

Cornelia Ileana Gatlan



This picture was taken in Braila in 1955. I was 17 years old and this photo was taken when I finished secondary school.

Before I took the admission exam at the School for Nurses, I also sat for an exam to enter drama school - because I wanted to become a movie actress. I got a passing grade, but it wasn't high enough to get me admitted. I would have liked to go in this direction, because I was always fond of art. I still like music, opera, theater - everything that means art. What I didn't like was math.

When my mother went to Bucharest to withdraw my admission file, she met an actor who was from Braila and worked in human resources in the movie sector, and the man asked her, 'Why didn't you look for me to tell me about Cornelia?' But how was my mother supposed to know that this man worked there? It was too late, I failed my entrance, so I went to the nurses' school. This was my destiny. I would have loved to become an actress. I still have an inclination for beauty and for arts. I am a sensitive being. I'm not into exact sciences and foreign languages. I'm an old-fashioned person.

So I hadn't been admitted to drama school, and I took an entrance exam for the Law School in Iasi, where I wanted to be a part-time student, in 1955 or 1956. Back then, a worker's or a peasant's child had more chances to succeed than the child of an intellectual. In order to become a part-time student, one had to hold an employment in order to prove that he or she wasn't able to attend courses on a daily basis. I wasn't employed, but I managed to provide the required certificate for a while, until it didn't work anymore. I went to Law School for two years, but had to quit. In that period, I would only go to the faculty at certain times.

Then, in 1958 or so, my father met some doctor named Calciu, who was the manager of the Medical Technicians School in Braila - back then the job was called medical technician, not nurse - which had just been founded, and the man asked my father, 'If your daughter is not in college, why not send her to the nurses school?' I was about 20, and medical science didn't really appeal to me, but I did register, and I got to like it. The medical technicians school was what we call a vocational school today - a school for nurses. It lasted four years.

I also have a head nurse certificate; I got it to improve my qualification, and I had to pass an exam for it. I graduated from the Medical Technicians School in Braila, in 1959. I took the exam to move to head nurse between 1st and 7th September 1971, in Galati.