Kurt overcame, becoming a renowned speaker, lecturer and mentor for many people. His life story is one of triumph and courage over fear and hatred.



Yvonne Redgis was born in France to an American father and a French mother. She was living on the Riviera when she was arrested in 1943 for anti-German activities, and was deported to Auschwitz. Surviving the concentration camp, after the war she immigrated to the U.S. where she developed notoriety as a popular, vivacious speaker.



Annette Renschowicz is a daughter of Holocaust survivors from Poland. She was born and raised in New York City. She worked for the NYC Department of Education as a teacher's assistant for children of special needs. Annette loves to travel. On a trip to Israel, a family member related to her the narrative of her grandfather's dog. She then journeyed to her parents' former shtetl and the concentration camps in Poland. She is a strong advocate for protecting stray animals. She currently lives with her companion of twenty-nine years, Raphael, and her cat, Penelope, in Brooklyn.

Gloria Rubin was a child in Poland, where her father had a wheat mill and her parents took in girls from a nearby orphanage. In 1939 the family were taken to the Warsaw ghetto. Gloria was the only one of her family to survive the Holocaust.



Kathy Rubin was fifteen years old at the end of World War II. She had been in Teresienstadt, Czechoslovakia with her mother and three siblings and all of them returned to Hungary. When they arrived at their home, they happily found that her father had also survived the war. In 1956 Kathy married, and a few months later the couple escaped from Hungary during The Hungarian Uprising. They made their way to the U.S. They had two children and many family pets, including cats, a dog, goldfish, chickens and ducks. Kathy now enjoys gardening, going on cruises, attending lectures and helping people.

Jacob Stern and his family tried to flee on foot from the Nazis, but were caught and sent to a concentration camp. Fortunately his family, parents, brother and sister all survived.