Helena (Lena) Goldstein OAM
Holocaust Survivor
1919 - 2019

Helena (nee Midler) was born in Lublin Poland in January 1919. She studied law at Warsaw University but was forced to interrupt her studies due to antisemitism, both official, but also student related, including physical beatings. Further studies became impossible due to the outbreak of war.

Both her parents died in Treblinka (death camp) and one of her brothers fell in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Her other brother, along with his wife and their two day old infant daughter, were murdered by the gentiles paid to smuggle them out of the ghetto.

Helena survived in hiding 'on the Aryan side', brought outside the Warsaw Ghetto by and with the help of complete strangers who had felt a debt of gratitude to her father. Helena and these three others were hidden in the locked bathroom of a gentile who risked his own life and that of his family to hide them.

When the whole Polish population were ordered to evacuate Warsaw, Helena, her three friends and five other Jewish companions faced certain death, as they were unable to join the rest of the Polish population in the evacuation. Once again, thanks to a stranger, they were offered a hiding place. Below the ruined houses of Warsaw, they were shown a natural subterranean water channel at the edge of which was a tiny outcrop of dry ground, about two square metres in area, surrounded by water.

They were liberated by the Russian army in January 1945.

Helena was helped to come to Australia in 1949 by a surviving cousin. She came with her husband, Alexander, her surviving sister Fela, brother-in-law Ignas and their 2 year old daughter Giza. Alexander was a survivor of 3 concentration camps.

Helena subsequently had two children who grew up in Sydney and now has 5 grandchildren. Alexander passed away in 2007.

Lena passed away in May 2019.