Marlene Turpin,

Tochter Anna Denz-Turpin

(Ansprache Stolpersteine für Familie Denz)

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Lörrach, Luisenstraße 35

Hello!
My name is Marlene Turpin. I'm the granddaughter of Anna Marie and Oskar Denz, and the daughter of Anna Denz-Turpin. My grandparents and mother were victims of National Socialism in Germany simply because they were Jehovah's Witnesses.

I grew up in the US knowing my mother's and grandparents' story during the time of Hitler. I knew that all three were arrested at the German

border for bringing banned JW literature in from Switzerland.

After their arrest, my grandmother and grandfather were imprisoned, each for a 2 year term. My mother was temporarily released to the custody of her aunt, who was also one of JWs. However, my mother told me that whether she would stay with her aunt or be assigned to another German family, her mind was made up she was going to remain a faithful Witness and wait for her parents to be released from prison so she could be reunited with them.

Well, that idea changed pretty quickly because once JWs in the Bern Switzerland Branch heard my grandparents had been arrested and my 14 year old mother was basically on her own, they immediately made arrangements to bring her to Bern. They sent a young man over to help her escape from Germany, which she successfully did. However, she never again saw her parents.

While she was living and growing up in Bern, Oskar and Anna Marie finished their prison terms. Freedom was now in their reach however, the only way they could gain that freedom was to sign a paper renouncing their religion and beliefs, which both refused to do. Consequently, my grandmother went to Ravensbrück where she died, and my grandfather initially went to Dachau, and after a period of time, was transferred to Mauthausen where he died. My mother, still in Bern Switzerland, eventually met my father who visited there. Later, after getting married, they moved to the United States where I was born in 1951.

In 1990, I had the wonderful experience of accompanying my mother as she returned to her beloved Lörrach after leaving it over 53 years earlier. I had the opportunity to meet and get to know my family, and we visited all the places my mother knew and loved. We also visited her former home on Luisen Strasse. I remember we walked up the marble stairs to the apartment she and my grandparents lived in but, sadly we were not able to get in to see it. However, I saw in her eyes that she was remembering all the good memories. Time just won't allow me to share everything she told me in that excursion.

Ten years later in 2000, a remarkable thing happened. A woman from a village near Lörrach read an article about a historical exhibition in Loerrach that described the history of Jehovah's Witnesses during the Nazi years, which included my family with pictures. Many years earlier, in the 1980s, this woman had purchased a used sewing basket in a market area. In the bottom of the basket, she found it contained similar pictures to those in the exhibition along with letters on concentration camp stationary. She recognized, after all those years, that those letters were from my mother and grandparents—42 letters along with pictures. These were quickly returned to my mother who finally had details of what her parents had experienced. But best of all, my mother knew her parents' loving concern for her had never ceased.

So I know my mother, who passed away in 2013, would have loved to be there with you today. So, on her behalf, as well as my grandparents behalf, I would like to thank Gunter Demnig for remembering the victims of National Socialism and for making this remembrance possible. Also, I want to thank the city of Lörrach for making this STOLPERSTEINE memorial event possible. Also, I especially want thank Dr. Markus Hofmann who selflessly and patiently worked on bringing this honor to fruition. I so wish I could be there with you. But, thank all of you from the bottom of my heart.