

## LOUIS DE GROOT

Louis de Groot spent the war hiding in many different cities and with different people in the Netherlands. He was the only one of his immediate family to survive.

*"I am the sole beneficiary of my parents' brave decision for the family to go into hiding. Every day I thank them for having had the courage to take that step while there were so many unknowns to deal with. They are my heroes."*

Louis de Groot was born June 1929 in Amersfoort, the Netherlands. He lived with his parents, and his sister Rachel in Arnhem in a spacious apartment above their electrical store. On November 16, 1942, the policeman on their beat came into the store to tell them of his suspicion that the Germans were planning a roundup of Jews that evening.

The family took the policeman's warning seriously. They separated and each went into hiding in a different location. Louis' parents reminded him that people were risking their lives by opening their home to him.

His parents went to Amsterdam a few blocks from where Anne Frank and her family were hiding. In 1944, his parents and sister were denounced and arrested by collaborating Dutch policemen and deported to Auschwitz where they were killed. His sister's last words to him were "be strong".

Because of changing conditions that threatened his safety and increased the risk of discovery, Louis moved thirteen times within the next year. He was helped by a Christian couple, Anne and Dirk Onderweegs and their daughter Bonnette, in whose home he arrived in January 1944. The Onderweegs treated Louis like their son, and he continued living with them for 16 months after the liberation. However, in 1946, wishing to return to a Jewish environment, he moved to the Jewish Boys' Orphanage in Amsterdam.

In 1948, Louis volunteered for service in the Haganah, a Jewish paramilitary organization for the founding of the new state of Israel. The following year he returned to Holland and finished high school. He immigrated to the USA in 1950, and the following year was inducted into the US Army during the Korean conflict. Louis earned a master's degree in economics at Columbia University and worked as a business economist with the IBM Corporation. He met his wife Barbara an artist who helped him live with his painful wartime losses and to build a family.