



Resident feature

GRANDMA LINA

The Definition of Survivor

By Dr. Robyn G. Roth, Breast Radiologist
and unofficial granddaughter of Grandma Lina

Photos by Nicole Shilliday, Nicole Shilliday Photography
Personal photos supplied by the family



FIVE QUESTIONS

What is your favorite local restaurant?

Akura in Voorhees

What is your favorite vacation spot?

Italy

What is your favorite sports team?

She's really not into sports

What is your favorite leisure activity?

Reading books on her Kindle

What is your favorite Movie?

My Big Fat Greek Wedding

Meet my Grandma Lina, a survivor in the truest definition of the word. Technically, she's my best friend's grandma, but with 3 children, 9 grandchildren, and 9 great-grandchildren, what's one more "unofficial" grandchild? It is perhaps this open heart and love for people that has enabled her to survive all these years.

Those who meet her are often taken aback by her fun-loving nature and quick sense of humor, along with her ability to accurately recall dates and places from decades ago. But you'd never know that she has endured more heartache and tragedy than most people could ever fathom until you dig a little deeper.

She has survived her two husbands and two of her three children.

She has beat breast cancer 4 times, most recently last year when I was her doctor.

She survived the Holocaust after losing her father and sister at the hands of Nazis.

Carolina Jerud was born in Tarnopol, Poland, the second daughter of David and Betty. Growing up, she always looked up to her older sister, Rena. Both girls were highly intelligent and academic with promising futures ahead. However, she was robbed of her childhood when World War II broke out.

The Russians occupied her town in 1939, and two years later in 1941, the Germans took over her town of Tarnopol, where all of the

Jews in her town were forced into cattle cars and moved into ghettos, where they were crammed into tight quarters with limited food and housing.

In August of 1942, Nazis captured her sister and father in the ghetto, never to return home again; both were killed in the gas chambers in Belzec death camp.

Devastated and scared for their own lives, Lina and her mother Betty remained in the ghetto, constantly hiding from Germans and on the run with limited food. They eventually fled the ghetto in 1943, and looking for a safe shelter, Lina and her mother knocked on the doors of their former neighbors, only to be repeatedly turned away. One woman who recognized her mother opened her door and her heart and took them both in.

For the next 9 months, she hid them in the hollow portion of her basement staircase, successfully keeping them a secret from her own family members.

Lina and her mother were two of only approximately 50 Jews left from Tarnopol to survive the war. After the Russians liberated Tarnopol in 1944, Lina and her mother remained in Poland under the Communist regime despite several times trying to emigrate unsuccessfully. They were then forced to relocate to different towns in Poland frequently.





Lina with her late daughter Barbara and late husband Max.



The author with her "Grandma" Lina.

During their final move, Lina met her husband, Solomon, also a Holocaust survivor who survived in Russia. The two had a whirlwind courtship. She fondly remembers him showing up to her apartment with flowers which she assumed were for her but ended up being for her mother, a gesture of gratitude and respect that she remembers to this day.

Lina and Solomon started dating in December of 1947 and were married three months later. One year later, their son David was born.

Lina's mother, Betty, helped raise David in his early years and shared a very special bond. But Betty never recovered from her suffering from the Nazis and died in Poland at age 62.

The young family remained in Poland under the Communist regime until 1956, when they relocated to Israel which helped them emigrate successfully, and where they lived until 1959.

Her mother's lone surviving sister in the US convinced them to move again, initially settling in Far Rockaway, New York, and then in Northern New Jersey, where they opened a successful wholesale supplier for drug stores. Lina and Sol were blessed with two more children, Barbara and Betty.

Lina worked as an accountant for the business and sent their kids to the best schools. David became a dentist specializing in periodontics, and Betty, her youngest, became a general dentist. Barbara, her middle child, was a divorce attorney.

Solomon and Lina were married for 45 years until Solomon died in 1993. Lina was married to her second husband, Cantor Max Rubin, also a Holocaust survivor, for 26 years until he passed away last year.

May 5 and 6 is Yom HaShoah, or Holocaust Remembrance Day, a day to commemorate the approximately six million European Jews who were killed during the Holocaust, most in death camps, including Lina's family. The vast majority of living survivors were children at the time of the war, and their numbers are rapidly declining. At last count, there were only about 245,000 Holocaust survivors left in the world, with only about 16% living in the United States.

Although it has been more than 80 years since the Holocaust, it's still very difficult and heartbreaking for her to talk about. But it has never been more important, which we both understand all too well.

Ever since the October 7 Hamas terrorist attack on Israel when over 1160 Israelis were killed and brutally mutilated, mostly civilians, acts of antisemitism rhetoric



Lina with daughter Betty and her husband Jerry.



Part of Lina's family in Cherry Hill. From left: great-grandchildren Wally and Alfie; daughter-in-law Lorraine; Lina; great-grandchildren Isaac and Maeve; granddaughter Ilana holding great-grandchild Dori; grandchildren Adrienne and Adam; great-grandchild Solomon.

and violence have skyrocketed by about 337% in the US. Waves of antisemitism continue to take place on college campuses and in major cities nationwide. Over 240 Israeli hostages were taken on October 7 including women and children, 134 of whom are still being held in captivity in Gaza.

We need to continue to bear witness to the atrocities of the Holocaust in the hope that it will "never again" happen; never is now.

Grandma Lina wells up with tears as we talk about the modern-day atrocities committed against Israel and Jews across the world, a story that she is sadly all too familiar with.

These days, Grandma Lina is still an avid reader and enjoys her nightly meals with friends at Lions Gate, a Jewish retirement community where she resides. She is happiest on Fridays when she is surrounded by her grandchildren and great-grandchildren at the Shabbat table.

Lina will spend Mother's Day surrounded by multiple generations of her loving family, a family that she has rebuilt from the ground up. Her rhythm, like so many of us, is based on our family and community bonds. It is perhaps just that, which has kept her going after all these years.



Daniel, Alfie and Ilana Shein; Adam Rosenthal, Isaac, Solly, Lorraine, Andrienne Rosenthal, Elliot, Wally, David, Ayelet, Alissa and Hillel.



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