

Joseph Fleischmann

(17.10.1925 in Nuremberg – 10.3.2015 in Norfolk, Va.)



(Photo: Lin Herz)

Joseph Fleischmann, age 89, died on March 10, 2015 at his home on Armfield Circle in Norfolk, Virginia.

He was born on October 17, 1925 to Ida Wechsler and Samuel Fleischmann in Nuremberg, Germany. He only escaped death in the Holocaust because his immediate family immigrated to Norfolk, Va. in late November 1938. At age 12, Joseph had run away from home on a bicycle, planning to join his father, already in New York, by stowing away on a U.S. bound ship in Le Havre, France. But when both the *unreasonable* U.S. and French consuls declined to accommodate him with needed legal documents, he went home.

During *Kristallnacht* a particularly fanatic stormtrooper neighbor slapped Joseph's mother. He was angry and frustrated over Joseph's father having escaped death in a concentration

camp by making it to America. Fortunately, Joseph was visiting his grandfather at the time, or this influential Nazi might have substituted him in place of his father (due to his being very big for a 13-year-old). Joseph slept in his grandfather's attic for the following week.

Joseph attended Norfolk Public School until June 1940, when he was encouraged to help with family living expenses. While working illegally 62 hours per week on Church Street at age 15, Joseph attended Matthew Fountain Maury High School three nights per week for English classes.

Joseph served in the U.S. Armed Forces from April 1944 until June 1946, mostly with the 343rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (Blackhawks) in Europe, where he lost 50 percent of his hearing. He also served in combat in the Philippines, for which his division had taken amphibious training for assaulting Iwo Jima. He survived WWII due to several complex twists of good fortune and because God answered MOST of his prayers with an emphatic NO.

Joseph worked as an auditor for the U.S. Treasury Department from 1951 until 1984. Attending the Norfolk Division of the College of William and Mary, mostly at night, he received his B.S. in Business Administration, Cum Laude, in June 1956 with 160 credits. Although for economic and familial responsibility reasons, he was an 8th grade school dropout, the college matriculated him on the basis of a special test. Joseph so loved academia that at the request of the Head of the Business Department, after graduation, he taught accounting courses at night until his treasury job required too much travel in 1963. He received his C.P.A. certificate (#888) in 1954. Joseph founded the Evening College Club in 1955 and was elected its first president.

Joseph regularly delivered *Meals on Wheels* for the Jewish Family Service of Tidewater for 16 years, until a near fatal accident in 2006. He was a member of B'nai Israel (and its predecessor congregations) since 1947 and Senior Clubs of the J.C.C. since 1990. He lived a frugal life, and so he was able to leave a Charitable Remainder Trust to the Tidewater Jewish Foundation and Jewish Family Service.

Joseph was predeceased by his beloved parents and his only sibling, Rachel Fleischmann Schramm of Teaneck, N.J. and Boca Raton, Fla. He is survived by nieces Diana Holtzman (Kenneth) of White Plains, N.Y. and Janet Ida Gelman of Livingston, N.J.; grandnephews David Holtzman (Michelle), Jason Gelman, and Adam Gelman and grandniece Lauren Ravitz (Brett), two great-grandnieces and a great-grandnephew.

Joseph was buried in the Cedar Lawn Cemetery with Rabbi Sender Haber officiating. Memorial contributions can be sent to a charity of choice or Jewish Family Services, 260 Grayson Road, Virginia Beach, Va. 23462.

Joseph's nieces, Diana Schramm Holtzman (email: dianasholtz[at]gmail.com) and Janet Schramm Gelman (email: jig616[at]aol.com) would love to hear from anyone who knew him either in the United States or Germany, and would like to share any memories.

Lin Herz

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