

Biography of a Teacher Extraordinaire

FROM SIBERIA TO ST. KITTS: A Teacher's Journey

BROOKLYN, NY, UNITED STATES, January 14, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- This new book is a captivating and deeply researched biography of Zenaida Katzen, a master of foreign language instruction who embraced a comprehensive approach to teaching. Simmonds was a student of Katzen's in the 1960s on the Caribbean island of St. Kitts. After his retirement from 25 years with the New York City public school system as a teacher and administrator, he was compelled to learn all he could about the special woman who inspired him to become an educator.



When she arrived in St. Kitts in 1961 to teach French and Spanish to teenagers (mostly boys), Zenaida Katzen (Zina) had already lived an extraordinary life in Siberia, China, France and Chile. What Simmonds uncovered during his five years of painstaking research is the complex story of a dynamic, driven, independent woman who dedicated her life to education and advancing the lives of children.

“

Katzen's trajectory is cinematically adventurous, ... the twine that holds together its diverse parts, tenderly captured by Simmonds, is her calling to be a teacher.”

Kirkus review

Zina Katzen wasn't simply a French teacher or a Spanish teacher - she was an educator who believed in providing students with an experience while they were learning. In St. Kitts, she organized activities and programs outside the classroom, and was able to secure funding from a wealthy

friend in China who supported her work. A chapter of Simmonds' book includes letters between Zina and her benefactor, offering a unique perspective into how Zina carefully managed the financial, educational and extracurricular needs of her students, and revealing a more personal side of Zina - an animal lover who was devoted to her mother and aunt, both of whom lived with her in St. Kitts.

Simmonds' story is beautifully written, thorough and includes photos of Zina, her students, friends, family and the places where she lived and taught. Thoughtfully placed throughout the narrative are French phrases and words, which contribute to the cadence of the story, and lend authenticity to its message.

Simmonds spent five years on a research journey traveling to Chile, Hong Kong, Shanghai, St. Kitts and France researching the life of this teacher extraordinaire who profoundly touched the lives of an untold number of students in China, Chile and the Caribbean.

["FROM SIBERIA TO ST. KITTS: A Teacher's Journey"](#) is published in print-on-demand paperback

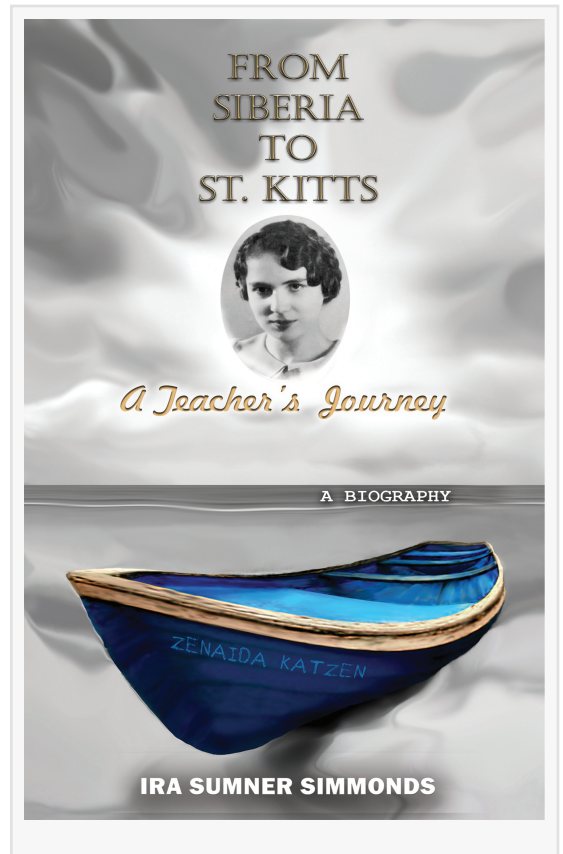
and ebook format by ISS Publishing and is now available on Amazon.com and Barnesandnoble.com.

Review copies of "FROM SIBERIA TO ST. KITTS: A Teacher's Journey" are available to media contacts upon request. [Ira Simmonds](#) is available for interviews.

About the Author

Born on the Caribbean island of Nevis, Ira Simmonds received a B.A. in French from St. Francis College, Brooklyn, New York, and M.A. and M.Ed. degrees from Teachers College, Columbia University, NYC. After a ten-year stint as House Manager at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, he spent the next twenty-five years in New York City Public Schools as a teacher, Assistant Principal and Acting Principal. He currently works as an educational consultant.

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