

MARGARET LAMBERT

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE



ECHOES & REFLECTIONS

TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST. INSPIRING THE CLASSROOM.



Margaret Lambert was born to Edwin and Paula Bergmann on April 12, 1914, in Laupheim, Germany. She had two brothers, Rudolph and Walter. Margaret's father was in a manufacturing

business along with his brothers and cousins. Margaret recalls that she was a strong-willed, independent child who had many friends, both Jewish and non-Jewish.

Margaret first attended a Jewish school, then a public high school followed by preparatory school. Margaret's love and mastery of sports, which included skiing, skating, running, and climbing, led to her acceptance to study physical education at a German university in 1933. However, due to the rapidly changing political climate, she was advised to postpone her studies. Soon after came a devastating chain of events for Margaret: the anti-Jewish legislation, a dramatic change in her non-Jewish friends' behavior and attitudes, and her exclusion from sports clubs.

In the fall of 1933, Margaret accepted an opportunity to study in London, England, where she again excelled in sports by winning a British track and field championship in the summer of 1934. Immediately afterwards, coerced by threats to her family, Margaret returned to Germany to train and compete on the German national team. She was the only Jewish athlete on the team, selected so that other nations wouldn't boycott the 1936 Berlin Olympics. As soon as other Olympic teams were en route to Berlin, Margaret was dropped from the team.

In 1937, due in part to a wealthy friend of her father, Margaret obtained an affidavit to immigrate to the United States, following her older brother who

had arrived in America five months earlier. Denied permission to leave, Margaret's father and the rest of her family stayed in Germany until 1940 when they were allowed to immigrate to England.

After arriving in the United States, Margaret won a national championship in track and field in 1937 but retired from the sport shortly thereafter. She then sponsored the immigration of fellow athlete Bruno Lambert, whom she had met and fallen in love with before she left Germany. In 1938 they married. During the war years, Margaret was an army bride, moving from base to base until 1946 when she and Bruno, a physician, moved back to New York, where they had two sons, Gary and Glenn. The rest of her family eventually emigrated from England to the United States and settled in Queens, New York. In 1980, Margaret was inducted into the Jewish Sports Hall of Fame. At the time of Margaret's interview in 1995, she and Bruno had three grandchildren: Jake, Ben, and Moli.