

RENA BERNSTEIN

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE



ECHOES & REFLECTIONS

TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST. INSPIRING THE CLASSROOM.



Rena Bernstein was born on April 3, 1938, in Krakow, Poland, to Jewish parents Natan and Sabina Wallach. Between September 1939 and June 1941, Rena lived in Soviet-occupied Poland. Her hometown was invaded by the Germans in 1941. During the war, Rena had to conceal her identity for survival. To escape persecution from the Nazis, she adopted the false identity of Irena Konkol, a Polish-Christian girl who lived with Janek Konkol (civilian aid giver) in Bezmiechowa, Lwów, Poland. She was able to renew contact with her mother and father and move to Italy after the war and then later to New York. She continued to identify with and practice conservative Judaism with her husband and two sons: Jonathan and Joseph Bernstein. This interview was conducted on January 22, 1998, in Brooklyn, New York.