

# JUDITH BECKER

## BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE



ECHOES & REFLECTIONS

TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST. INSPIRING THE CLASSROOM.



Judith Becker was born Judith Berger on September 8, 1928, in Stettin, Germany, to Ephraim and Pepi Berger, who were both of Polish descent. She had four siblings: Felix,

Eduard, Marlit, and Joachim. Her father was a textile merchant, and her mother was a corset designer. Judith went to a Jewish school and remembered being chased out of a friend's house once because she was Jewish. Life began to change for the family in 1938; the Gestapo came to arrest Ephraim, but he managed to hide in the attic above the family apartment. Judith and her mother and siblings were later expelled from Stettin and their German citizenship was revoked. They immigrated to Poland and Judith went to school in Radom.

In 1940, news came that Ephraim had been arrested while on his way back from the US Embassy trying to get exit visas for the family. He was later killed in the camps. Felix, meanwhile, managed to immigrate to the United States on a friendship visa. In 1941, the Radom ghetto was created and the rest of the family was forced to live in one room of a three-bedroom apartment. Judith and her mother were able to find jobs working as corset makers in the ghetto. They lived in the Radom ghetto until 1943, when the family was deported to Majdanek.

In the spring of 1944, Majdanek was liquidated and the family was deported to Plaszow, a concentration camp in Poland. There, Judith was selected for forced labor. In May, there was a selection and Joachim was deported and killed. A couple of months later, Judith, her mother, brother, and sister were transferred to Wieliczka where they worked in the salt mines. In September 1944, Judith, her mother, and sister were selected apart from Eduard and deported to

Auschwitz-Birkenau, where they managed to get jobs working as printers.

In January 1945, Judith, her mother, and sister were forced on a death march to Ravensbruck and once there, were confined to an overcrowded barrack. After a short time, they were transferred to Malchow, a camp in Germany where they were starved for weeks. The women were then transferred to Taucha, a sub-camp of Buchenwald. In April, the camp was liquidated, but Judith, along with her mother and sister managed to escape by hiding in the barracks. When the searches stopped, they emerged from the barracks and went to the nearest town. The three stayed at a German farm where they eventually regained their strength before immigrating to the United States, where Judith finished high school in Brooklyn, New York. Along the way, they were reunited with Eduard who had also immigrated to the United States.

Judith met her future husband, Arnold Becker, and they were married in March 1948. The couple had four children: Deena, Ephraim, Leah, and Rachel. Judith worked as a legal secretary and Arnold worked as an engineer. Eventually, Judith and her husband moved to Israel along with their children. At the time of Judith's interview in 1997, she and her husband had twenty-six grandchildren.