

Hebrew Cemetery Association

By Lorrie Klemons, Publicity

I write this article on November 24, scrambling to meet the December deadline before getting busy with Thanksgiving preparations. On November 22, I thought about JFK and his assassination forty-five years earlier in 1963. This was the year of my Bat Mitzvah, and it was a sobering time for me and for all Americans. Hopes and dreams lay shattered, as limp and lifeless as Kennedy's body, on that ill-fated moment in history.

On that same Shabbat, we read the Parsha "Chaye Sarah," The Life of Sarah. Ironically, the Parsha dealt largely with Sarah's death, rather than her life. Sarah died from grief, at the moment that she believed her son Isaac was taken to the mount to be sacrificed. As a mother, I can appreciate her pain. The irony of both JFK's and Sarah's deaths has made a lasting impression on my life.

In Chaye Sarah, Abraham spends an exorbitant amount of money on a burial plot for his beloved Sarah. What makes the purchase of this land so critical to our collective Jewish history is that it was the very first purchase of a parcel of our Jewish homeland and it substantiated our claim to the land, rather than it being merely a gift from God. Purchased from the people of Heth, the field

and cave in Machpelah became the uncontested legal property of Abraham as a burial site. God promised Abraham and his descendants the land. As a non-resident, the only piece of land that Abraham could hope to acquire was a burial place for the dead. This purchase represented a token title to the Promised Land, and a symbol of possession when the people were far from the land—either in Egyptian slavery or European exile. The Holy Land represents the possibilities and potentials of the Jewish hope, Hatikvah.

In Charlotte, North Carolina, we are fortunate to have had our burial place purchased for us by our Jewish ancestors more than 140 years ago. In 1867, Charlotte was a community of 4500 residents. Among these citizens were a handful of devout Jews. Faithful to their laws and traditions, the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Charlotte purchased 11 acres of

what is now Statesville Avenue to be their Hebrew cemetery. This purchase of land provided a holy resting place for Jews from all over the state of North Carolina. Just as the Holy Land represents the possibilities and potentials of the Jewish hope, one has only to tour Charlotte's Hebrew Cemetery to see the possibilities and hopes that those who preceded us in eternal life have provided for us, for our children and all future Jewish generations.

Live your life generously. Elevate your Godly soul by becoming a member of the Hebrew Cemetery today.

If you would like to make a donation to memorialize a loved one, send your check payable to the Hebrew Cemetery to 4229 Peggy Lane, Charlotte, NC 28227. For more information about membership benefits, graves, prepaid funeral costs, endowments, and/or including the cemetery in your estate planning, contact Association President, Kevin Levine at 704-333-5155. Visit the website at www.hebrew-cemetery.org.

Directions to the cemetery: Providence Rd. north into and through uptown; right onto Graham St.; follow Graham for about two miles; left at fork onto Statesville Ave.; travel about 1/2 mile, the cemetery entrance will be on your left. ☆



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Leslie Winner, JHFNC Board Member, Stan Greenspon, Maureen O'Keefe, Henry Greene.

Photos of Raleigh Premiere Courtesy
 John Elkins Photography

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