

The Birth Of Rober Schilton



This photo was taken at the “French Pasteur Hospital” in Istanbul in 1964 when my son Rober Schilton was born. While we were at the hospital a photographer came and took this photo as a souvenir. You can see me, Sami Schilton on the left of the photo, my wife Suzi is in bed beside me and my daughter Rita is sitting beside her mother. They are holding the newborn Rober in their arms. The photo was taken a couple of days after the birth. We were waiting for the Brith-Milla ceremony to take place to leave the hospital. In those times, the Brith-Milla ceremonies used to take place at the hospitals. So, my son Rober’s brith-milla took place at the hall of ceremonies of the hospital that was situated on the bottom floor. A lot of guests had attended and it had been a day of joy and excitement. Both my wife and I were terribly excited and so was my brother-in-law Alex Samuel, because he was the one to take out and hold the baby during the ceremony. My sister Suzi Samuel brought the baby down from the hospital room to the hall. She delivered him to her husband Alex and the rabbi conducted the ceremony. It was so exciting.

My wife and I had two children. The elder, Rita Schilton (now Rasier) was born in Istanbul in 1958. My daughter Rita went to a Turkish school first, called Tarhan Koleji and then she went to St. Pulcherie French school. [Catholic secondary school, 6th to 8th grades only with two preparatory classes at the beginning] Then she went to St. Benoit [French Catholic high school, 6th to 11th grades with two preparatory classes at the beginning] for the lycée. We did not have a Bat-Mitzva [Bat Mitzvah] for our daughter because there was no such tradition at that time. Rita married Cako Rasier when she was 20. They had actually been together for 7 years before that, since she was 13. They had two children; a boy, Ralfi Rifat Rasier born in 1980, and a girl Meyzi Rasier born in 1987.

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.