

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF COMMEMORATION IN MEMORY
OF THE VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST & THE 75TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF AUSCHWITZ

Holocaust survivors and their families, Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen...

It is my privilege and honour to share a few thoughts with you
on behalf of the Van den Brink family.

When a stone is dropped into a pool of water, the ripple effect
continues to widen and circle out long after the stone has sunk
to the bottom. Tonight, we as a family still feel the ripple of a
stone dropped into a pool many years ago. And although, we
were not there, the impact remains as tangible today as it was
all those years ago.

In March 1943, 77 years ago, my grandparents, Aart and
Rinske van den Brink performed a deed of love that continues
to circle out and impact our lives to this very day.

They assisted several Jewish children during the Second World
War. One of these children was Abraham Staal or "Aby" as he
was known. He was just 15 years old at the time.

My grandfather and grandmother took Aby in, hid him and
cared for him as one of their own children for approximately
nine months.

In the Shoah organization interview with Aby in 1998, he said
that my grandparents were very religious and that the family
read from the Bible every afternoon at lunch.

The children, including Aby, all took turns and they had to read from both the Old and the New Testaments.

This confirms to me that my grandparents did this act of love without expecting any recognition because we as children of God believe what is written in Colossians 3 verse 23: “And whatever you do, do it with all your heart, as though you are doing it for the Lord himself and not merely for others.”

I am thankful that this act of love has now circled out to four generations of Van den Brinks. In fact, we all carry their DNA and the unconditional love for all people regardless of their convictions or origin.

Grandmother is recognised tonight as grandfather was already recognised together with his brother Herman and wife Marie in 1979. The effect of grandmother’s act of love is encircling everybody here tonight including Lorri Staal, daughter of Aby Staal who resides in the USA. Since 2016 she has been searching to find all the people that assisted her father during the War. It is due to her persistence and endless efforts that recognition could be given to grandma Rinske tonight.

To the Yad Vashem organisation, The Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre and the Embassy of Israel, thank you for awarding the title of “Righteous among the Nations” to my grandma Rinske. We greatly appreciate it and it is an honour to have our family recognised.

THANK YOU