

Elizabeth Waiser's Son Efim Waiser



My son Efim Waiser. This photo was made for his graduation photo album after finishing secondary school in Chernovtsy in 1973.

My son was born in 1955. We named him Efim after my husband's father.

My husband and I came from religious families. We always believed in God like our parents taught us. We observed all Jewish traditions in our family. We fasted before Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and celebrated Pesach. I was a good housewife and had all traditional food made on holidays. I cooked Gefilte fish like my mother taught me. We worked at Shabbat, because Saturday was a working day. But I always cooked on Friday. In the evening my husband and I prayed and I lit candles and only then we sat down to dinner.

On holidays my husband and I went to the synagogue. We didn't go to synagogue on Saturday. My husband and I spoke Yiddish and Russian at home. We spoke Russian to our son, but he has heard Yiddish since he was a baby and so he learned it himself. We also celebrated Soviet holidays and got together with our neighbors in the yard. We sang Soviet songs and went to parades. Although we couldn't afford much we enjoyed what we had.

My son was very successful at school. I tried to convince him to go to the institute after finishing school, but he saw how difficult it was for us to make our living and he decided to go to work. He took a course of electronic equipment maintenance specialists and got a job at the "Electronmach" plant. My son was a wonderful, kind and caring man. He was interested in the Jewish religion, culture and history and studied a lot. After Ukraine gained independence my son was one of the founders of the first Jewish association. Efim taught Jewish history at Hesed. He was very fond of it. Girls liked Efim, but he didn't have time to meet with them. I told him that he had to think about getting married and having his own family, that his father and I would not always with him. It could never occur to me that I would bury my own son.

When he told me that he was planning to go on vacation to Poland with his friend I tried to talk him out of it as if I had a bad inkling. He fell ill with encephalitis in Poland and his arms and legs were paralyzed and his friend escorted him back to Ukraine in an ambulance vehicle. He stayed in hospitals for a long time and I was always beside him, but there was no working cure for him. My son died in 1996. My husband and I buried him at the Jewish corner of the town cemetery and installed a gravestone on his grave.