

Second Generation: Michèle Blask



Michèle Blask is the daughter of two Holocaust survivors. Her father, Hans Nemenoff, grew up in Königsberg, Germany. He and his immediate family survived the war by escaping to British Mandate Palestine. Hans was the last to leave in August of 1935, and spent the war years in Tel Aviv.

Michèle's mother, Imy Rothmüller, grew up in Temesvar/Timișoara in Transylvania, now Romania. Imy married her first husband, Istvan Halmos, and moved with him to Cluj, now Cluj-Napoca, Romania. From there, Imy and her husband were deported to Auschwitz in May of 1944. Imy was transferred to Pdettinghoffen/Lenzing, a subcamp of the Austrian concentration camp Mauthausen where she was liberated on May 5, 1945 by US military troops. She survived, but her husband was murdered.

Michèle's parents met each other in Canada. Hans went to Montreal, Canada in 1946 sponsored by his cousins so he could work for them. Imy went to Toronto, Canada as a maid through the Domestic scheme, a program created by the Canadian government to help meet the demand for domestic labor in Canada. Imy was working for distant cousins of Hans who introduced the two. They got married and raised Michèle amongst other Holocaust survivors in Montreal, Canada.

Michèle met her husband, David Blask, in the summer of 1973, on Kibbutz Kfar HaNassi in Israel. He was from Abington, Pennsylvania. He moved to Montreal in 1974 to do graduate studies at McGill University where Michele was studying as well. Michèle and David married in Montreal in December, 1975. They lived together in Canada until the separatist party, the Parti Québécois, won the provincial election in November 1976. That spurred them to plan to move to the United States. Michèle immigrated to the United States in May, 1978. She now shares her story to honor her parents' memory and to educate people of all ages of the lasting effects of genocide



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