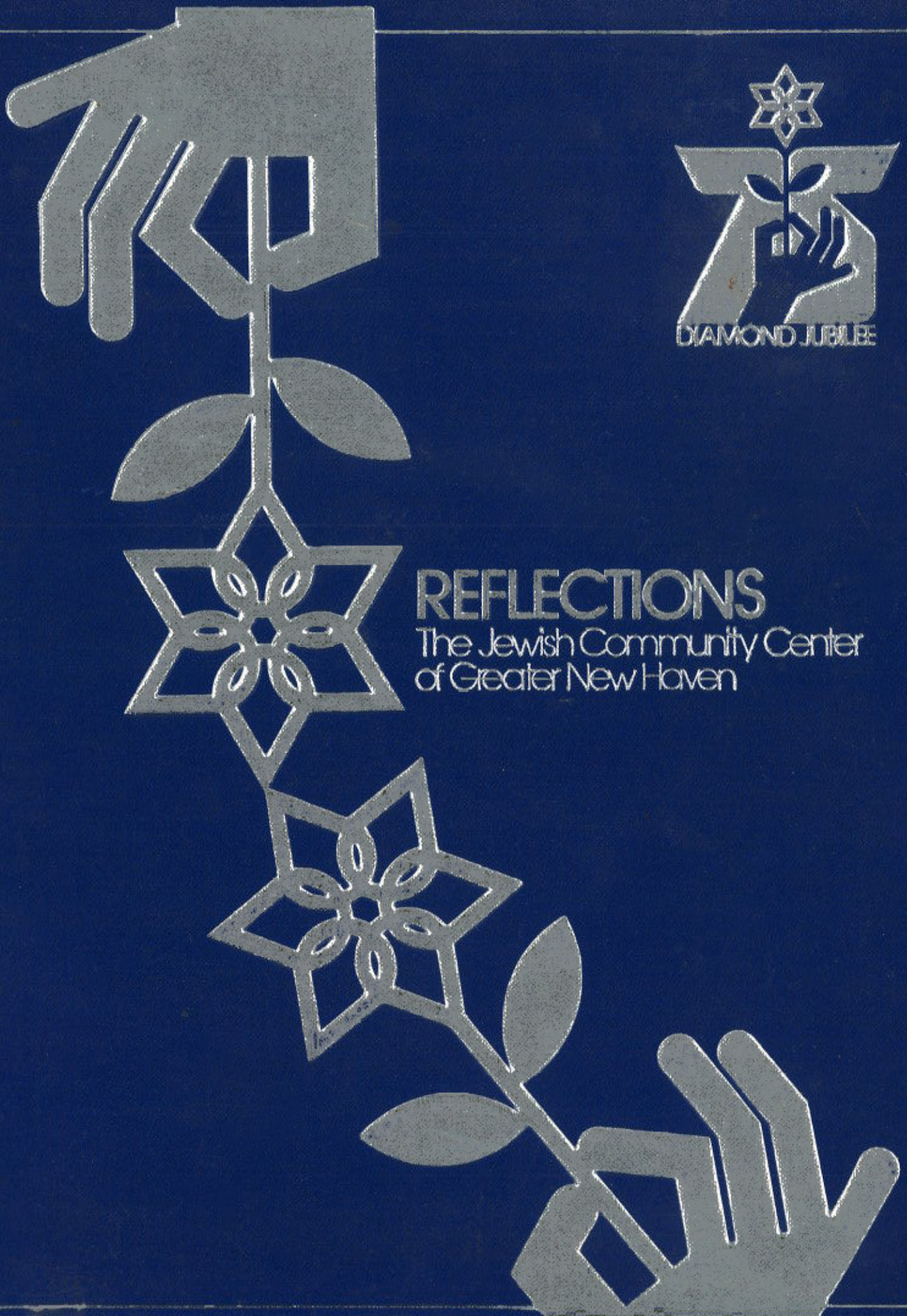


REFLECTIONS

The Jewish Community Center
of Greater New Haven

COMMUNITY NEWS

NEW HAVEN JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER

DEC. 30, 1955 — 15 TEVETH, 5716

ENGLAND CHAMBER PLAYERS TO PERFORM JANUARY 8



NEW SERIES OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS FORUMS



With the increasing tensions between Israel and the Arab States and the questionable role played by Russia, the Public Affairs Forum series starts the 1956 season with its first forum Jan. [illegible] at 8:15 p.m. on the topic: Russia, Israel and the Arabs.

Other topics to be discussed are Feb 6, Civil Liberties — How Valuable?, March 12, Should Everyone Be Psychoanalyzed?, April 23, Do You Hate Yourself?, Jewish Anti-Semitism.

Tickets to the forums are [illegible] Center members.

Page Two

THE COMMUNITY NEWS
Published weekly from Rosh Hashanah to June 1st by the New Haven Jewish Community Center, 1156 Chapel Street, New Haven, Conn. Subscription rate, 75¢ a year. Single copy, 2 cents. Entered as Second-class matter, February 20th, 1963, at the New Haven, Connecticut, Post Office, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Vol. XLVIII — No. 26

cial Beginners Swim — New Classes
s Age Group
[illegible] is now being a[illegible]
[illegible] Beginn[illegible]
[illegible] th

SPO[illegible]

Junio
and

MAY 1, 1964

Fun In The Sun At Center Day Camp -- Regis

ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE
SH CENTER
12th at 8 P.M.
Members
those elected to Kovod

The ca[illegible]
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days a week be
Cottage in
make trip

1156 Chapel Street
Day Camp

dress
ge — Phone
1964 — Grade as of
Parent's Signature
Deposit $25.00 per child

DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB
Every Monday and Thursday at 8 P.M.
Fractional and Complete
Master Points — Prizes

WARD.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND





JCC NU'S-nVIEWS

1156 Chapel Street, New Haven, CT — 203-865-5181

Jewish Community Center of Greater New Haven

A TIME TO BUILD

March, 1986

THE BUILDING IS SOLD!!



PICTURED ABOVE IN THIS YEAR'S JUNIOR TEAM
Front row left to right: Mark Grove, Jeff Brown and Stu Rosenholtz. Back row: Leonard Margolis, Center Athletic Director, Rich Kramer, Mark Kasowitz, Wayne, Markman, Steve Kasowitz and Coach Robert Pite. Camera shy: John Edelglass, Charles Sussman, Bob Miller and Ken Rosen.



BOYS SWIM TEAM
[illegible]t row, left to right: Rick Kerwin, Jim Stein, Jim Barnett, Jeff Bilgore, Rick Sil-
[illegible]n, Steve Goldbloom, Frank Barnett, Ira Zilf.
[illegible]d row: Bob Atetsky, Steve O'Connor, Bob Silverstein, Jim Flanagan
Mike Moss, Paul David (Coach), Doug Brodoff.
Andy, Randy, Shawn McSherry.

TEAM
Goldbloom, Eve Miller, Nancy Silver-
Sher, Marcy Zilf, Margi Sher, Debbie
Miller, Cheryl Feldman, Vicky Trachten, Caren
n, Jenaie Thrash.
Kushner, Robin McSherry.

— Don't Miss! —
FIORELLO
Presented by the
THEATRE GUILD
[illegible]
York State. Re-
[illegible]ew F

Center Celebrates

dren's Story Hour
eekly story hour takes place
Center Library at 4-5 P.M on
ys. Some of the brand new
et to be displayed will be
the younger children, and
ll also be an opportunity
older children to browse
hose new books. All Cente-
are welcome.

'67 —
ENTER TEENS
4 day trip to Montre-
da Monday-Thursday,
18, 19, 20
ll Center teens ages
ears. Both boys and
only 30 will be ac-

conditioned coach
g New Haven 6:00
17, returning 9:00
sday, July 20.
— Trip will take
PO '67 via sight-
ts of interest in-
rt Ticonderoga,

ELECTED TO KOVOD

At a recent meeting of the [illegible] Society Beh[illegible]

[illegible]ich Hootenanny
[illegible]e holiday by singing
[illegible]ats of the Jewish people
[illegible]ll as freedom songs from many
[illegible]nations. In addition to group sing-
[illegible]ing, several popular professional folk
artists will perform.
All teen-agers are invited to the Pesach Freedom Hoot on April 27; admission is free.

PASSOVER SCHEDULE

Building Closed Monday, April 24 at 5:00 P.M.
Building Open Wednesday, April 26 at 7:00 P.M.
Building Cl[illegible]

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INTRODU[illegible]



Chapel Street

1952 - 1986

Digitized by Project Zikaron
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2024



Dear Friends,

Shalom!

In 1987, the Jewish Community Center of Greater New Haven will proudly celebrate its Diamond Jubilee -- marking 75 years of service to our friends and neighbors in the Greater New Haven community.

This commemorative album was originally conceived as a special keepsake of the June 21, 1986 "Sold On The Center" party as a tribute to the Chapel Street facility and the Chapel Street years... but as we entered our Diamond Jubilee, it was evident that an expanded tribute recognizing the full 75-year history of the JCC was even more fitting. Like our parents and grandparents before us, we strive to present to our children a sense of history, a feeling for "the way we were," so that they can remember their roots.

Though no book could ever truly capture the spirit of the Jewish Community Center, these pages briefly reflect a glimpse of the rich life the Center has experienced. Treasured photographs from our archives recall many of the special moments and special people of our agency. From the days on Dwight Street, where our roots lie... to the Chapel Street era which touched the lives of thousands... to our present transition period which anticipates a new building and a new era... the Jewish Community Center has earned a valued place in the heart of Greater New Haven.

Our facilities may change through the years, in direct response to the times -- but our commitment to the future remains unbroken. We thank you for your continuing support, and hope you enjoy the memories presented within these pages. L'Chaim!

James M. Shure

James M. Shure
President,
Jewish Community Center of Greater New Haven







THE CHAPEL STREET YEARS of the Jewish Community Center actually began on June 3, 1947 when the Center's Board of Directors authorized a separate corporation, called the Building Fund Trust, to administer a fund that was created through community fundraising "to be used to build a new Jewish Community Center."

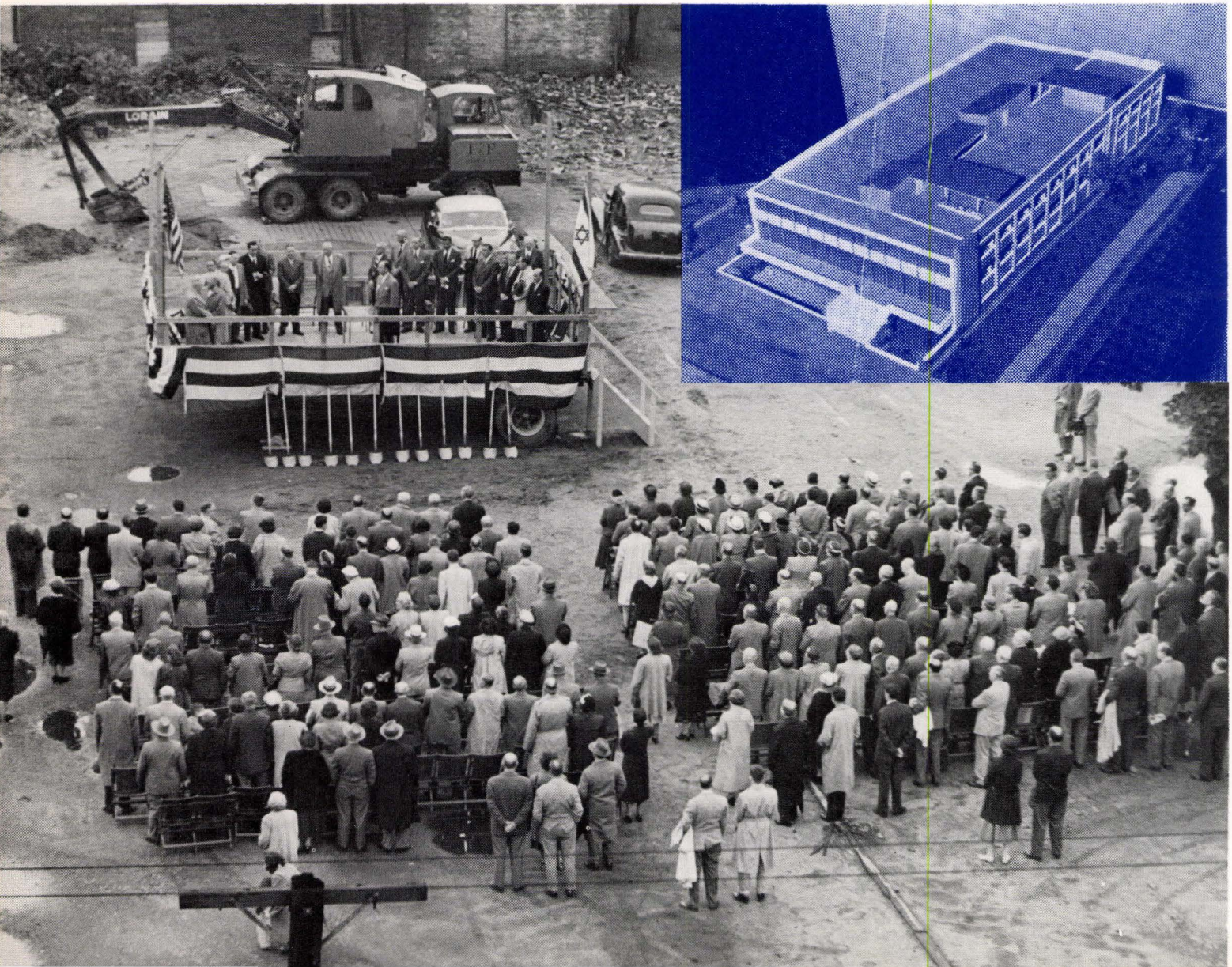
The campaign goal of $750,000 would be raised through individual and business gifts, community-based fundraising efforts, bake sales, car washes, traditional "pushkes" in the kitchen, and the "Andy Kopkind Carnival" for children, which netted $140 in nickels, dimes, and pennies towards the campaign goal.

It was a complete community effort -- and the Center to be built would serve as the home for the full Jewish community for nearly 35 years.

THE GROUND BREAKING,
at the former site of
DeCaprio's Motor Sales
("Used Cars Bought and Sold"),
was held on an overcast, rainy
day in June, 1952.

Construction of the new facility
was completed in 1954; the
official dedication was held on
April 11th.









1156 CHAPEL STREET -- the site of the new Jewish Community Center of Greater New Haven -- served as the cornerstone of an upper Chapel Street revitalization.

Then, as now, a strong membership was key to the success of the JCC. Membership in the new facility soared as it became the social, cultural, recreational and educational hub of the Jewish community -- and an important focus for the entire New Haven population.

Today, there are thousands of people whose lives were touched by hours spent at the JCC -- in the teen lounge, in the woodworking shop in the basement, in summer day camp on the roof, and in Hebrew High School classes held on the second floor. (Later the second floor was renovated to include offices for the Anti-Defamation League, Laurelwood Summer Camp, the New Haven Jewish Federation, and the Jewish Book Shop.)

The Chapel Street Years

Presidents

Maurice E. Proctor
1953-55
Samuel I. Hershman*
1955-59
Louis Feinmark*
1959-62
Robert V. Adelman
1962-65
Elihu R. Jacobson*
1965-68
Joel Cohn*
1968-71
Robert R. Eisner*
1971-74
Marvin C. Gold*
1974-77
Arnold Alderman
1977-79
Herbert Setlow
1979-81
David A. Beckerman
1981-83
Mark G. Sklarz
1983-85
James M. Shure
1985-

Executive Directors

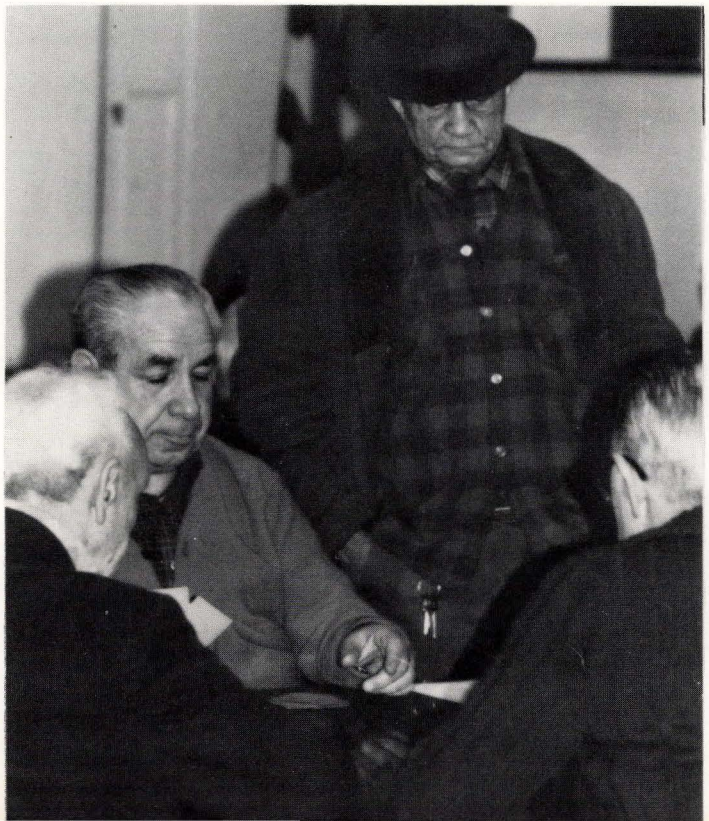
Louis Shanok*
Stanley Sprechman*
Leonard Margolis
Israel Amitai
Herman Shukovsky
Howard Schultz

* deceased









THE CENTER WAS THE PLACE TO MEET -- it was home to the seniors who gathered each day to share lunch, a class, exercise, a visit with friends or a game of pinochle in the Lounge..

The community gathered for art exhibits and lectures, dances, weddings, commemorative celebrations and Theater Guild productions; for Purim parades, concerts, sewing, painting, golf lessons, bowling, racquetball, or a sauna and steam in the Health Club.

People met in basketball leagues, at teen sock hops, vacation camp programs, gymnastics, swim teams, and summer day camp programs.

The Center was the community's home -- and its doors were always open to serve everyone.







CENTER PROGRAMS
such as the annual Center Ball, Theatre Guild productions, after-school basketball leagues, and the popular teen sock hops of the '50s and '60s, were part of the lives of our community.

The JCC was the place to go for lectures and seminars, art exhibits, concerts, dance performances, children's theater, workshops in sewing, cooking, painting, sculpture... and more.

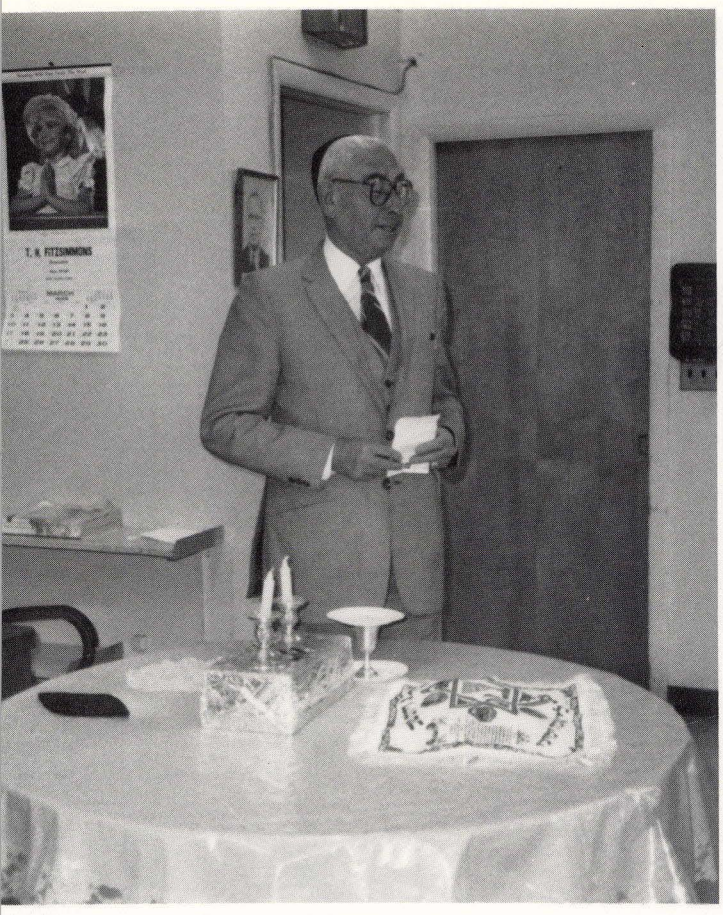
EXPERIENCES AT THE JCC helped form the personalities of each child who passed through its doors, and enriched the lives of the adults who worked with the children, attended Center functions, and worked on committees to help plan programs for the future.

















Any age, interest, nationality, creed, or color -- from preschool to post-retirement -- was welcome at the Chapel Street JCC.

Parties... pet shows... holiday cookie-making sessions... the older generation helped the younger, and the children kept the adults young at heart.



'The group to which an individual belongs









is the ground on which he stands. . .'

-- Lewin. ***Menorah Journal,*** 1940, LRS, `74.

SUMMER DAY CAMP PROGRAMS were continued at the Chapel Street JCC, and over the years, were held in many locations: on the Chapel Street roof, at Camp Oranim in Northford, Cedarcrest Grounds in Orange, Hubinger in East Haven, East Haven's Kelsey Island, Hopkins/Day Prospect School, and at the JCC West Rock Fitness Center. The commitment to providing a quality learning experience for each child in order to foster each individual's independent growth and self confidence is the focus of the JCC camping philosophy -- but as all campers would agree, fun is usually the outcome!















Every JCC camp program approaches each child or teen as an individual with unique strengths and needs, Our goal is to help your child establish healthy relationships through small group structures that stress learning to care and share with one another. This process is aided by an experienced sensitive and mature camp staff.

Our camping programs are designed to enhance personal growth and skill devel- opment to make each child feel good about him or herself. There is an emphasis on involvement, learning and doing.

All camp and agency programs reflect our Jewish heritage and the values inherent in our American democratic experience.

-- Excerpt, ***JCC Day Camp Brochure***

FITNESS FACILITIES at the Chapel Street JCC were the finest in New Haven, serving thousands of members as well as guests, such as leading actors from the Shubert and Long Wharf stages, students from nearby colleges and business travelers.

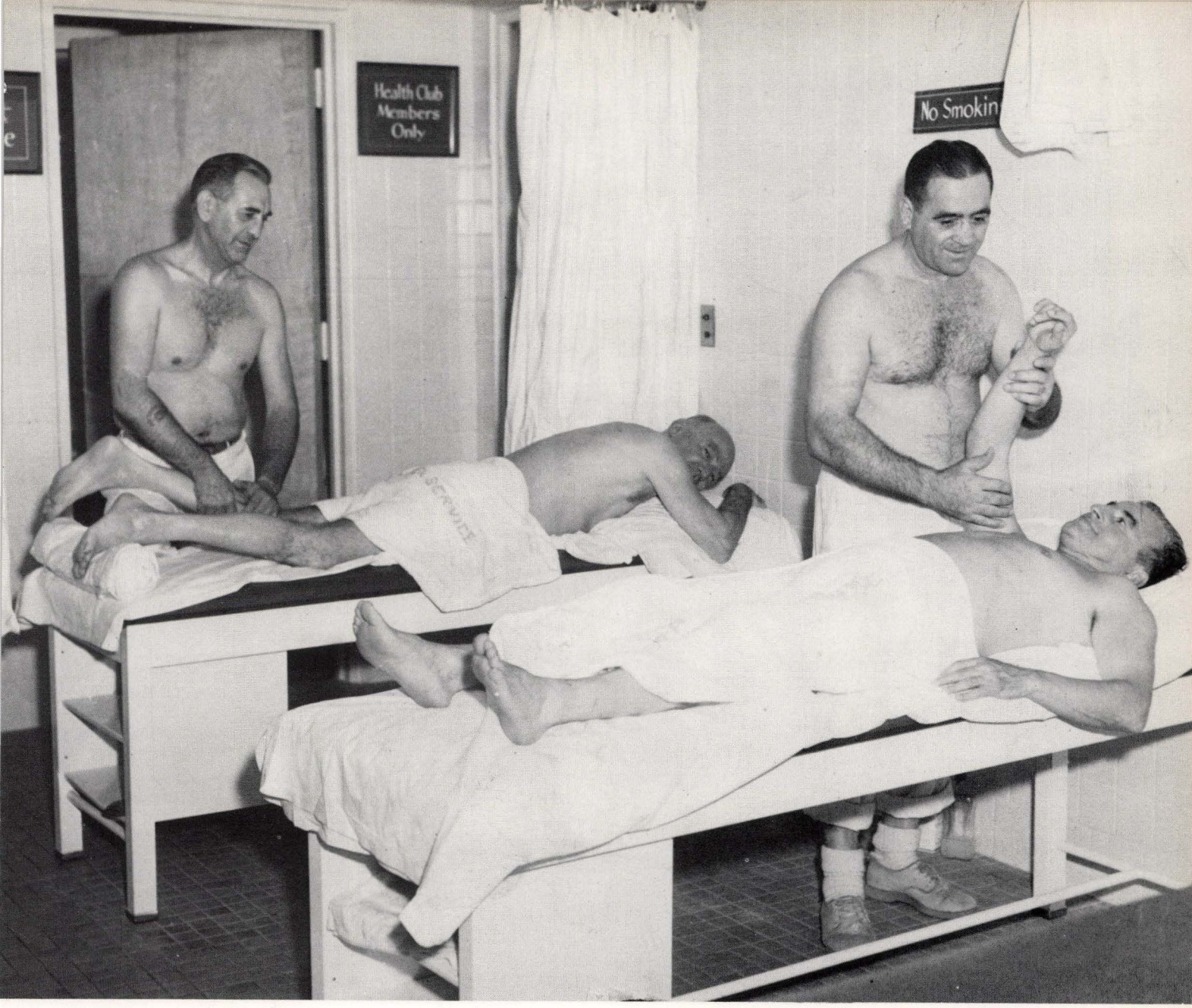
The swimming pool was a well-used facility. It allowed the JCC to offer instruction for children, free swim time for families and a place for our outstanding teams to hold practices and swim meets within the Center's own building.

The "famed" indoor bowling lanes were enjoyed by families on weekends, children after school, and adults during the day. Later, the space was used for golf lessons and then renovated to become the senior adult "Sixty Plus" Club lounge.

The popular JCC Health Club was an "inner sanctum" to many men and women, including New Haven's political luminaries who enjoyed a special place for relaxation, massage, and meetings with friends in a comfortable and private atmosphere.

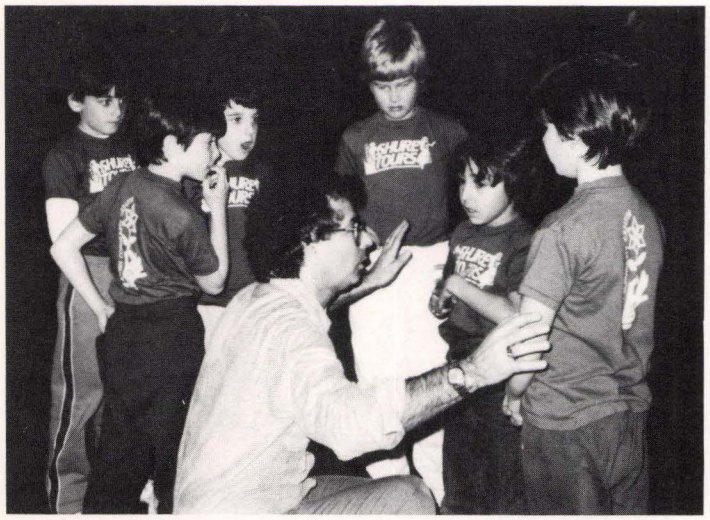


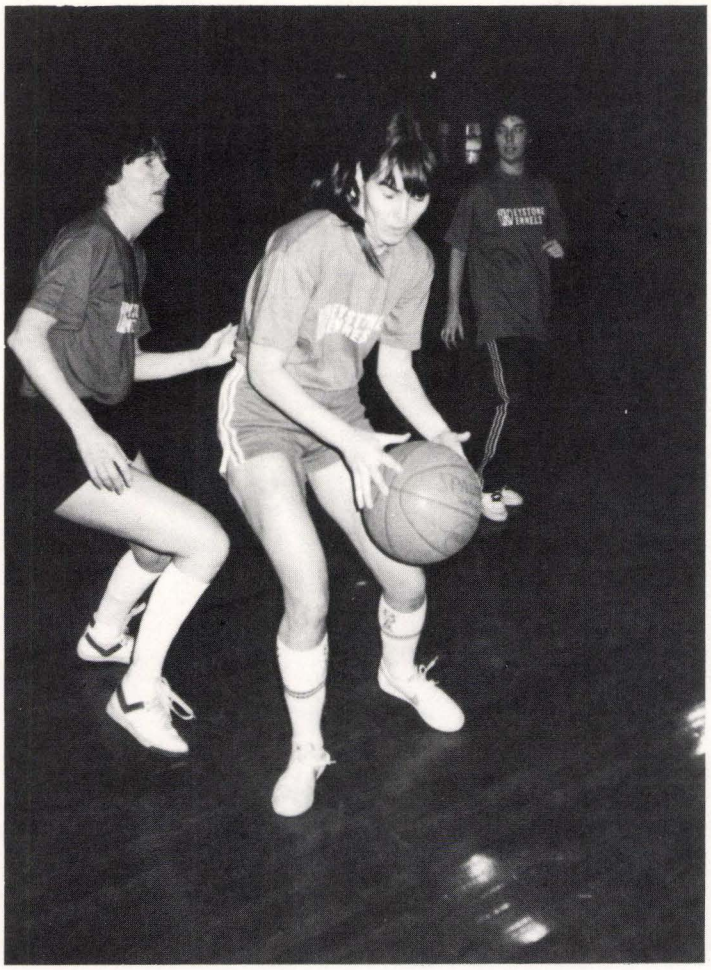



Health Club
Members
Only
No Smokin


ATLANTA
GA.
DETROIT
MICH.
NEWBURGH
N.Y.
New Haven
Montreal
ALLENTOWN
PA.
THE NATIONAL JWB
BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

BASKETBALL AT THE JCC, from "Biddy" through the "over 40" league, has been the core of team sports programs. It is on the JCC court that many children and teens learned about team spirit, respect for the individual, courtesy, sportsmanship, self-confidence and self-control. Through inter-JCC competition, our youngsters have met new friends throughout the country and have hosted teams from other countries.

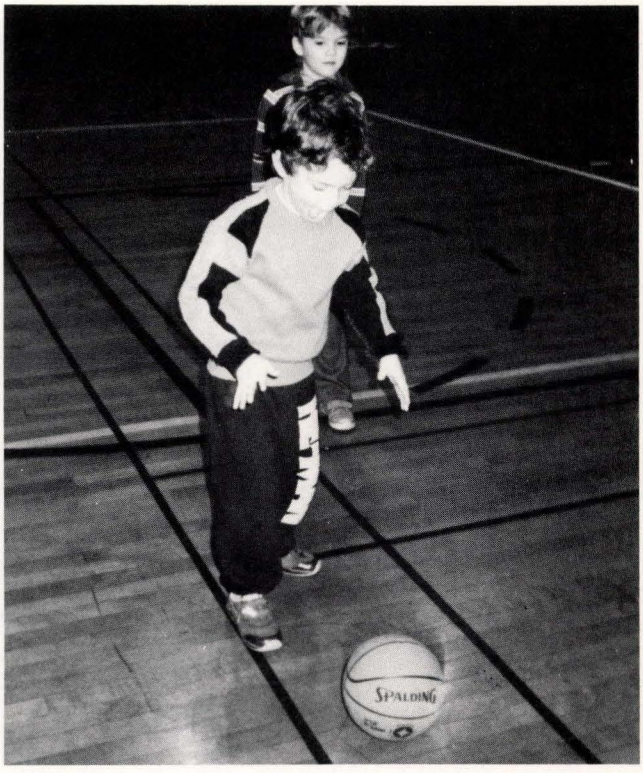














"The well-being of the soul can be obtained only after that of the body has been secured." -- Maimonides, ***Guide for the Perplexed,*** 1190, 3.27.


NEW 22 HAVEN
NEW 12 HAVEN
NEW 23 HAVEN
NEW 24
NEW 21 HAVEN
NEW 4 HAVEN
NEW 15 HAVEN
NEW 11 HAVEN



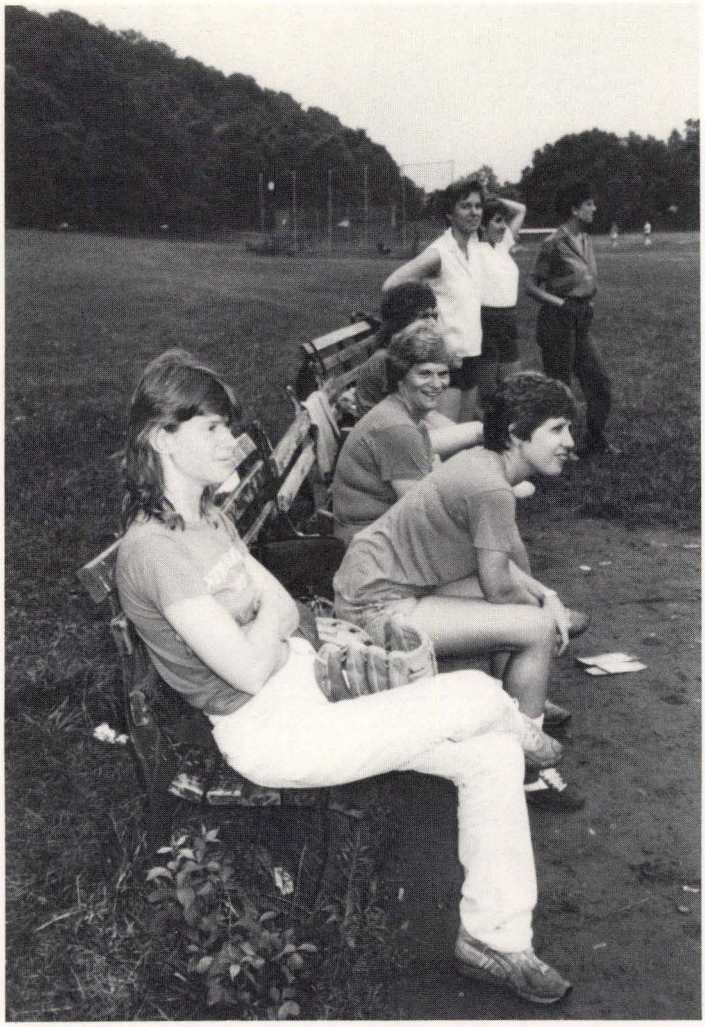

63-64


NEW HAVEN
63-64


J.C.C.
25
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22
23
69-70


22
31
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30
24
12
20
66-67


NATIONAL CHAMPIONS
1979
NEW 4 HAVEN
NEW 12 HAVEN
NEW 22 HAVEN
NEW 10 HAVEN
NEW 44 HAVEN
NEW 13 HAVEN
NEW 14 HAVEN
NEW 25 HAVEN



"The competitive urge is a fine, wholesome direction of energy. But... the desire to win must be wedded to an ideal, an ethical way of life. It must never become so strong that it dwarfs every other aspect of the game of life."

– E. R. Murrow, ***This I Believe,*** 1952, p.74





COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEER SUPPORT enable the JCC to thrive and grow. Volunteers serve meals to the elderly; give time and love to preschoolers; and help with the hundreds of concrete tasks that make programs a a success. They also coach teams and teach classes, help raise funds for JCC services and activities, and form the committees that create Center policy and assist in its implementation. Over the years, the ***Kovod Society*** has honored many of the outstanding men and women who have labored to make the Jewish Community Center a strong, vibrant and vital agency within the Greater New Haven community.







The Kovod Society, 1955-1986

1955
Emanuel Gratenstein
David Landow
Sadie Levine
Beatrice D. Teitelman
Albert R. Webber

1956
I. J. Hoffman
Bertha W. Konowitz
Jack Konowitz
Ruth Prager
Shirley G. Wells

1957
Marjorie Benenson
Esther Hershman

1958
Arthur Markle
Milton Small

1959
Esther Copelon
Arnold Gordon
Eunice Gordon
Carol J. Messer
Eugene Moss
I. E. Resnick
Louis Spelke

1960
Rose Dickstein
Marvin C. Gold
Freda Leopold

1961
Lucille Alderman
Paul Alpert
R. Livia Forman
Elihu R. Jacobson
Albert Porto

1962
Louis Feinmark

1963
Robert Caplow
Daniel DeAngelis
Robert Hoffman
Trudy L. Mogil

1964
Beatrice Slater
Max H. Teitelman

1965
Betty A. Ellis
Rhea Savener

1966
Joel Cohn

1967
Robert R. Eisner
Arthur Kanoff
Arthur Kleinberg
Lee L. Moore

1968
Robert Pite

1969
Josef Adler
Jack D. Barnston
Irvin A. Shiner

1970
Hannah L. Malkin
Arnold Potash

1971
Edmund Brennan
Pearl F. Fleischer
Marcia D. Kravitt

1972
Abby Bench
Anita B. Eisner
Milton Potash
Henry Stein

1973
Bernard Burge
Herbert Leibovitz

1974
Ruth R. Jacobson
Howard Lerner
Anita M. Perlman
Lawrence Schaffer

1975
Lindy Gold
Richard Jacobs
Reuben Moore
Rosalind Spielvogel

1976
David Beckerman
Gladys H. Epstein
William Kauffman
Irving Rohinsky
Martha S. Weisbart

1977
Harold Potash
Gerry Vitagliano

1978
Jordan Abeshouse
Blossom R. Rose
James A. Wolf

1979
Carl S. Feen
Marvin S. Pisetsky
David Shutan

1980
Clara Baker
M. Wallace Rubin
Herbert D. Setlow

1981
Mark G. Sklarz
William Shames
Frederick S. Moss

1982
Irving Calechman
Rhea Greenberg
James M. Shure

1983
Renee Hartman
Harriet Seligson
Lawrence Shanbrom

1984
Jay Alpert
Phyllis Kauffman
Marc Olins

1985
Ann Meyerson
Arthur Pite
Gary Sklaver

1986
Phillip Meyerson
Nanci Olins
Barry Vine

'SOLD ON THE CENTER,' a fantastic party to celebrate 35 years of JCC service to the community from the Chapel Street home, was held on Saturday, June 21, 1986.

Nearly 1000 people were on hand, many from other states, to honor the Chapel Street JCC and remember together the special events that marked these wonderful years.

It was a unique night -- seven bands were on hand to play music to suit all tastes and to salute through song the years gone by. Lavish decorations, refreshments, and a warm feeling of nostalgia contributed to an event unlike any other ever held in New Haven.

Old friends met and shared memories of the early days on Chapel Street -- and beyond, to the Dwight Street era.

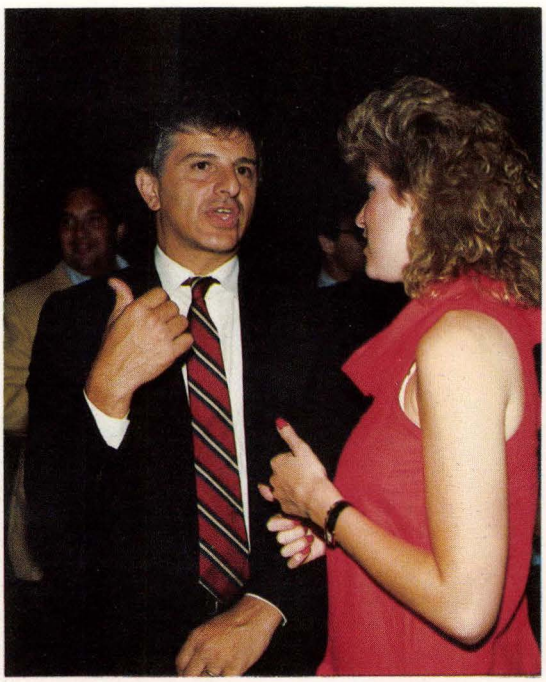
It was a "once in a lifetime" event!









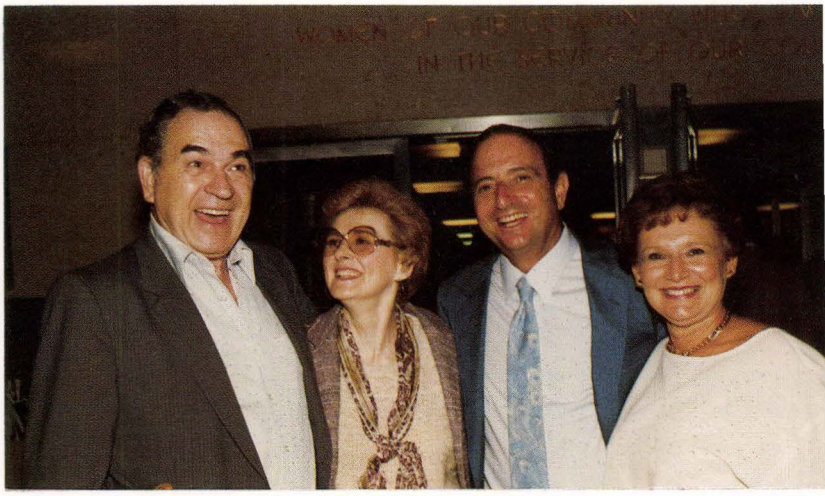






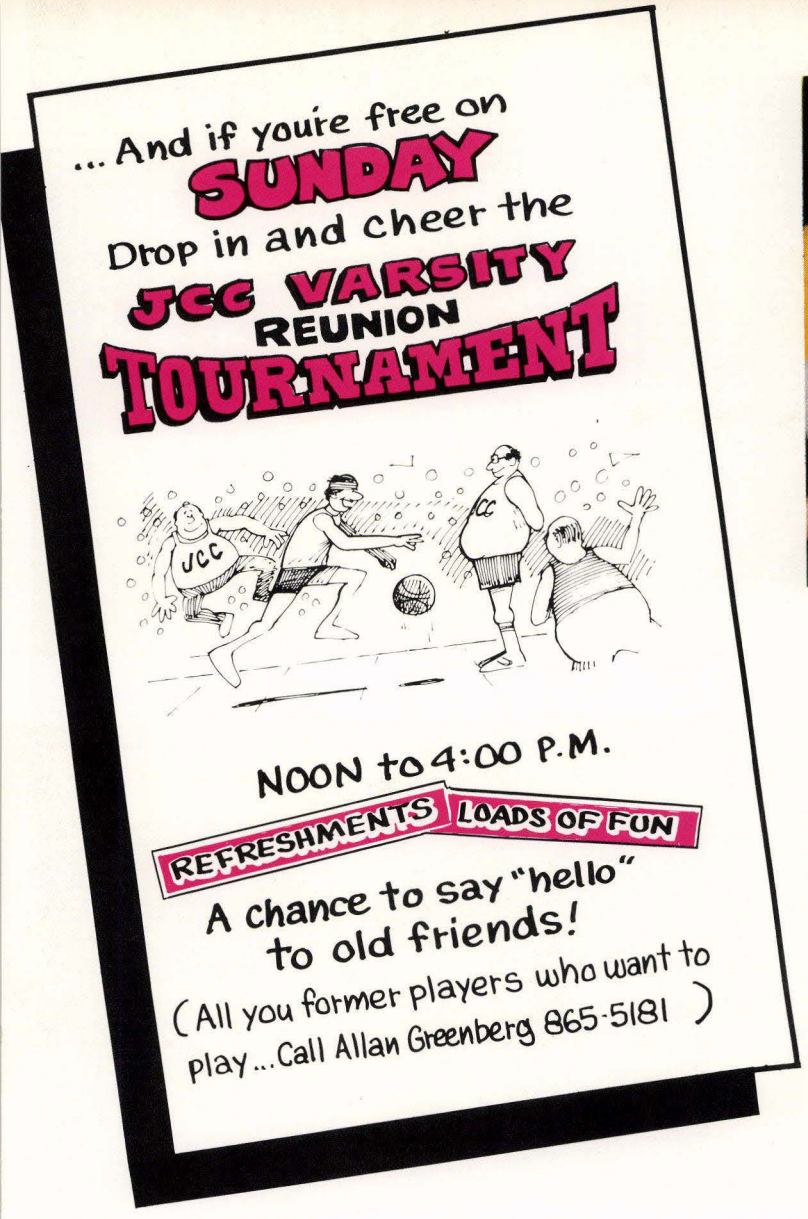



JEWISH
COMMUNITY











THE CELEBRATION CONTINUED on Sunday when over 80 Varsity Alumni suited up and once again took to the JCC Gym to play the last game and shoot the last hoop. They came from as far away as Florida and California to honor their days as friends and teammates.

Spouses, friends, children gathered on the bleachers to cheer them on -- and at the end, a special game ball was signed by all to be placed in the cornerstone of the new JCC and team photos were taken.

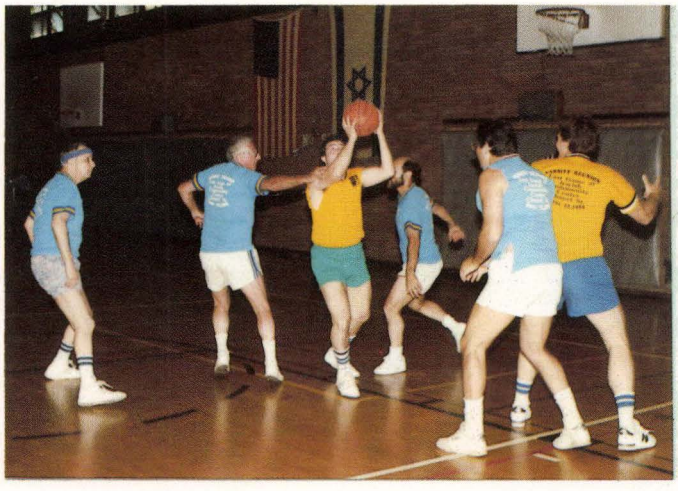













JCC VARSITY
BASKETBALL
1970-1980


JCC VARSITY
BASKETBALL
1950-1960


JEWISH
COMMUNITY
CENTER
GROWING
FOR THE
FUTURE
J.C.C. VARSITY REUNION TOURNAMENT - JUNE 22, 1986


JEWISH
COMMUNITY
CENTER
JCC VARSITY
BASKETBALL
1960-1970



Our thanks to the following people, whose contributions made possible the publication of this book and the entertainment on June 21, 1987.

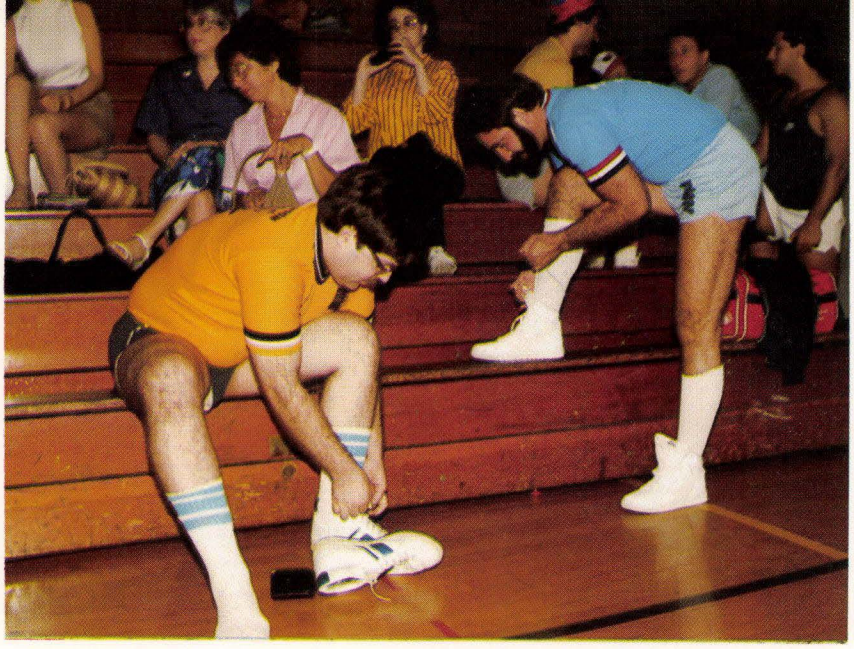
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The Lender Family
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Mark Levy
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Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Rappaport
Dr. and Mrs. Stanley Reiter
Mr. and Mrs. Irving Rohinsky
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Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Teitelman
Mr. and Mrs. Max Teitelman
Mr. and Mrs. Sol Terkeltaub
Mr. and Mrs. Morris Trachten
Mr. and Mrs. Murray Trachten
Compliments of the University of New Haven

ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 1986 the Center moved from its Chapel Street home into transition facilities on Whalley Avenue -- and a new era began!

The sense of history prompted us to take a backward glimpse at the Dwight Street days and the friendships that were formed on Legion Avenue. The Chapel Street home was, after all, an outgrowth of the community spirit, commitment to service, and dedication of leadership that was found at the Dwight Street JCC -- and even before.







DIAMOND JUBILEE

Dwight Street

1938 - 1954

THE JOY OF BEING TOGETHER was a hallmark of the Dwight Street JCC. Families gathered for social events and cultural programs; youth attended religious school and participated in JCC trips, summer day camp activities, holiday celebrations, afterschool activities, art and dance classes, and in sports.

Dwight Street became of the home of the Jewish Community and the place where people went to make friends and share leisure time. It was "a great place to be" and the center of an active and commited corps of community leaders.









The Dwight Street Years

Presidents

Joseph E. Levy*
1914-15
Samuel J. White*
1915-16
Samuel J. Nathanson*
1916-17
Benjamin Golden*
1917-18
Samuel Tendler*
1918-19
Meyer Stodel*
1919-21
Jacob Caplan*
1921-23
Robert R. Savitt*
1923-24
Louis M. Sagal*
1924-28
Samuel Weil*
1928-30
Hyman Jacobs*
1930-32
S. Bennett Alderman*
1932-34
Herman Levy
1934-36
Nathan Podoloff
1936-37
Edward Cooley
1937-40
Bernard P. Kopkind*
1940-43
Abraham Markle*
1943-46
Dr. A. Lewis Shure*
1946-48
James D. Kauffman*
1948-50
John J. Fox*
1950-53
Maurice Proctor
1953-55

* deceased











'In Rab's days, there was a teacher whose prayers for rain were answered promptly. Asked to tell of his special merit, he said: I teach children of the poor as well as of the rich; I accept no fee from any who cannot afford it; and I have a fishpond to delight children and encourage them to do their lessons.'

-- ***Talmud***: Taanit, 24a

THE JCC BASKETBALL HERITAGE began at the Dwight Street JCC. Anyone who ever played there remembers the unique placement of pipes and the special shots necessary to score a basket. It is said that the term "home court advantage" was coined at the Dwight Street gym!






ELIZABETH
TOURNAMENT
1953
JEWISH
JV
CENTER





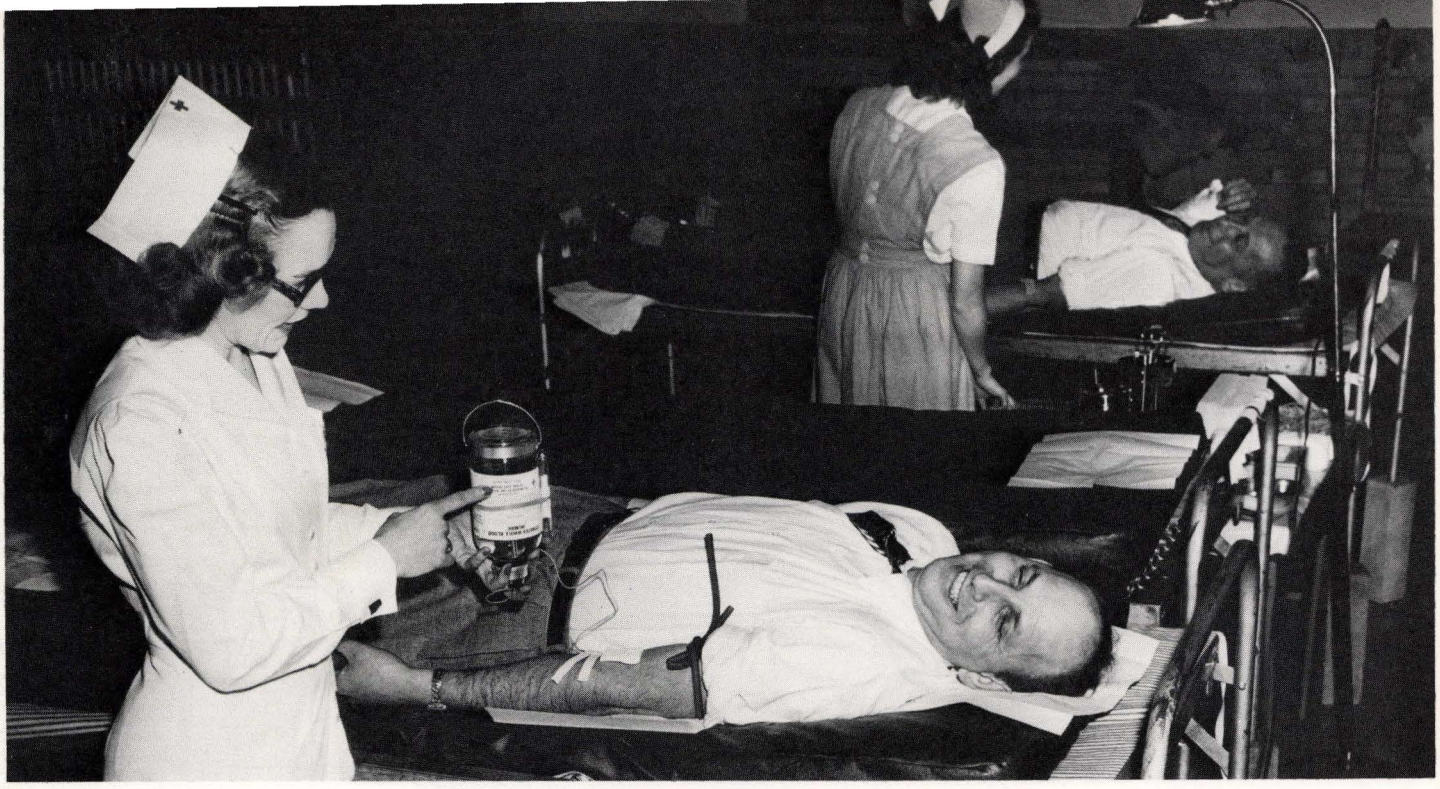

New Haven


JEWISH
CENTER


JEWISH
JV
CENTER


NO
SMOKIN





THE KOVOD SOCIETY, 1934 - 1954

1934
Bernhardt E. Hoffman
Sarah Semack

1935
Hilda M. Podoloff

1936
Joseph Drabkin
Louis Sachs

1937
Abraham Markle

1938
Nathan Podoloff
Jean Saslau
Robert Solomon

1939
Halen Rakieten

1940
Edward Cooley

1941
Bess Cohen
Edward Lettick
A. Lewis Shure
Ernestine Traurig

1942
Lillian L. Freedman
Albert W. Ginsberg
Bess Rosoff

1943
Harvey Bennett

1944
Deborah E. Himmelfarb
Joseph Keller

1945
Anne C. Braun
James D. Kauffman
Pearl Kline
Harry Lowenthal

1946
Sonia Berney
Bernard P. Kopkind
Maurice E. Proctor
Ida P. Weinstein

1947
Sylvia Bailey
Charles Berney
Meyer Botwik
Rose G. Fox

1948
Esther Fishman
Jacob B. Fishman
John J. Fox
William Greenberg
Marion Kauffman
Samuel Pite
Mary C. Ticotsky

1949
Philip Saslau
Deborah Taraza

1950
Meyer E. Bailey
Paul Goodwin
Jessie "Buddy" Kurland
Alma Zimmerman

1951
Nathan Feldman
Harriet Ginsberg
Samuel I. Hershman
Harvey N. Ladin
Lillian Lazaroff

1952
Anna Beck
Nathan Goldman
Naomi B. Gordon
Abraham Lapides

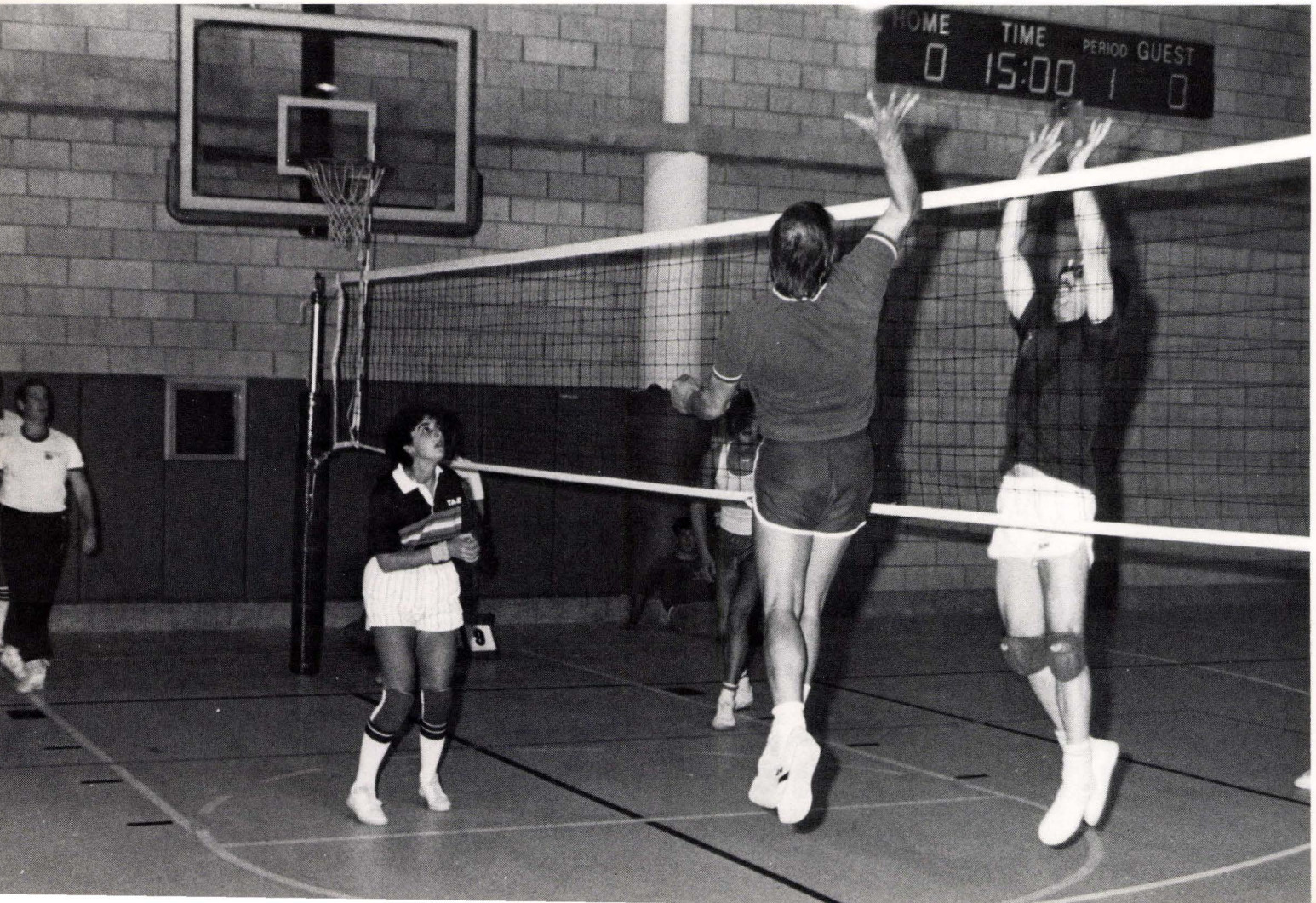
1953
Charles Henchel
Molly Kaplan
Joseph Shure

1954
Harry Barnett
Robert Botwinik
Dorothy N. Hilcoff
Sylvia Tendler
Joseph N. Weiner

AS THE GROWTH AND VITALITY of the Dwight Street Center resulted in the need for a new and expanded home, the changing lifestyles and needs of our community made the Chapel Street facility no longer suitable for our needs.

So the Jewish Community Center begins a new era in serving its constituency -- a transition period which will imprint its own chapter in Center history -- a chapter that will end when a new Jewish Community Center of Greater New Haven is built for our children and grandchildren.







DIAMOND JUBILEE

Transition

1986 -



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HISTORY of the JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF GREATER NEW HAVEN

(Reference: the archives of the Jewish Historical Society)

The Jewish Center had its origins in the Young Peoples' League, which changed its name in 1913 to the YMHA. Meetings were held in a loft at 200 Orange Street, a building which was also the headquarters of the organized charities of New Haven. This is symbolic of the close cooperation between the Jewish Center and other organizations in New Haven, a significant part of its history. In June of 1915, the YWHA was formed; volunteer women organized activities including piano, sewing and gymnastics, and often invited guest speakers from Yale University. Meetings were held at 301 George Street initially. In 1918, the YMHA purchased a one-family house on Crown Street at the corner of High and York for their own facility.

In 1921 the YWHA joined the YMHA at 304 Crown Street, and engaged the first paid director to plan for the community. An addition was eventually built, but many in the community felt the time had come to plan for a new, modern building. To reach that goal, officers of the YMHA formed a new corporation, the Jewish Community Council of New Haven, and organized a fund-raising drive. Although there was a ground-breaking ceremony at an adjoining lot on Crown Street, the new facility was never built -- doubt and fears about raising sufficient dollars halted the attempt. When the plans fell through, there was a strong feeling of disappointment in the community and a resolve to pursue the goal of a new Center even more diligently.

Despite the lack of a new building, the YMHA and YWHA programs continued to expand and flourish. Although under one roof, both organizations maintained separate leadership. The women organized a Women's Assembly which focused on activities that supported the "good of the community" and addressed the specific needs of women. The Junior Assembly conducted programs for the children of the community and joint activities provided social and cultural programs for all. Because of the lack of physical facilities, there were no athletic or health activities in the Crown Street building.



In 1935, the Jewish Community Council appointed a committee that organized the new Jewish Community Center. A constitution and by-laws for the new agency were created and the committee became the first Board of Directors. At the suggestion of the Jewish Community Council, the Hebrew Institute, the YMHA and YWHA merged with the new organization under the heading of the Jewish Community Center and on January 27, 1938, members of all three organizations signed the Articles of Association of the New Haven Jewish Community Center.

The Hebrew Institute contributed the building that would become the headquarters for the new organization. Renovations were made with the help of the Community Council and several Hebrew Institute rooms were converted into a gym, gameroom, and lounge. In 1938, the Jewish Community Center moved into the building. Title was transferred to the new organization on March 4, 1942, and the Dwight Street JCC was born.

The Dwight Street facility ushered in a new era for the JCC; here, at last, was a building in which classes could be held, after-school activities could be scheduled, and summer day camps held outside in the courtyard. There were enhanced opportunities with the addition of recreational, social and physical education activities all under one roof. However, the Dwight Street facility was soon outgrown. By the mid-1940s, a new facility was needed.

The Chapel Street years of the Jewish Community Center actually began on June 3, 1947 when the Center's Board of Directors authorized a separate corporation, called the Building Fund Trust, to administer a fund that was created through community fundraising "to be used to build a new Jewish Community Center." The Building Fund Campaign goal of $750,000 was reached and the ground-breaking ceremony, at the former site of DeCaprio's Motor Sales, was held on June 1, 1952. Construction of the facility was completed in 1954, and the official dedication was held on April 14.

1156 Chapel Street, the site of the new Jewish Community Center, served as the cornerstone of an upper Chapel Street revitalization. Then, as now, a strong membership was key to the success of the JCC. Thousands of people's lives were touched by hours spent at the Chapel Street JCC -- in the teen lounge, in the woodworking shop in the basement, in summer day camp on the roof, in the swimming pool, in the indoor bowling lanes (which were later removed to make space for golf lessons, then renovated to serve as the senior adult "Sixty-Plus Club" lounge), and in the JCC Health Club.

By 1976, however, the target membership of the Jewish Community Center was no longer using the downtown facility as it had in the past. In 1981, a joint JCC/New Haven Jewish Federation panel met to discuss the findings of a Jewish Welfare Board study that recommended the Center relocate. Needs Assessment and Relocation Planning and Development Committees were formed to act upon these recommendations; by 1982, the Chapel Street facility was placed on the market.

By 1985, a facilities space budget had been designed, and site search and development committees were named, as well as a financial analysis task force and a Board of Governors and General Campaign Chairmen. Consultants were engaged as the JCC moved into a fundraising campaign. In August, 1985, in preparation for the transition period that the sale of the Chapel Street facility would bring, the JCC decided to lease and renovate a fitness facility on South Bradley Road in Woodbridge, now known as the JCC West Rock Fitness Center. In the summer of 1985, the Capital Campaign for the new building began its first phase, raising over $3.5 million. Options agreements were signed both for the sale of the Chapel Street building and a piece of property -- the proposed site of the new JCC.



In December, 1985, the sale of the Chapel Street building brought the capital campaign to over $5 million. Arrangements were made for lease of the property until June, when the Center's administrative and programming staff -- and the Senior Adult Center -- would move into transition facilities at 566 and 570 Whalley Avenue. In early 1986, when the proposed site of the new Jewish Community Center was unexpectedly reclassified as Class 1 Wetlands, the site search and development committee expanded its search, working in cooperation with the New Haven Jewish Federation to explore the possibility of a community "campus" approach. Transition facilities were leased at 566 and 570 Whalley Avenue for administrative offices and a Program/Senior Center.

'SOLD ON THE CENTER,' a fantastic party to celebrate 35 years of JCC service to the community from the Chapel Street home, was held on Saturday, June 21, 1986. Nearly 1000 people were on hand, many from other states, to honor the Chapel Street JCC and remember together the special events that marked these wonderful years. It was a unique night -- seven bands were on hand to play music to suit all tastes and to salute through song the years gone by. Lavish decorations, refreshments, and a warm feeling of nostalgia contributed to an event unlike any other ever held in New Haven. The celebration continued on Sunday when over 80 Varsity Alumni -- from as far away as Florida and California -- suited up to play the last game in the JCC gym and sign a game ball for the cornerstone of the new building. And then it was time to leave. On Wednesday, June 25, 1986, the Center moved into its transition headquarters at 566 Whalley Avenue -- and a new era began.

Since June 25, 1986, the Center has continued to grow. Use of the Hopkins/Day Prospect School Athletic Complex together with the JCC West Rock Fitness Center has enabled the JCC to continue serving the health and fitness needs of the community. The Center and Jewish community leadership continues the site search for the new Jewish Community Center, with several options now under evaluation. As we enter our Diamond Jubilee -- marking 75 years of service to the Greater New Haven community -- membership in the Center continues to grow, and community participation in programs and services is at an all-time high.

The strength of Judaism consists in this, that as soon as one period of history comes to an end, another begins. A new idea replaces the old, fresh forces come into play, and the result is continuous progress.'

-- Krochmal, More Nebuke HaZeman, 1851.



'Blessed is he who keeps the foundations of his fathers.'

-- Aprocrya.II, Enoch 52.9

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