

In Their Own Words — New Lions of Judah Tells Us What Jewish Philanthropy Means to Them

Thirty-eight philanthropic and generous women in our community will be honored at a luncheon at the Duke Mansion on Thursday, December 4, 2003. Guest speaker Victoria Agron, Senior Vice President of Financial Resource Development at United Jewish Communities, will address the group on the topics of American Jewish demography, psychographics and philanthropy. Lions of Judah annually contribute a

minimum of \$5,000 to the Jewish Federation Annual Campaign.

Recently, Sandy Cahn, President of United Jewish Communities' National Women's Philanthropy, said, "With all the terrible unrest in our world today, we Lions are among the most able to assert our strength to make substantial improvements. ... We understand that through the power of our philanthropy, we can ensure the kind of world we envision."

2004 Lion of Judah co-chairs, Nicki Ostrow and Mary Wojnowich, asked some of our



Linda Seigel, (right), was presented with her Lion of Judah pin at the 2003 Main Event Preview Party, chaired by Lion of Judah Co-chair, Nicki Ostrow (left).

Lions of Judah to share why they choose to make this financial commitment.

Linda Seigel:

"My grandparents and my parents both set a high standard for me, of giving within the Jewish community. The Jewish Federation reaches the broadest base of 'Jewish philanthropy,' both domestically and abroad. Women have finally made their mark in the business world, and it is critical we also do the same in the philanthropic world. We are a vital part of the community, and need to be counted in tikkun olam - making the world a better place. I am proud to be a Lion of Judah, to continue my family's tradition of giving and to take my place within this Community. I have recently endowed my Lion of Judah gift to leave a lasting legacy to safeguard the values that are important to my family and me forever."

Stephanie Block, Ph.D.:

"A divorced, unaffiliated mother of two college students, unemployed and seriously ill in the spring of 2000 finds Jewish renewal, faith and love at age 50. It sounds like the opening line of a novel, but it is my story.

"I was raised in Cincinnati, OH, and we were members of Rockdale Temple. My mom was on every Jewish Board, involved with Hebrew Union College and was known as the Woman of Cincinnati. My parents doing the 'right thing' sent me to private school with a Jewish student restriction. I became the target of Jew hatred/bashing and exclusion throughout my 6th-12th years. At Jewish religious school, I was hated for going to private school and excluded. By high school graduation, I hated being Jewish.



Stephanie Block (right) received her Lion of Judah pin from Bobbi Bernstein (left), past president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte, at the Main Event Preview Party in January of 2003.

"Twenty -five years of marriage to a non-Jew ended in 1999. Through a friendship with a woman who wanted to become a Jew, I slowly found my way back to my roots. As I grew through study of Torah, became a member of my Temple, made new friends, started a new career and began a new loving partnership, for the first time I wanted to contribute money to the Federation.

"Lion of Judah represents to me the willingness to survive, fight, sacrifice and refuse to be silent. My annual gift is a great sacrifice but I know the gift will reach fellow Jews in Charlotte and

around the world who also want to survive. My renewal has brought



Mattye Silverman (left) presents Donna Levin (right) her Lion of Judah pin, at the Major Gifts Dinner, December 2001.

me energy to volunteer, serve and find my voice to shout out and help those who live in fear and silence. I am proud to be a Jew."

Mattye Silverman:

"When I was 12 years old, I helped my Daddy put our family pictures in albums. Many were pictures of his father's family from Vilna. I remember thinking how handsome they were. They looked like the family pictures of relatives from New York from the same period. Shortly after, I learned about the Holocaust, and realized that this 'new' family, so recently discovered, had died in such a tragic way. This had a profound impact on me and from that period on, I wanted to make a difference in the lives of other people. One very meaningful way was becoming a Lion."

Donna Levin:

"Norman and I had always given a family gift to Federation and we took much pride in what we were able to do for our community but when our friend Don Bernstein talked with us about our 2002 pledge, I realized how much I wanted to step up and really make a strong statement about the importance and honor of helping our fellow Jews. Norman supported me because he knows how hard I have always worked to teach the true meaning of tzedakah to our children (and grandchildren!). Being a Lion of Judah gives me a wonderful feeling of pride and responsibility. Whenever

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