

Katalin Kallos Havas And Her Sons



I celebrated my 81st birthday in June 2003. This photo was taken on that occasion. On my right is my older son Peter, and on my left my younger son Gyorgy. We are in the kitchen of our apartment on Brancusi Street in Kolozsvár, and I'm just opening my birthday presents.

Every year we celebrate my husband Miklos' birthday and my own. The whole family gathers on these occasions, as my sons come home to Kolozsvár, along with my daughters-in-law, Nora and Marika, and my grandchildren: Robert, Renata and Patricia.

My older son, Peter, was a musician, he graduated in flute at the Conservatory and became a music teacher. Currently he lives in Bucharest and works as a translator for the Hungarian broadcast of Romanian national television. He translates from Romanian into Hungarian and from Hungarian into Romanian. He is often employed as a simultaneous translator by the Hungarian embassy. When Viktor Orbán visited Bucharest for the first time, Peter was the translator. The mother of Peter's wife, Nora, is Romanian, and her father is Hungarian. They divorced early on because her mother forbade them to speak Hungarian at home. My daughter-in-law understands Hungarian, and she's also forced to because we are quite indiscreet with her - not on purpose, of course because we are on quite good terms, but we spontaneously talk in Hungarian. She always understands what we are talking about, but can't speak Hungarian. My grandson from Bucharest doesn't speak Hungarian. His name is Robert and he was born in 1976. My son scolded us for not teaching him Hungarian, because he spent his summer holidays with us here in Kolozsvár. We couldn't teach him because we didn't spend enough time together for that.

My younger son, Gyorgy, is an engineer. His wife is a Hungarian Christian; her name is Marika. They live in Nagyvárad. They have two daughters: Renata, born in 1989, and Patricia, three years younger. They are both baptized and will confirm. I asked my son, 'What does the minister think about you bringing your daughters to scripture lessons, you being a Jewish husband?' He said the minister is very intelligent, has a high rank and they are on very good terms with each other. He

told me, 'Whenever I take my daughters there, we usually chat for 20 minutes. We respect each other. He doesn't want to convert me, we don't speak about religion.' His wife's parents are religious, they insisted on baptizing the children. And in order to preserve peace within the family, my son had nothing against it. He said, 'When they grow up they will think and act at their own discretion, anyway.' None of my sons are interested in religion. They are aware of their Jewish origins, but they don't observe the Jewish traditions.

I spend most of my retirement at home and occasionally I go to the Jewish community to meet my friends. When I'm at home, I usually read or tend the flowers in the garden.