

## URSULA LEVY

### BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE



Ursula Levy was born to Max and Lucia Levy on May 11, 1935, in Osnabrück, Germany. Prior to the war, Ursula and her older brother George lived with their parents in Lippstadt, near Muenster. Ursula's

father managed the family-owned textile business. Because Ursula was so young when events unfolded in Germany, she had no memories of her family's Judaic beliefs and practices.

In November 1938, after the Kristallnacht Pogrom, Ursula's father and uncle, Ludwig Levy, were arrested and imprisoned in Sachsenhausen concentration camp, where they were forced laborers. Some months later, both men were released in ill health and died in early 1939. Fearing for her children's lives, Lucia contacted her brother-in-law, Dr. Joseph Mueller, in the United States for help. With the assistance of Joseph and Agnes Van Mackelenbergh, leaders of a Catholic organization in the Netherlands, Dr. Mueller arranged for Ursula and George to be taken to Rotterdam. In April 1939, Ursula and her brother boarded a train leaving Germany, and soon after arriving in the Netherlands, they were taken to a children's home at a convent in Eersel, where Ursula and George were later baptized Catholic.

In May 1940, when the Nazis invaded the Netherlands, Ursula and George's lives changed yet again. After reviewing the convent's records, the Nazis discovered Ursula and her brother, as well as other Jewish children in hiding, and in April 1943, the siblings were deported to Vught concentration camp. In that same year, on Ursula's eighth birthday, Mr. Van Mackelenbergh

managed to visit her at the camp and told the commandant that Ursula and George had a father who was Catholic living in America. As a result, the siblings were spared from being deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau with the other children in the camp. However, in October, Ursula and her brother were transported to Westerbork transit camp, where they were placed in an orphanage barrack and attended school.

In early 1944, Ursula and her brother avoided a transfer to Auschwitz-Birkenau, again with the help of Mr. Van Mackelenbergh, and were instead sent to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. In April 1945, some of the camp's prisoners, including Ursula and her brother, were forced onto a train that circled the camp for thirteen days until they were liberated by Soviet soldiers near Tröbitz, Germany.

Soon after their liberation, Ursula and George returned to the convent in Eersel, where they learned that their mother had died while at the Stutthof concentration camp in Germany. In 1947, Ursula and her brother immigrated to the United States to live with their uncle, Dr. Mueller and his wife, Irmgard, in Chicago. There, Ursula continued her education and eventually got married and had two children, Gerard and Kareen. Some time later, Ursula earned her master's degree in nursing and worked for twenty-four years as a nurse in the Chicago Public Schools. At the time of her interview in 1997, Ursula was divorced and living in Skokie, Illinois.



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