

Engelina Goldentracht At The Wedding Of Her Granddaughter Marina Shevchishyna



The photo was taken at the wedding of my granddaughter Marina in Kiev in 2001. From left to right: Marina's husband's father Leonid Shevchishyn, my daughter Alla Karelshstein, I, Engelina Goldentracht, Marina's husband Andrei Shevchishyn, my granddaughter Marina Karelshstein, Andrei's mother Ludmila Shevchishyna and my son-in-law Alexandr Karelshstein. My daughter Alla entered the Kiev Institute of Foreign Languages after finishing school. When she was a student she married a construction engineer, Alexandr Karelshstein, a Jew. He was a leading engineer at a design institute. In 1970 Alla gave birth to Marina. Alla now works at the International Solomon University [Jewish University in Kiev, established in 1995], and my granddaughter Marina works at the Judaism Institute. My husband always spoke about Israel with respect. During the Six-Day-War and at the height of anti-Jewish propaganda in the Soviet Union, Michael spent hours listening to the radio to hear the truth about Israel. My husband wanted us to move to Israel or the US. But I was concerned about having to start things anew and facing difficulties. We often argued, and my work was mostly the crucial factor in the end. I adored Israel when I went there. It's a truly amazing country. It's a garden on stones in a desert. I traveled a lot across the country and felt very proud of my people. I feel sorry that we didn't emigrate in the early 1970s. Now it's too late. My children want to stay here, and I'm too old to change my life. Ukraine declared independence in 1991. People had more freedom and opportunities to improve their life. The Iron Curtain fell, and they could travel and visit their relatives and friends abroad. I've always dreamt about traveling, and I've visited Paris, Amsterdam, Brussels and many other towns and countries lately. The economy is improving and we can buy books and products that we knew nothing about during the Soviet times. Isn't it wonderful! Neither my brother nor I were members of the Communist Party although we grew up in a family of devoted Bolsheviks. We never celebrated Jewish holidays. Jews can speak proudly about their nation, its history and culture for the first time in many years. Only now I gradually get closer to the Jewish way of life. There is a Jewish religious community, an association of Jewish culture, the Israel Cultural Center and the Hesed in the Ukraine. I'm interested in Jewish

traditions. I go to the synagogue and attend the Torah study classes.