



Irma Herzfeld Freudenreich

April 7, 1917 - October 19, 2020

Irma Herzfeld Freudenreich passed-away on October 19, 2020 at the age of 103. She is survived by daughter Anita (Emil) Bonanno, niece Frieda Schmiedel, and many beloved extended family members and dear friends.

She was born to Abraham and Frieda Herzfeld in 1917 in Lobsens, Germany. The youngest of six children, she had a happy and comfortably well-off childhood as part of a lively traditional Jewish family. Her father was a successful German Industrialist, who was awarded the Iron Cross for his service in WWI. He was a proud German, a generous philanthropist, and a devout Jew. Her mother was known far and wide for her kindness and generosity. Irma was a tomboy and an adventurer.

Following the outbreak of the war, Irma's father was incarcerated in a concentration camp on December 6, 1939 and Irma and her sister Ruth were sent to Lodz, Poland (Litzmannstadt). There she met and became engaged to Izy Freudenreich. When the Nazis liquidated the Lodz Ghetto in August 1944, Irma, Ruth, and Izy's mother Toiba Freudenreich, were shipped by train to Auschwitz. As the Soviets advanced, they were transported to Hambuhren, Germany by truck and worked in the salt mines for three months. From there they were marched to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. At Belsen, Irma and Ruth contracted typhus. Toiba nursed both women back to health but died of typhus in April 1945. Irma was liberated from Bergen-Belsen by the British and Izy was liberated from Dachau by the Americans. After liberation, Izy bicycled from camp to camp searching for Irma and his mother. He found Irma in Bergen-Belsen and they were married by a rabbi in the camp in July 1945. The newlyweds settled in Hamburg where their first daughter Tonika was born in 1947. It was during this time that Irma learned her parents had been shot in the woods outside Lobsen and that three of her brothers had perished in the Holocaust. Her fourth brother, Ernst, survived because she traveled by train from Germany to Russia to rescue him from a "spy camp" while 4 months pregnant.

In January 1950, the Freudenreichs immigrated to America, arriving at the Port of New Orleans. They settled in Dallas where Irma had an uncle. Their second daughter, Anita,

was born here in 1953. A premature baby, she lost her sight as an infant. Izy found work as a garment cutter with Jeanne Manufacturing, which he took over in 1970. He built the factory into a successful business with 400 workers. After his sudden death in 1974, Irma sold the company. After their arrival in Dallas, Irma started her own business out of their home, Irma's Buttons, Inc. which made belts, sequins, trims, and buttons. By the time she retired in 1980, the business had grown to employ 45 people. Tragedy struck again in 1985 when her daughter Tonika died of cancer at the age of 38. Despite the hardships in her life, Irma was always dynamic and vibrant, greeting people with a warm smile, eager to hear about their lives and to share her experiences. She was active in the community, volunteering for local hospitals, Golden Acres--the Jewish Home for the Aged, Hadassah, NA'AMAT USA, JFS Meals on Wheels, the Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum, and Shearith Israel Synagogue, where she was also a member for 75 years. In her final years she still actively engaged with people and genuinely enjoyed their visits to her.

Irma thought it was important for you to know that:

- You can endure unimaginable suffering and still go on to lead a meaningful and full life.
- Survival is a remarkable example of the human spirit's ability to adapt, rebuild, and recover.
- You can and should continue to laugh, love, and enjoy life even after you have suffered profound loss.
- You should never give up because life is precious. She was so proud to be 103 years old. She never gave up.

Irma lived a full and amazing life... her legacy will live on forever in the hearts and minds of all the people she inspired. May her memory be for a blessing.

If your heart prompts, Irma asked that donations be made to the following in her name:

- Guiding Eyes for the Blind, 611 Granite Springs Road, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598
- Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum, 300 N Houston St, Dallas, TX 75202