

Rober's Graduation Day



This photo was taken at Marmara University in 1987. It was my son Rober's graduation day and cape-and-gown ceremony. In this photo you can see from left to right, my father-in-law Menahem Behar Bitek, me (Sami Schilton), my son Rober and my wife Suzi.

My younger child, a son, Rober Schilton was born in Istanbul, in 1964. He was born at the French Hospital and his brit-mila [brit milah] was also done there. My sister's husband, Aleks Samuel held him and my sister brought my son to the hall. Then there was a buffet for the guests. When our son was 13 years old, we also had a Bar-Mitzva [Bar Mitzvah] for him. We had the religious ceremony at the Sisli Synagogue. Then that night we had another celebration at the Tarabya Hotel ballroom. A lot of guests and relatives came, there was great entertainment, live orchestra etc... Then we cut a big cake, and all in all it was a beautiful fiesta [Ladino for celebration]. He recited a speech both at the synagogue and at the ballroom.

Rober studied primary school at the Kurtulus Primary School [public school], then he went to High School [English High School for Boys] for secondary school and he went on to Robert College for the lycée. Then he studied Business Administration at Marmara University and did his Master's degree at Bogazici University. He was a very good student and was able to get a very good and very strong education. He is a talkative person who likes to tell things in detail. He will give every detail of even the smallest thing he is talking about. He never cuts things short, so much so that sometimes we tell him "just cut it short and come to the point"; but he answers "oh, no you are going to listen from beginning to the end". He never comes to the point quickly but he tells a good story.

We always spoke Turkish with our children. We used to go to the movies with them when they were kids. We had mostly Jewish friends with whom we went to the movies, the theatres, on picnics etc... We would also frequently gather in houses and enjoyed ourselves. When we got together our children would play with the children of our friends of course.

We raised our children according to Jewish traditions. We taught them about all the holidays, Pesah [Pesach], Rosh Ashana [Rosh Hashanah], Kipur [Yom Kippur]. We got them used to fasting since they were quite young. At Pesah [Pesach], the seder was celebrated at our house with our family and my wife's father who lived with us. It used to be a very nice seder and we read the Agada [Hagadah] beautifully. We weren't crowded, just our own close family. Our children go to the synagogue during the holidays.

We weren't able to send our children to the Jewish youth clubs. My daughter got tied up with her husband very early in her life and so she had no time for clubs. They were together since she was 13. And my son somehow never wanted to go. We always insisted that he go but he never wanted to.