

Lazar Gurfinkel And His Son Michael Gurfinkel



This is a picture of me as a radiologist at the children's hospital in Chernovtsy and a happy father holding his son Michael in 1960. I graduated the Medical Institute in Chernovtsy in 1951. There were many vacancies in Ukraine, but Jewish doctors were sent to distant areas in Russia, to the Ural and Siberia. I got an assignment to a district town near Leningrad. My job assignment was to last three years, and then I was planning to go back home. But there was a lack of doctors, and I had to work there for another five years. I returned to Chernovtsy in 1956. There was anti-

Semitism, and it was difficult to find a job. I was offered a job as a radiologist in a district town near Chernovtsy. I worked there and went to see my mother at weekends. I got a good salary and my life was improving, but my mother was growing older and had problems living alone. I began to look for a job in Chernovtsy. I found one at the town children's hospital. The chief doctor of this hospital obtained an employment approval for me from the regional health care department. I worked at the children's hospital for over 30 years. My colleague at the children's hospital had a relative. This colleague of mine was also a radiologist and a Jew. His relative again graduated from Chernovtsy University and was an assistant at the Geo-Chemical Faculty. My colleague introduced me to her and her family. It was my future wife, Fania Aizinger, a Jew. She was born in Chernovtsy in 1930. She was reasonable and kind. She wasn't a striking beauty, but she was good-looking. I went to visit my sister and brother in Bucharest in 1958. My brother and sister advised me to get married. I returned to Chernovtsy and proposed to Fania. We had a civil ceremony in 1959 and a small dinner party at home. My mother baked a cake and made dumplings with buckwheat. I bought a bottle of wine. There were about ten guests at our party. Our son was born in 1960. We named him Michael after my father. My wife went to work, and my mother looked after our son. After some time I realized that my wife and I were very different people, but we stayed together for the sake of our son. Michael finished secondary school with a medal. My wife worked at the Chernovtsy University as an assistant at the Geo-Chemical Department. This helped when my son entered the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics. Upon graduation he began to work as an engineer at the Electronmach Plant, a military plant. I wanted him to get married and have a family, but my wife was afraid that he would become more distant from her if he married and talked him out of marriage. Five years ago my wife and son moved to the USA. I didn't want to go with them. I believed it was time for my son to start his own life without our influence.