

meet your neighbor

Dr. Erica Miller



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Written by Brooke O'Brien
Photography by Rene Taylor, Rene Taylor Photography



Where The Lilac Tree Blooms

After 75 years, the lilac tree still blooms at the childhood home of Dr. Erica Miller—the home she left for a Nazi concentration camp in 1945. During her recent trip to Romania, she marveled at the tree's existence. "The fragrant aroma brought me back," she recalls. "Even in horrendous circumstances, you can find something good."

That positive outlook reigns, no matter the obstacles. In fact, her childhood experiences during the Nazi regime blossomed within her a strong will to persevere.

The Nazis had raided her family's Romanian home twice. Each time, her parents rushed 7-year-old Erica and her older sister to the attic to hide amongst the straw. The family eventually surrendered and was permitted to bring only what they could wear to the railway station. They layered their clothes thick and heavy—which proved to save her father's life during the beating on the cattle car. The screaming and blood terrified Erica, but didn't cause her instinct to intervene and save him. "Why are they doing that to Papa?" she asked. But her question was muffled by her mother's hard set firmly across her mouth.

Then came the frantic cries of families separated in the shuffle. "I wanted to comfort a woman who'd lost her family, but my mother held me back," she recalls. "I'll never forget the woman's constricted face."



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