Biography of Vera Schiff

Vera Schiff was born to a middle-class family in 1926 in Prague, Czechoslovakia, where her family had lived for many generations. They were very much assimilated and her father held a high position in the government. After the German occupation of the country in 1939, however, her family became increasingly marginalized.

In 1942, the family was deported to the Theresienstadt ghetto, where Vera was assigned to work in the hospital. Vera's parents, sister and grandmother died in the ghetto. In spite of unimaginable odds Vera managed to elude the ongoing deportation to death camps. After the war ended, she discovered that she was the sole survivor of the entire family.

Vera met her future husband, Arthur Schiff in Theresienstadt. They settled in Prague for a few years but in 1949 they decided to move to Israel. They immigrated to Canada in 1961 and settled in Toronto. Vera worked as medical technologist and Arthur as a pharmacist. They have two sons, six grandchildren, and several great-grandchildren.

Following retirement, Vera embarked upon writing her memoirs describing her experiences in the Holocaust. She published several books about the Holocaust and also speaks to schools about her experiences. In recognition of her contributions to literature, writing and speaking about the Holocaust across Canada, Vera was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Letters by the University of New Brunswick, Saint John.