



HILLEL

The Star



WASHINGTON AND LEE HILLEL NEWSLETTER

Elrod University Commons, Lexington, VA 24450-2116

hillel.wlu.edu robinsj@wlu.edu

(540) 458-8443 Fax: (540) 458-8155

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Update on the W&L Center for Jewish Life



As I write this, we are one fourth of the way to our four million dollar goal to build and endow the Center for Jewish Life. Response has been positive and enthusiastic, from alumni, parents, the W&L Board of Trustees, and the local Jewish community.

Fifty individuals and couples have already supported the project with gifts. They, better than anyone, can say why they made the gift, and why the Center for Jewish Life is important. I thought you might be interested in hearing from some of these early supporters. We appreciate all the interest shown, and we look forward to sharing more stories like these in the future.

I have already enjoyed many delightful conversations with alumni. I look forward to meeting many more of you, as support for the Center continues. For more information, please call my office 540-458-8443, or e-mail robinsj@wlu.edu.

Sincerely,

Jean Robins
Director, W&L Hillel

An Essential Step

By Mark Eaker '69

I wrote the largest check I have ever written for a philanthropic gift to support the Center for Jewish Life. In part I was acting as a Trustee because I believe that the CJL is an essential step in attracting Jewish students and faculty to Washington and Lee. They in turn are important in the intellectual and cultural life of the institution. W&L cannot achieve its goals to become a leader in liberal arts education unless it attracts the broadest possible range of students and scholars.

The more important motivation for me was as a Jewish alumnus. The tradition of Jews at W&L is a significant one. I take great pride in the contributions of Jewish students and in particular of the ZBT's. I am saddened by the closing of the house but more so by the decline in Jewish enrollment and the perception that W&L was not a good place for Jews to attend. My four years at W&L were the foundation for the success I have had the last 40 years. The school and my classmates, Jewish and non-Jewish, were supportive of me as a young man and the friendships I made there have been among the most lasting and important of my life. I have always felt at home in Lexington because of my four years at W&L. Making the CJL a reality will establish a physical center at W&L that will replace the ZBT and Phi Epsilon Pi houses and will also be an important gift to the growing Jewish community of Lexington.

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Mark is a professor of Business Education. He taught at the Darden Graduate School of Business at the University of Virginia, Stanford, Duke, SMU, and the University of North Carolina. He is currently a partner in the Sire Group of Partnerships. He was elected to the W&L Board of Trustees in May, 2006. Mark currently lives in Northern Virginia, but hopes to relocate to his home state of Texas.
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Campus Life

By Alan Corwin '62

When I was on campus in the late fifties and early sixties, Jewish fraternities were very much a part of just about every aspect of campus life. The need for Jewish fraternities faded in the late sixties and seventies when other houses began rushing Jewish students. Without the Jewish fraternities there was no longer an uniquely Jewish presence on campus. The feeder system for Jewish applicants atrophied which was a net loss to the University.

For years Washington Hall thought the answer was to make religious services available to Jewish students. But Jews understand that being Jewish is about a lot more than going to shul or temple. Things began to turn around when brothers Doug ('92) and Larry ('94) Brown with others helped found Hillel. (Their father, Dr. Ed Brown ('62) had been my roommate in the Phi Ep house.) My daughter was one of the early Hillel members.

Life for Jewish students on campus improved dramatically when Joan Robins became executive director. Joan organized social events in addition to religious observances like building

a sukkah, a Chanukah party, ski trips, a community seder, Tikkun Olam projects in Rockbridge County and Very Interesting Professors luncheons. The decline in Jewish enrollment reversed, but still needs to double again to reach the level enjoyed in the post war years.

The Center for Jewish Life is the next step which will provide added incentive for Jewish students to enroll at Washington and Lee. Jewish students need a home of their own to function as a Beit Midrash (a house of study), a Beit T'filah (a place for worship services) and a Beit Knesset (a place for meetings and social activities). The Center for Jewish Life will provide facilities not available in the Elrod Commons.

My generation is fading away, *tempus fugit*. It's time for us to think of the generations which will follow us, just as the generations which preceded us provided for us. Little can be gained by trying to go backwards and reestablish Jewish fraternities at Washington and Lee. The best way, in my opinion, to move forward and ensure a vibrant Jewish presence at Washington and Lee is to support the Center for Jewish Life campaign at W&L. The Center will be our legacy.

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Alan is a retired financial advisor from Washington State. He served on the W&L Alumni Board and the Hillel Advisory Board.

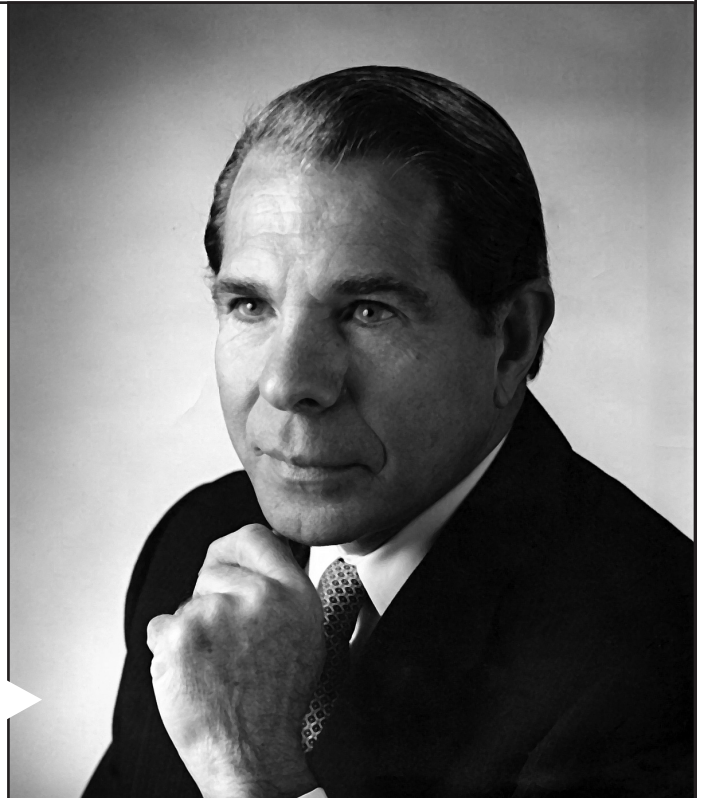
A Wonderful Resource

By Sol Wachtler '51

When I went to Washington and Lee, there were very few Jewish students. It was an all male campus at that time, and the Jewish students were divided between two fraternities: Phi Epsilon Pi and Zeta Beta Tau. While at school, our only contact with Jewish community life was through the Grossman family in Lexington and from Lynchburg: the Fineman, Oppleman, and, predominantly, the Schewel family, all of whom were beyond generous and hospitable to us. Knowing how important these contacts were to the Jewish students, I was pleased when a Hillel Chapter was brought to the campus, and thrilled when I learned that a Center for Jewish Life would be constructed on the very site where the Phi Epsilon Pi House once existed.

I believe the Center will provide a wonderful resource for the Jewish students and add a dimension to the Washington and Lee culture. I feel privileged to be a part of the Center and congratulate Joan Robins and the others responsible for creating this wonderful and creative enterprise.

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Sol served as a Justice of the New York Supreme Court (1968-1972) and Judge of New York's highest court, The New York Court Of Appeals (1973-1992). In 1985 he was appointed Chief Judge of that court and Chief Judge of the State of New York. He was Chairman of the National State/Federal Judicial Council. He currently teaches law in the New York area.



Commitment from the Board of Trustees

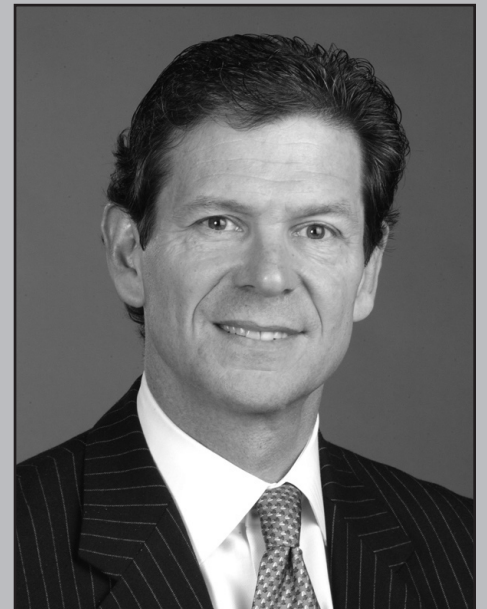
By Phil Norwood '69

As evidence of the Board's and my own personal commitment to the Center for Jewish Life, I was pleased to make an early gift to the project.

Washington and Lee simply cannot achieve the standard of excellence we aspire to without broadening our base of Jewish students. Despite diligent efforts by the Admissions staff for a number of years, we remain under-represented with this critical constituency, even in comparison to the Jewish student population during the era when I was a student—when no particular recruiting effort was directed at this group. While there is no one answer to this dilemma, our research is clear that

a prominently located Center for Jewish Life can make a big difference. This project demonstrates to prospective Jewish students and the entire Washington and Lee community that we are committed to Jewish life on campus, and that we see Jewish presence as enriching to the broader campus life.

A secondary but important benefit of the Center is its potential to help W&L reconnect with and engage our numerous Jewish alumni. They can play an invaluable role in our efforts to increase the numbers of Jewish students on campus, and improve the quality of the Jewish community both on campus and in the local area.



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Phil is Rector of the W&L Board of Trustees. He is President and CEO of Faison Enterprises, Inc., a real estate and investment company, headquartered in Charlotte, NC.

Freedom and Democracy

By *Eva Horn*

Parents of Audrey Horn '08

Two Souls

By *Mark Horn*

I never knew my maternal grandparents – they were transported to Auschwitz in 1944. My Grandmother was sent to the gas chamber immediately; my Grandfather was marched to Buchenwald and was killed there. My mother survived a Death March through Hungary and Austria to be liberated by the US Army in 1945. I was born and raised in Prague, Czechoslovakia, where just the word “Jew” was a dirty word. My family escaped from Czechoslovakia in 1966 and, eventually, reached the United States. I went to college and medical school in the US, met my husband here; we have two great children. I have had a wonderful life in this country, in freedom and democracy.

Our daughter Audrey is a student at Washington and Lee University, enjoying every minute of her experience here. When she showed us the information about the planned Center for Jewish Life and the naming opportunity for the Eternal Light, I was speechless. I never dreamed that there could be an Eternal Light burning in memory of the grandparents I never knew, at a University that gave my daughter a great education, in the country that gave me and my family a chance for a new life in freedom and Democracy.

Our contribution will help to build a Center attracting more Jewish students to this University, enrich their college experience and, most important, help all students learn about Jews, demystify our religion and culture and reduce the ignorance which breeds anti-Semitism. This is a legacy worthy of my grandparents.

From the moment I met my future wife, it was evident that the Holocaust had played an enormous role in her life. She knew her maternal grandparents, both murdered by the Nazis, only from diaries, stories and photographs. Her mother, a woman of enormous strength and warmth, is a physician and survivor whose wartime experiences were clearly life defining. With this personal history, we knew immediately that we would participate in the Center for Jewish Life at Washington and Lee.

The opportunity to name the “Eternal Light” in memory of her grandparents was, for Eva and therefore for me, the perfect way to memorialize them. The thought that these two souls will forever be remembered at an educational institution dating from the beginning of her adopted country is priceless for us.

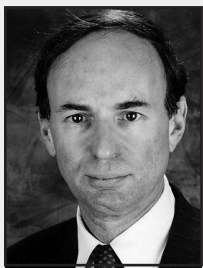
We envision a busy student pausing briefly to read the memorial, perhaps thinking for a few precious moments about these two people who suffered so much for their Judaism. That, for us, will be sufficient.

Dr. Eva Horn is a radiologist, working in New Jersey.

Dr. Mark Horn is a physician, working with Pfizer Pharmaceuticals in New Jersey.



Community Connections *By Jim Sagner '62*



My name is James Sagner (“Jim”), class of 1962A and ZBT. I was intrigued by the prospect of a Center for Jewish Studies from the first moment I heard of the concept in the late Spring of 2007. When I was invited to attend a briefing in New York City, I was anxious to attend and provide meaningful support.

Of course, there was no Hillel in the late 1950s – early 1960s or other arrangement except for the two Jewish fraternities, ZBT and Phi Epsilon. We arranged make-shift visits to Roanoke and Staunton for High Holiday services, and the synagogues

welcomed us but did not offer anything beyond attendance (such as a meal). W&L did nothing and had no one like Joan to speak for us with the administration. There simply was no interest in our situation, and in fact, there was a fairly strict quota for Jewish enrollment.

The Jewish students in that era performed remarkably well academically and in the various student organizations, and their record of graduate school admission was very impressive. In my junior and senior years we had consecutive ZBT valedictorians; this included my pledge brother Joe Goldstein who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1985. Jewish students of that generation became physicians, dentists,

bankers, businessmen and important figures in any number of careers.

Despite the collegiality of ZBT and Phi Ep, what was missing from four years of our lives was Jewish culture and ritual. And today, the two fraternities don't even exist to provide that support. Positive or negative impressions that may have occurred during our college years are best reinforced or overcome by a commitment to this important goal. Please join me and fifty others to make a permanent institution for Jewish students, faculty and staff, and for the entire Lexington and Rockbridge County community.

Jim is a senior managing partner at Sagner/Marks, Inc, and also teaches on the college level. He lives in the New York area.

Old Friends, Bookends

By John Zamoiski '74



John Zamoiski and Eric White at the ZBT house arm in arm during the 1970's.

It was my first day at W&L. It was early September, 1970. I was unloading my boxes and bags behind the Freshman Quad and another freshman came up and offered to give me a hand with my things. Although I was trying to project an air of confidence and independence, I was also understandably as nervous as every other freshman. When Eric White introduced himself as a classmate from Norfolk and proceeded to help me unpack, the initial uneasiness and fear of being on my own melted away. Before long, we got to talking about the usual things that help you establish common ground, and of all coincidences, we found that both of our fathers had been at W&L and had actually been fraternity brothers.

Naturally this revelation and need for connection led to phone calls home that night where the identical reactions were, "Joe's son?" and "Sam's son?". We found out that our fathers were close friends who had become separated by World War II, distance

and a less sophisticated communications system than we have today. It seemed fated that over the next four years Eric and I would become fraternity brothers and lifelong friends. And, over the years, the bonus has been that across the miles that separate us, our bond has become even stronger, extending to equally close relationships between our wives and our children. Today there is a photograph on my desk of my father and Eric's father arm and arm at the Phi Ep house in the 1940's. It makes me smile. There's also a picture of me and Eric at the ZBT house arm in arm during the 1970's and that too makes me smile. Finally, we have an album of photos now that showcase how our two families have celebrated together for more than 65 years.

Our story is not unique. W&L friendships have always crossed continents and generations. But, for W&L to remain strong and relevant as in the past, stories like ours must remain the rule for Jewish students.

That cannot happen without attracting and nurturing a student body that is defined by diversity. And for that to happen, Jewish students must have a place that they can feel proud of and that can serve their needs. The Phi Ep house of our fathers and the ZBT house that was home to me and Eric are now gone, but certainly not forgotten. The Center for Jewish Life at W&L will provide that platform and that base that the school is so desperately in need of to ensure that Jewish students feel at home. It can be a place of celebration, education and outreach that will serve as an example to students who have not been exposed to Jewish tradition and values. It can nurture an atmosphere of understanding and mutual respect. That is why Eric and I have made such a strong commitment to ensuring that the Hillel Center for Jewish Life at W&L becomes a reality as soon as possible.

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John is CEO of NMA Entertainment & Marketing, a consulting firm. He lives in the New York area.

John and Eric, 2007, still friends.



SPECIAL EDITION - CENTER FOR JEWISH LIFE UPDATE



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Artist rendering of the new W&L Center for Jewish Life.