

DIE LETZTEN ZEUGEN

Ruth Edith ELLINGER

(früher Ruth KATZ) geb. 1924

USA

“I lived with my parents Johanna & Paul Katz and my sister Suzanne Katz (now Balaban) in the 6th district in the Esterhazygasse. **Prior to the horrors that occurred in 1938 we had a wonderful life.**

Besides school which I loved, my sister & I took gymnastics, went ice-skating all winter long. My sister took violin lessons and I learnt the piano. I also took acting lessons and we performed a few times with a dance group. **Our life was full and happy.** I went to school at the “Frauenerwerbverein” for almost 4 years. **In March of 1938 everything changed.**

I was lucky to be able to leave in June of 1938 and come directly to the United States of America with my parents and my sister. The train trip from Vienna to Hamburg and the few days that we had to stay in Hamburg were very scary. Once we boarded the ship the S.S. Washington we felt some relief. **My family left Vienna with 24 American Dollars.** We were able to take 8 Dollars per person and were told that I was too young and was not even allowed to take that. Our life in New York was difficult. I was the only one in the family that knew a little English. My mother would send me shopping and in the beginning I made so many mistakes. In September 1938 I started High School. I had brought all my report cards from Vienna and was evaluated and put into 6th term High School. I was 14 years old and all the other students were 16 years old. I was a novelty and their little pet. I had problems with the language, but had the most wonderful teachers and was able to graduate when I was just 16 years old.

My biggest regret is that I did not take advantage and go to college. But my parents both had to work, my sister worked and therefore I wanted to help out as well and started work in an office. **The carefree days that we had enjoyed in our youth in Vienna were gone forever.** Money was short and we could not afford any of the luxuries that we had enjoyed in Vienna. A young man helped me with homework after school. His name was Maron Ellinger. When I was about 18 years old we started dating and when Maron came home from the Army after the war was over we were married in 1945.

Our son Allan Jay was born in Sept. 1947 and we have had much joy from him. Maron and I were happily married almost 62 years and I am sorry to say that he passed away on October 15, 2007 after many long illnesses. I miss him terribly.

Allan is happily married to Bernadette. I have 3 granddaughters and 6 great-grandchildren – 3 boys and 3 girls – and they are the love of my life. I am also very lucky to have a wonderful sister and her 3 daughters who are just like my own. Also my sister’s granddaughter who calls me every single day. We have a very close-knit family and are there for each other. I have a sister-in-law living near me, who is my best friend. **I feel very fortunate to be part of this loving family and I hope that we can enjoy many happy and healthy years together.”**

A LETTER TO THE STARS