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## Ben Lesser: Life after the Nightmare

Mac O'Malley, Assoc. Editor - Special Features | April 26, 2013

### Part 2 in 3-part Series

The Holocaust claimed the lives of approximately six million Jews; men, women, and children were ruthlessly murdered by the Nazi regime in their attempt to eradicate what they deemed an “inferior” race. The lives of the survivors were forever altered; most had witnessed the deaths of friends, neighbors, and loved ones. But Ben Lesser did not let his losses define his life. He chose to move forward and live a happy, successful, and fulfilled life.



A young Ben Lesser (Courtesy)

After spending the last few years of his young life surrounded by death and terror, Ben was finally freed from Auschwitz in April of 1945. He was taken to St. Ottilien where the Bavarian monks had devoted one wing of the monastery to medical care and rehabilitation for Holocaust survivors. In December he was reunited with his pregnant sister Lola, who was the only other survivor of their immediate family; their mother, father, and siblings Moishe, Goldie, and Tuli had all been killed by the Nazis during the war.



Ben and Jean Lesser (Courtesy)

On September 21, 1947 Ben arrived in New York; this was the start of a whole new life for the young man who had so recently been liberated from Nazi cruelty. In 1949 he decided to try his luck in California and took a bus to Los Angeles with Martin, a friend from Germany. It was there that he met and married Jean Singer and in 1952 they were blessed by the birth of their first daughter, Sherry. “With the birth of my daughter, I finally understood why I had been allowed to survive. I could see how my parents would live on through her.” Ben said in his book *Living a Life That Matters: from Nazi Nightmare to American Dream*.

In 1953 Ben became a US citizen, a monumental accomplishment for a man whose traditional education had stopped when he was eleven. Four years later the Lessers welcomed their second daughter, Gail, into their family.

Throughtout this time, Ben tried his hand at many different jobs. Eventually, he obtained his real estate license and founded his own real estate company. Whether it was working for somebody else, or building his own business, Ben would not let his traumatic past hold him back from reaching his potential. “Individuals can’t always choose what happens to them, but whether it’s a crisis or calamity, people can choose to either let it ruin their lives, or learn from it and move forward.” Ben said.

In 1995, he retired with his wife, Jean, to Las Vegas, Nevada, having achieved the “American dream” that he had hoped for since coming to the United States in 1947.

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- Tom O'Malley, Co-founder

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### Commentary



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June 9, 2014

If Democrats don't know basic history, should they really be trying to rewrite it? That's a question some people wondered yesterday after Senator Chuck Schumer's (D-N.Y.) primetime gaffe. The Harvard-educated agitator, one of 42 liberals trying to scrap the First Amendment, argued for his party's amendment by suggesting that the author of it would have approved. [...]



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