

Gustawa Birencwajg And Her Family Today



This is me, Gustawa Birencwajg, now, with all my family. This picture was taken in 2004, in our apartment in Warsaw. First from left is my daughter Halina Leszczynska (nee Birencwajg), next to her is my grandson Janusz Leszczynski, and my great-granddaughter Natalia (Kasia's daughter). Next is me, my granddaughter Kasia, my daughter Cetka, my great-granddaughter Joasia (Kasia's daughter). and my grandson's Wlodek wife, Maria. Higher is my granddaughter's Kasia husband, Slawek, and my grandson, Wlodek Leszczynski. Below sitting are my great-granddaughter Zofia Leszczynska, and M. Luba, who was taking care of me. In 1966 my husband Dawid died. I was left alone in the apartment. How old was Wlodek, my daughter Halina's son, by then? He was in 9th grade, so 15 years old. Halina was divorced by then. And Wlodek said to me, 'Grandma, perhaps we can live together, it would be merrier for us.' So he talked me into it, I agreed to have our two apartments exchanged for one larger one. So since that time we've live together like this. When my daughter was working, I was taking care of the house, buying things, doing everything, it was all good. But one day I was washing the kitchen window and the stool slipped from underneath me. I fell, I hit my head on the cupboard. The doctor came and joked with me, 'Did you manage to finish washing that window?' So he told me to lie down, but there were no good results and I went to the ophthalmologist at the hospital. When I got there, he told me that my one eye was already gone. They treated me, I kept going in and out of hospital, when these lasers were created, they operated on me then. But I lost my eyesight completely anyway. Some physician operated on me three years ago, gave me some hope, but nothing came out of it. I can't see anything. And they have to care for me night and day. My old age pension is 950 zloty. My daughter gets 1100 zloty and that's how we live together. I keep getting weaker, but I am not surprised, because everyone says that for my age I still look good. I still danced on my 90th birthday. One daughter got divorced, the second one got divorced, each one had one child and they raised them alone. Each of them has a higher education, I have a grandson who graduated from two faculties - Wlodek Leszczynski, Halina's son - and this grandson really respects me. I tell him, 'Stop it with this

Grandma.' But he says, 'No, I want to have a grandma, because my friends don't have grandmas and they're jealous.'