

Florence Jaffa Demonstrates the Art of Giving

By Phil Warshauer

Florence Jaffa has always been surrounded by charitable family members who understood the true meaning of tzedakah. She learned it from her parents, lived it with her late husband, Ben, and taught it to her children and grandchildren. She has now made plans of her own to provide for future generations of the Charlotte Jewish community.

An endowed fund has been established to perpetuate her annual gift to the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte. She will provide for other community organizations through her estate. It is her hope that her gifts will help the Charlotte Jewish community grow and the creation of The Book of Life Society will inspire others in the community to make this same commitment.

"I was raised in a family home of moderate means by parents who were committed to their synagogue and the Jewish community. Though they didn't have much money they gave of their time and shared what they had to help others. I learned at a very early age to be content with what I had and to care about others. It was part of being Jewish."

She married Ben Jaffa in 1952 and moved to Charlotte from Far Rockaway, New York. Moving to a small and isolated Jewish community was quite a cultural shock,



Florence Jaffa

but the Jaffa family was deeply committed to supporting all the organizations that were here.

The Jaffas were involved with both Jewish and secular organizations. Ben was an inspiration to many and never realized the impact he had made on people. Florence smiles when thinking of her husband, who passed away on January 31, 2002.

"Ben and I were a great team. He was my best friend but he made me independent. We really complimented each other. He gave me the means to be charitable and I know he would be proud that I am making a commitment that will help secure the future of many worthy organizations in Charlotte."

One of the defining moments of her life came in 1974 when the Jaffas traveled to Israel for the first time. "I can trace my personal giving back to that trip to Israel," reflects Jaffa. "These were the early years of the Women's Division of Federation. Educating and empowering women to make independent gifts was a new concept. The Federation was the right vehicle for me at that time and continues to do a great job of providing for our community. It started because of that trip and the Federation's commitment to Israel."

The Jewish landscape of Charlotte has changed dramatically over the past 55 years. Florence wants to continue to do her part to assist the leadership of the community to adapt to those changes and preserve those Jewish institutions and values that have enhanced her life. "It's important to see that what we have worked so hard to create continues to prosper," says Jaffa.

In addition to her commitment to the Jewish community she has been deeply involved with Central Piedmont Community College. In 1966, she took her first classes and has developed a close relationship with their art department as a student and benefactor. Her printmaking and paintings adorn her home and reflect many of the trips she shared with Ben. Her art work

has won awards and is represented in many corporate and private collections.

"Whatever I have given, either with my time or financial support I have been rewarded by knowing that I have helped in some way to share what I have with others," says Jaffa. "I have always tried to do what I thought was the right thing to do." ☆

Phil Warshauer is the Director for Planned Giving for the Foundation for the Charlotte

Jewish Community. For more information on how you can inscribe your name in *The Book of Life Society*, or any other questions, please contact Phil at 704-973-4544 or pwarshauer@ffc.org.



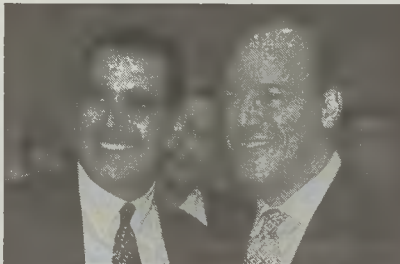
Former Press Secretary Ari Fleischer Stops in Charlotte

On October 21, former press secretary Ari Fleischer spoke to a standing-room only crowd in the Sam Lerner Center at Shalom Park. For about an hour, Fleischer related anecdotes, listed facts, expressed opinions, and answered questions to the religiously, politically and ethnically diverse audience of more than 300.

Fleischer's appearance was co-sponsored by the Republican Jewish Coalition (RJC) Charlotte Chapter and the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte. In introducing the speaker, Jeff Epstein, chair of Federation's Community Relations Council (CRC) explained: "While the Federation and CRC in no way endorse political candidates or parties, it would be wrong for us to reject opportunities to hear from anyone who has both unique experiences and perspectives on events and issues important to our country in general, and the Jewish community in particular."

Fleischer engaged the crowd right from the start with several humorous stories related to being Jewish and working in the Bush administration. When he first arrived in Texas and told people his name, he was asked: "Is that R.E.?" Well, of course, he thought, after all, I am in the land of "J.R."

Fleischer transitioned into his views on the current Middle East situation, the Iraq War, Iran, and their impact on Israel. He emphasized the Bush administration's



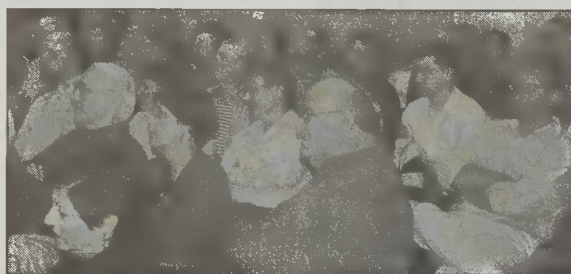
Rob Adler with guest speaker Ari Fleischer.

unwavering support of Israel. He fielded some challenging questions and answered them thoughtfully and without equivocation.

When asked about Federation's involvement in an event that might be construed as politically divisive, Sue Worrel, executive director of JFGC, stated, "The Jewish Federation thought long and hard about our participation in this program. Ultimately, we determined that our paramount responsibility was to present a speaker of this

caliber and experience to the community. However, specific steps were taken to maintain the organization's integrity and neutrality: no Federation funds were spent on the speaker; the event was free to avoid the perception of indirectly raising funds for RJC; RSVPs were not required for the event in order to maintain the community's trust that no names would be shared with RJC; and finally, in order to uphold Federation's non-partisan position, Mr. Fleischer was asked not to discuss the current Republican platform or presidential candidates."

Regardless of where participants stood in the political spectrum, Fleischer provided a forum for the community to debate and discuss issues that affect Israel, our community and our lives as Jews. ☆



Ed Newman, Barbara Ezring, and Rabbi Murray Ezring were among the more than 300 who attended the event.



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