

## MARIANNE GERHART

The daughter of a German Jewish mother and a non-Jewish father, Marianne Gerhart lived through the war in Germany.

*"I am often asked, sometimes with barely disguised suspicion, 'If you and your Jewish mother lived in Germany during the Nazi time, how come you survived?'"*

We survived because at critical moments there always appeared in our lives people who were willing to take great personal risks on our behalf."

Marianne Gerhart (née Zeise) was born in Germany in 1923. Her Christian father had been decorated with the Iron Cross, but because of his marriage to a Jewish woman he lost his position as a psychologist. In 1939 he moved to Berlin to train at the Jung Institute but as protection for the family, he periodically returned so that the neighbors could see that Marianne's mother was still married to an "Aryan". Her mother, a well-known actress, lost her job but continued to give private drama lessons. One of her students later confided that the Nazis had assigned him to spy on her.

When nine-year-old Marianne attracted attention at school for not wearing Hitler Youth uniform at school, her father found a Lutheran school that was willing to accept her. Being half-Jewish, Marianne was able to finish high school but was barred from the University and from employment. Nazi headquarters assigned her to a night job washing streetcars, but she felt increasingly vulnerable in a place where workers could be easily rounded up.

After making an anti-Nazi remark in a public lecture, Marianne's father had gone underground to an unknown location. The air raids intensified, and Marianne worried for her mother's safety alone at home. In December 1944, Marianne's mother got a notice to report for deportation to Theresienstadt. The end of the war was in sight, and in desperation, Marianne went to a sympathetic neighbor for help. Though she knew that he was a Nazi party member he helped get Marianne's mother's papers destroyed so that she no longer officially existed. Marianne later learned that he had helped many Jews over the years. Marianne's father was able to return to Munich, and the family was reunited just before the American troops arrived.

Marianne came to the US alone in 1947. She attended the University of California earning degrees in Social Welfare. She had a long career as a psychotherapist, working in a private practice.