Pacific Southwest Region WLCJ Conference 2023 & Torah Fund Study Day

March 12, 2023 19 Adar 5783

Honoring Women of Strength and Courage

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TORAH FUND
WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM
CELEBRATING 80 YEARS

Woman of Strength and Courage

Judy Fisher, Sinai Temple

We are fortunate to have an amazing group of women who stand out as leaders in Sinai Temple's Sisterhood. However, Judy in particular has given so much of her time and knowledge to assist Cici Hallegua and myself, Shanaz Farahi as new Co-Presidents. She has helped us navigate executive and board meetings, guided us on procedures, helped us with registration at our events, continues to volunteer tirelessly to help with catering, and stays on top of finance related matters. Judy is our "Super Woman"! She is a whiz with computers and numbers, is a kind and caring person and an all-around great human being. Her heart is full and she gives so much. There are not enough words to express how much we appreciate her.

Judy was a member of Sinai Temple's Board of Directors and continues to be on the Temple's Budget Committee. She is on Sisterhood's Executive Committee and Board. Judy has been and continues to be Treasurer and Co-Vice President of Development at Sinai Temple Sisterhood. In Sisterhood, she was President from 2004-2006, and held the positions of Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Historian and Recording Secretary as well as many other positions throughout the years. Judy is also Treasurer for Women's League's Pacific Southwest Region.

Judy has an undergraduate degree from UCLA in Psychology and a master's in Bio-Statistics. For more than 40 years, she has run a successful computer business teaching and programming the impossible. She started programming in graduate school and has risen to the challenge of each new assignment since then. Her passion for computers is comparable to her passion for Judaism. We believe Judy is most deserving of this honor.

Woman of Strength and Courage

Sara Lewis, Adat Shalom

Adat Shalom Women's League is proud to honor Sara Lewis as our Woman of Courage. With her husband Harold, Sara has been an Adat Shalom member for over 50 years. She is endlessly dedicated to our Women's League. She is a Past President, current Treasurer and runs major fundraisers, including our Annual Honey Drive and scrip sales. She is never far from our kitchen, guaranteeing amazing food to enhance our events. Sara serves as mentor to many, encouraging their participation in Adat Shalom and in our Women's League.

Woman of Strength and Courage

Jackie Ben-Efraim, Shomrei Torah Synagogue

Jackie Ben-Efraim has been actively involved in Conservative Judaism her entire life. Jackie is the Hebraica Cataloger and Special Collections Librarian at American Jewish University, the home of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies. She has served on the STS Sisterhood board in many capacities, but as one of the first women in America to read from the actual Torah scroll, Torah Fund and supporting female rabbinic students is near and dear to her heart. When Jackie is not busy with Sisterhood activities, she spends time with her husband, 3 children, 4 grandchildren, granddog and grandcat.

Woman of Strength and Courage

Elissa Lazarus, Temple Etz Chaim

We honor Elissa for her long standing volunteerism and her courageous spirit to stay involved with our Synagogue Board and our Sisterhood Board despite the sudden loss of her dear husband, Steven Lazarus, from covid in early 2020. Elissa also powered through a long healing process after a car accident in 2022.

Elissa is a former WOTEC President, Membership Chair, Parliamentarian and Woman of Valor as well as synagogue board member for many years. In addition to mentoring new sisterhood board members, Elissa is a devoted mother and grandmother and enjoys being an active member and leader of the Jewish community at her residential community, University Village.

Woman of Strength and Courage

Julie Steinschriber, Temple Ramat Zion

Julie Steinschriber has been very involved in Temple Ramat Zion Sisterhood since 1988. She's held many positions including President on the Board and Executive Committee. In 1995, she became Torah Fund Vice-President. She thought she had to write the yearly play, so she did. When she told those who'd written it before, they said "Who are you, and what do you mean you're writing the play?!" Since then, she's written or co-written, acted in and produced the yearly Torah Fund Play and many other programs.

Since 2012, as Religious Vice-President, she has written creative programs and organized the up to 40 female participants, ages 4 to 99, for yearly Friday and Saturday Sisterhood Shabbat Services. Julie has co-written skits and parodied songs for Women's League PSW Conferences. She wrote the parody song currently being used by WLCJ International as the commercial for the 80th Anniversary of Torah Fund.

Woman of Strength and Courage

Kim Memar, Temple Beth Sholom, LV

Women's League of Temple Beth Sholom, Las Vegas is proud to honor Kim Memar to represent us at the PSW Conference / Torah Fund Study Day. Kim is devoted to Women's League and demonstrates daily what it means to be a woman with STRENGTH and COURAGE. She has served our Sisterhood in almost every aspect, from President, Torah Fund VP, and Treasurer to the master of getting and collecting auction items for both WL and TBS. Kim also received our special Sara Saltzman and Mickey Wilner awards, as well as "Women of the Year". Kim's talents also extend to PSW where she served as Treasurer and now serves on the Conference Committee.

Kim is an amazing friend, a devoted wife, and loving mother and grandmother. Her life has been full of so many challenges and yet she carries her head high and is a wonderful role model. She deserves every honor, Mazel Tov Kim!

Woman of Strength and Courage

Susie Katz, Adat Ari El

Susie is a longtime Sisterhood board member and the most dependable. I was taking Mah Jongg lessons from her a mere few hours before her husband fell ill. He sadly passed away within days, and after sitting Shiva, Susie continued to teach her Maj classes. She did not want to let her students down. She never asked for payment; she only asked that her students make a donation to Sisterhood. She has always been a strong leader in the many roles she has held at Adat Ari El and within the community. She was a public-school teacher, math tutor, and a Maj instructor. She has been in charge of Tribute Cards since 1994. Even as our community took a hit during the pandemic, her tribute cards provided a constant source of revenue for our Sisterhood. She was Co-VP of Membership, Co-VP of Torah Fund and is currently the Co-VP of MID. Whenever Susie is in charge, people know tasks will be accomplished and money will be raised. She has a no-nonsense leadership style that makes others want to follow her.

Susie was born in Zagreb, Yugoslavia in 1938 to Austrian parents. Her family was forced to leave Austria when she was just a year old, in order to escape Nazi persecution. She graduated from UC Berkeley and taught math in Northern California. She married Gunther Katz in 1963 and moved to Southern CA, where she taught math in West Los Angeles for 3.5 years. She tutored math for 40 years and has been teaching Mah Jongg for 12.5 years. She began doing Tributes in 1994. She was Membership Co-V.P. in the 90s for two years and Torah Fund Co-VP from 2010 - 2018. Susie has been M.I.D. Co-VP since 2017 (6th year). Before Covid, she served Kiddush lunch every Shabbat. Her husband passed away in 2011. She is a mother of two sons, and the proud grandmother of a freshman at Syracuse University majoring in Civil Engineering.

Woman of Strength and Courage

Sharlene Schwed, Temple Beth Emet

Sharlene was born in Philadelphia but grew up in Boston. She made her way out to Anaheim and joined Temple Beth Emet and Sisterhood in 1983. She has held many different positions over the years including Torah Fund VP, treasurer (which is her current position) and even president a couple of times.

Sharlene celebrated her Bat Mitzvah in 1986 and started leading portions of the service. She taught Hebrew School from 1985 -1999 and then confirmation from 2013-2016. All this teaching was done as she was working on her California State credential.

Sharlene is a devoted member of the congregation leading the preliminary service on Shabbat morning on a rotating basis and serving as Gabbai most of the time. Her knowledge of Judaism has lead her husband Howie to often refer to her as “Rabbi Chuck.”

I’m sure if she were growing up today she might have made the decision to become a rabbi knowing that Torah Fund was there to help defray the cost. Sharlene has been a benefactor since the nineties.

She has 2 children and twin granddaughters that are the apple of her eye. She was kvelling watching them start Sunday School this year and then singing the Hanukah blessings to her on Facetime. Sharlene is a devoted friend and I would call her a mensch!! Ember of the synagogue.

Woman of Strength and Courage

Deborah Goldberger, Valley Beth Shalom

Deborah has combined her love of Judaism, Israel, and the Jewish community with a top-notch business background. While being an active member of the Valley Beth Shalom community for over 30 years, she has held business positions with leading entertainment and technology corporations, produced a high profile Public Service Announcement, covered the Middle East for National Security Agency with fluency in Arabic, French, and Hebrew, and formed her aquatic therapy and fitness company. Prior to being President of VBS's Sisterhood, she was president of a Hadassah region and founder of groups in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., and a board member of many Jewish and community organizations.

With her husband, Gary, Deborah is the proud mother of twin female young adults. She learned early on the value of philanthropy and volunteering and saw first-hand the dedication, commitment, and personal growth of women in Women's League. Deborah feels it is a privilege to work and advocate with an organization of women leaders who sustain Judaism in Israel and abroad. She hopes to continue playing tennis, spending time with her family, learning and reading, staying active in the Jewish community, and bringing to her business clients health, healing, and happiness. Like Isaiah, 60:3, Deborah hopes to continue to lead, shine a light, and set an example for her daughters and others, "And the nations shall walk at thy light, and kings at the brightness of thy rising."

Woman of Strength and Courage

Karen Bohrer, Congregation Beth El, La Jolla

Karen is proud to have served as the President (7 years) and VP of Programming (10 years) for Women's Connection of Congregation Beth El, La Jolla, working with an extraordinary community of dynamic women representing diverse experiences and Jewish communities around the world. She is grateful for her wonderful and dedicated "sisters," Rabbis, and Staff at Beth El who have been central to building relationships and celebrating friendship and spiritual connections. She is also grateful for her family for their love and support.

Woman of Strength and Courage

Barbara Tricoci, Temple Beth Shalom of the East Valley

Barbara has been a long time member of Temple Beth Shalom of the East Valley and its Sisterhood. She has been active over all the years of her membership in this Sisterhood chapter in Chandler, Arizona. Barbara has been president of the group 4 times and co-president once. She is currently the treasurer, helping the chapter find better banking options. She also guided the Sisterhood into more efficient methods for collecting dues. Along with her duties as treasurer, Barbara has been active in many other areas of Sisterhood. The Board has jokingly given her the honorary title of President Emeritus. Barbara was active with our By-laws revision committee and has been active with the Programming Committee. She also encourages both new members and returning members to get actively involved with Sisterhood. Barbara is without a doubt an invaluable member of the Sisterhood of TBSEV.

Woman of Strength and Courage

Denise Youngwood, Congregation Beth Shalom

Denise Youngwood has been a great friend to all and is one of the assets to our synagogue community at Congregation Beth Shalom in Santa Clarita. She moved to California from Brooklyn in the late 1980's, has served on both the CBS Synagogue Board and the Sisterhood Board in several capacities, and will always volunteer to help whenever asked. Currently, Denise is both the CBS Board's Recording Secretary and the Sisterhood Board's Communications Chair. One of Denise's favorite activities is participating in the annual Purim Shpiel. Our very successful fundraising program "Dining For Dollars", was started by Denise and her beloved late husband Alan more than 10 years ago and is still going strong. We know we can always count on Denise and we enjoy her company as well!

Woman of Strength and Courage

Rita Schlosser, Congregation Or Tzion

Rita and her husband Steve moved to Scottsdale in 2013 to be nearer to some of their children and grandchildren. Rita was a leader in her Women's League in a synagogue in Saratoga, CA. She has a daughter and 2 married stepsons & daughters-in-law, each with 2 children. She is a former toy developer, technical illustrator, and still works as a fibre artist.

In our synagogue she has designed and sewn all 7 Torah covers, two table covers and the temporary cover used on the Torah between readings. It was her expertise that allowed us to hold Women's League craft afternoons helping our members design their own hats! She has successfully led our synagogue's Social Action group for the last 3-4 years. Social Action is a passion of hers. She also loves to cook, bake, and entertain in their home, especially during the Jewish holidays. Six of her recipes are in our Congregation Or Tzion cookbook! Her family is, of course, another passion.