

Community News

Generous Gift is a Tribute to Our Jewish Community Local Organizations Receive Surprise Bequest

By Phil Warshauer, Executive Director, Foundation for the Charlotte Jewish Community

It was a simple obituary of about 100 words in the Charlotte Observer, containing the usual information. He was born on May 29, 1932 in Charlotte, NC and passed away in Dunwoody, GA on April 12, 2010 at the age of seventy-seven. A former employee of Eastern Federal Corporation, the family business located in Charlotte, he then moved to Atlanta where he lived the major portion of his life.

I remember recognizing the name and my heart skipped a beat as it often does when you see a familiar name or face listed on the obituary page of a newspaper. I asked myself if I had met the deceased and tried to recall past references to his name. After several brief moments I realized that there were no personal connections to be made other than my relationships with some of his surviving relatives. It was not until several months later, when I received a call from the Levine Jewish Community Center's CEO, Philip Berman, that I realized the impact this individual would have on our community.

It is always a bit awkward when you greet someone with the same name. "Phil, it's Phil." "Hey Phil how are you?" With that out of the way Phil Berman asked me if I knew of Michael Meiselman. I responded that we had never met but I remember that he had passed

away several months earlier. "That's him," Phil informed me. "Guess what?" he continued. "We have just learned that he has left a very significant gift to the Levine Jewish Community Center through his retirement plan." "Did you know him?" I asked. "No, not at all," he responded.

We have all read about philanthropic individuals who leave substantial gifts to charitable organizations that appear on the surface to have little connection with the donor. From my experiences these gifts were left to other organizations, not ones that impacted my life or community. After having similar conversations with representatives from Temple Israel and Temple Beth El, I quickly realized that now it was our turn. They had each received similar gifts from a donor who they knew very little, if anything, about. It was evident that Mr. Meiselman had been touched by Charlotte's Jewish community and wanted to say thank you one last time.

"We were thrilled to hear about Michael's generosity and his investment in our Charlotte Jewish community," said nephew Carter Meiselman relating the feelings of his family. "It is truly inspiring that he chose to leave a legacy here in Charlotte after being away for such a long time."

Over the next several days it was interesting and exciting to hear the reaction of our community leaders about Mr. Meiselman's gift. After all, things like this do

not happen every day. But they do, they just don't happen to our temple or our Jewish Community Center — the places where we attend Shabbat services, send our children to camp and where our parents and grandparents participate in senior programming.

"We are so grateful to Michael Meiselman for remembering Temple Beth El," said Moira Quinn Klein, Temple Beth El's president. "We were not an immediate part of his Jewish circle here in Charlotte, but his inclusion of Temple Beth El in his bequest shows his love and care for our entire Jewish community. The generosity of people like Michael Meiselman reminds us that planned giving creates a legacy for our community and is an investment in the vibrancy of the future of Judaism in Charlotte."

"Even though he moved to Georgia years ago, Michael Meiselman kept a place in his heart for the Charlotte Jewish community and maintained his membership at Temple Israel," added Stuart Breidbart, Temple Israel's President. "He certainly is remembered by long-time members of our congregation. We will see to it that his generosity will be remembered for generations."

Why does an individual who spent the major portion of his adult life in Georgia leave such a significant charitable gift to Charlotte's Jewish community? The nature of his gift is a tribute to Michael Meiselman's generosity


and love of Judaism. It is also a tribute to our Jewish community and the impact it has on everyday life.


"I think Mr. Meiselman, through his gifts to the Charlotte Jewish community, showed how important connection is to a community and how wonderfully everyone in our community helps build these lasting connections," said Levine Jewish Community Center President Larry Schwartz. "The services we provide impact people every day in ways we may never know."

For additional information on how you can leave your own legacy for our Charlotte Jewish community, please contact Phil Warshauer at 704-973-4544 or pwarsbauer@charlottejewish-foundation.org. ☆




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Jewish Educational Loan Fund Loans Nearly Half a Million in Interest-Free Student Loans

The Jewish Educational Loan Fund (JELF) has awarded more than \$478,800 in interest-free loans to 123 Jewish students throughout the southeast for the 2010-2011 academic year. To students and families in Charlotte, JELF loaned over \$32,000 in partnership with Jewish Family Services of Charlotte.

While JELF currently administers just over \$3 million in outstanding loans, it has maintained its impressive 98% repayment rate. As students repay their loans, JELF uses those payments to make new loans, creating a circle of tzedakah. Applications for the 2011-2012 academic year will be available on JELF's website at www.jelf.org in February 2011.


Before JELF's interest-free loans are awarded, students must demonstrate that they have sought funding through other sources, including loans, scholarships and

grants, and have come up short in meeting their needs. Students also must maintain a minimum grade-point average to continue to receive loan proceeds.

For additional information, contact JELF Executive Director Lara Dorfman at 770-396-3080 or visit www.jelf.org.


The Jewish Educational Loan Fund, a non-profit organization based in Atlanta, grants interest-free loans to Jewish students from communities in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia for post-secondary study at accredited institutions. JELF loans are "last dollar," meaning they supply the final funds that a student needs to attend school. These loans can be used for study at a college or university, graduate school or professional/vocational school that leads to a degree or certificate. ☆

The Deadline for the October 2010 issue of the Charlotte Jewish News is SEPTEMBER 7, 2010.



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