

Holocaust Survivor Biography: Ruth Kapp Hartz



Ruth Kapp Hartz was a four year old, hidden child during the Holocaust in southern France. During that time she had to change her name to Renee to hide her Jewish identity.

In addition to being sheltered by an ordinary French farm family, she spent six months in a small Catholic convent to avoid capture by both the Vichy French Police and the Gestapo. When informants told the authorities that the nuns were hiding Jewish children, the Mother Superior was forced to lie to keep Ruth and the other children safe. Only the Mother Superior knew that the children were Jewish. The other nuns thought they were just orphans. Ruth remembers that the convent had blue windows so authorities could not see inside, and the chapel had a trap door where the children would hide when hunted.

Through unusual good fortune, Ruth and her parents survived the war and returned to Paris shortly thereafter. Ruth eventually graduated from the Sorbonne University with a degree in Biochemistry. In 1958, she came to the United States where she married and raised a family. She became a teacher of French language, literature and culture at the Springside School in Philadelphia where she worked for 22 years.

In 1999 she published her childhood memoir, *Your Name is Renée*, and in 2005, a French translation, *Tu t'appelles Renée*. She is also the director and producer of "A Legacy of Goodness," a DVD about her rescuers.

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Witness to History Project:

The Witness To History Project is designed to further the message and lessons of the Holocaust by direct interaction between students or interested adults and Holocaust survivors. Participants "adopt" a survivor by learning his or her unique account of via listening to the survivor tell his/her story, asking questions, writing a biography, reviewing a videotape, and memorizing and re-telling the story to others. Ultimately, the participant will have the lifelong job of educating others about the Holocaust by sharing this personal narrative. Contact the Holocaust Awareness Museum to participate.

Holocaust Awareness Museum and Education Center

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