

The Role of the Jewish Community Center and Jewish Continuity*

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Centers should assume a mandate to become Jewish cultural centers of distinction in their communities and maximize every opportunity to raise their standards to a new level of quality, visibility and prominence. Centers are the only institution in America that can effectively achieve becoming the Jewish cultural hub of the entire community.

THE honoring of Max Tasgal at this time, his very presence here and the setting of this conference in Baltimore carry me back to the late 50's and early 60's when, in Springfield and Baltimore, I enjoyed the status, the sense of accomplishment and the clear identity of a social group worker. My role on the staff of the Jewish Community Center was defined, in large measure, by my education. I felt very good about the relevancy of the curriculum at Boston University School of Social Work which prepared me for the coveted role of "group worker". My professional identity in 1956 seemed synonymous with that of the Center setting, its mission, and the bursting of hundreds of club groups within its walls. Sanford Solender had already defined social group work as the JCC's "central area of competence" in his benchmark paper on "The Unique Function of the Jewish Community Center".¹

They were the "best of times," when the Center was acknowledged as the optimum setting for student field work

training, when manual recording of statistics and budget information produced accurate data, when we all knew how to use the mimeograph machine and when supervision and professional growth were inseparable.

A national study in 1955² indicated that 58 percent of Jewish community center workers had a Master's Degree in social work. This compared with 22 percent in 1984.³ When I entered the field, 77 percent of program assistants were MSW's and today, roughly 47 percent of program assistants hold Masters degrees of any kind. In 1955, 83 percent of all professional staff between the ages 21 and 30 were MSWs.

During my early days in Springfield and Baltimore, there as in most communities, we witnessed hundreds of local friendship groups, sports clubs, national youth organizations, high school fraternities and sororities assigned to part-time group leaders. Parents were heavily involved in their teen-age children's activities. The focus of Jewish programming was on "content" and, although we were proud and concerned about Israel, its far reaching influence was not yet fully felt.

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¹ Sanford Solender, *The Unique Function of the Jewish Community Center*, National Jewish Welfare Board, 1955, p. 5.

² Melvin Herman, "Occupational Mobility in Social Work: The Jewish Community Center Worker," N.J.W.B., New York, 1959, pp. 64-65.

³ C.B. Scotch and E. Kagan, *A Survey of Professionals Employed in the Jewish Communal Field*, Florence G. Heller-JWB Research Center, 1985, (in process).

Professionals would grapple at staff meetings with such issues as the contrasting values of individual or group supervision, differences between group work and group therapy, how to work effectively with the isolate in the group, conflict-solving, the use of program as an instrument in the socialization of the individual, representativeness in youth councils, the helping and enabling relationship, conscious use of self and what's Jewish about social work.

Summary or process recording was a popular and helpful instrument for dialogue between the worker and group leader. There was no question or doubt about what was the "core discipline". We were committed to social work values and methods, to personality development and the healing and growth which could evolve from group interaction. There was a commonality of commitment and sense of mission which was very clear and tacitly supported by the Center administration.

Three session days and three to four nights a week, plus working three out of four Saturday nights and Sunday afternoons constituted the norm. Burn-out "was a barbecue" in those days.

There are many other memories of those earlier days. These selections from my beginning, 29 years ago, as a Center professional make vivid the picture of change in the body of professionals and in the Jewish community center itself. This change and process of change are the subjects of the article which follows.

There is the natural temptation to draw from the past when pondering the future. However, it has often been stated that "as we cannot change the past, let us, therefore, take care of the future". It is within the context of "taking care of the future" that my comments follow.

I have already stated that I am one of a generation whose professional role

was defined, in large measure, by education. I represent those who generally came to the Jewish community center field out of a commitment to social work principles. In contrast, a number of today's entering professionals who select the Jewish community center do so out of a desire to work with, and for, the Jewish community.

Change in Mission and Function

Changes that have taken place in the mission and function of the Jewish community center have made the setting hospitable to a variety of personnel. The Jewish community center of the 80's has evolved into a Jewish communal agency rather than a social work agency. The setting that was host primarily to the social group work discipline has changed to a multi-disciplinary agency. It has changed from a recreational group service setting to a multi-service facility. The central emphasis on personality development has shifted to one on Jewish knowledge. The social action orientation of former times has turned to one of community service.

A Blending of the Profit and Not-For-Profit Worlds

Consumerism has to some extent influenced the concept of serving the developmental needs of individuals. "Hype", more sophisticated marketing approaches, promotion and communication skills are the tools to attract the consumer or customer, often referred to as the member, by an emphasis on the best in quality and on the "best deal" for him/her, in order for the Center to be competitive.

Does the consumer coloration so prominent in so many Centers represent elements of what we might call the new "professional practice of the 80's"? Has the process of engagement

with members been replaced by the process of packaging?

The lines between the profit and not-for-profit worlds are blurring. We seem to be getting closer to one world of management and marketing. Some of these lines are perhaps necessary and helpful in our dealing with the drift to consumerism. There are some in the profession who are convinced that if Centers are to survive they must adopt the techniques of the profit world as they are in a highly competitive market where people shop around for the best product. The fact is that Centers do require business management skills but not to the exclusion of human relationship skills. There is no necessity for an "either - or" choice.

An entrepreneurial direction is supported and enhanced by the new breed of board leadership whose expectations of efficiency and cost effectiveness in delivery can threaten to diminish the intrinsic value of the service itself.

If Centers are, however, to be of some influence on Jewish continuity, they cannot view members of the Jewish community center solely as customers, but must enable them to assume a Jewish, and emotional and personal, connection to the agency.

Professional Identity

With a heavy emphasis on motives from the profit world what does "being professional" connote? How do Center workers identify themselves and their profession?

How many of us view ourselves as "Jewish community center professionals" and identify our career commitment with the "profession" of Center work? Or, contrarily, how many of us are loyal to or identify as our respective professions those of either social work, cultural arts, physical education, recreation or education—all of which are

practiced in a Jewish community center setting?

I met as a facilitator with the staffs of three Centers, each staff being composed of several disciplines. I requested that each person identify his or her "profession". In response, most of the trained social workers identified "Jewish communal service" as their profession and so did physical educators, camping directors, B.A. graduates and cultural arts specialists, some of whom hold Masters degrees in their chosen disciplines. However, they had difficulty in actually defining "Jewish communal service".

Many felt that "Jewish communal service" enjoys a greater acceptance and status in the community as a professional field than identification with a specific agency setting or with a specific discipline. It is possible also that some respondents recognized the portability of their skills and Center experience to other Jewish communal agencies. Although a small minority identified their profession as Center work or as a specific discipline, the predominant push was to turn to Jewish communal service for professional identity and status.

There have been a number of proposals through the years for a definition of the "profession" of Jewish communal service. There is some support for the development of a definition of an integrated profession of Jewish communal service to which professional loyalties and identification would be tied to in a commitment shared by all those of different disciplines. Some of the staff who identified "Jewish communal service" as their profession felt this shared commitment.

In 1972, Herbert Millman, writing on the topic "Jewish Communal Service . . . the Shaping of a Profession" proposed that we "view the *common cause* of the Jewish community and its

people rather than our differential disciplines as the matrix from which our professionalism arises and derives its shape . . . that, unlike other professions, we are unitarian in purpose rather than in core methodology".⁴

The thought has been expressed by several that a field of practice is not identified by the methods it uses, but by the service it offers.

I would suggest that while Jewish community centers and their personnel are linked to the "common cause" and the field of Jewish communal service, it is appropriate and even compelling to focus on the distinctive definition and identity of professional personnel in Centers. Specifically, I am proposing that we develop the philosophical base that is common to all professionals in JCCs and that will have a cohesive impact on the identity of professionals. The result can only be to enrich professional practice.

It is, however, essential first to clarify the broader and more complex issue of the institutional mission and function of Jewish community centers, in turn making possible greater clarity and insight into the distinctiveness of Center professional personnel.

Common Elements of Professional Practice

The following is an incomplete and imperfect identification of common elements of professional practice in Centers to serve as a beginning point for more exhaustive analysis. The underlying assumption is that a philosophical base of practice can evolve which applies to all professionals in JCCs. Whereas each professional possesses a

specific discipline and skill related to a service delivery system consistent with the mission of the JCC, he/she is not, however, a technician. Whatever the specifics of professional education, it should have oriented the professional to a certain set of values and body of knowledge. Yet too few Center professionals can define their practice or readily identify values which influence their professional behavior.

What Center professionals all have in common is a practice in which they engage in professional relationships and a process of helping people to achieve self-worth and social responsibility with their own strengths, in interaction with others. Center professionals must possess a sense of process and a capacity to direct process. They must perceive of themselves as change agents who recognize that people have the capacity and facility for change.

The proposed, newly defined profession will derive its philosophic base from an integration of theories, principles and value systems culled from among the various disciplines which will guide and direct professional behavior. This philosophic base incorporates values drawn from Jewish sources and the mission of the JCC which represent a major influence on professional behavior and practice. The direction of an agency must flow from a clear definition of practice and a value base agreed upon by all professionals including the executive.

These are some introductory thoughts for a dialogue long overdue. These thoughts will be reshaped, expanded, and sharpened in the attempt to develop new definitions that identify and distinguish the profession of Center work. Center professionals must be responsive to the perceptions of board leadership regarding *their* concept of the "profession", should also listen and engage with those colleagues whose

⁴Herbert Millman, "Jewish Communal Service—The Shaping of a Profession," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Vol. XLIX, No. 1 (1972), p. 34.

thinking is one of blending the variety of disciplines in all agencies as an integrated profession of Jewish communal service.

Quest For Excellence

What must follow the clarification of mission and a commonly accepted value base for the Center professional is the movement of Centers toward full or substantial compliance with provisions and standards established by a national Council on Accreditation, standards of quality toward which all will strive.

A systematic review and self-study through an accreditation process will influence and strengthen the concept of Jewish community centers as a "movement". It will stimulate the "new professionalism" of Centers as we complete the decade of the 80s and prepare for the future.

This accreditation role should be an imperative in standard setting for professionals and lay leaders and appropriately, it should be established and implemented through the Association of Jewish Center Workers and the Jewish Welfare Board. This shared responsibility will provide AJCW and JWB with an unprecedented opportunity to assume a major leadership position on behalf of the agency and the professional.

The field has not considered the far-reaching implications of accreditation or some modified model of quality control. Dialogue on accreditation will produce several complex issues affecting the status of relationships among Centers, AJCW and JWB which deserve serious attention, and a vigorous interchange of opinion. Aspirations toward excellence in the work of Centers require that energies and wisdom be directed toward achieving a higher level of quality truly reflective of a profession and a movement as dynamic as the Centers'.

I may tend to judge the Center field too severely as being currently neglectful and indifferent to standards of professionalism and quality control. Yet, there does appear to have been a diminishing focus on a "search for excellence" within the field.

The Nature of the Worker

The linkage of Center professionals and Centers to a common value base and standards of excellence are clearly worthy objectives. The kind of worker entering the Center field and recruitment trends are factors which influence the achievement of these objectives.⁵

Factors favoring and those inhibiting mobility continue to have significant impact on hiring patterns during the 80s. For example, current high interest rates make buying and selling a home prohibitive. Mortgage assistance for those below the executive level is yet to be implemented.

Some people are remaining on the job hoping for advancement while others are leaving their Center positions to seek new job opportunities. A family must now view critically the impact of any move on overall family income. When both spouses are working it is often an impediment to relocating when one of the spouses is dependent upon a career of his or her own in a given community.

The field has also seen a number of middle management professionals attracted by more lucrative business opportunities.

A major change in very recent years is the gradual elimination of the traditional entry-level position. Staff at varying levels are being asked to do

⁵ Solomon Greenfield, "The World, the Workplace, and the Worker," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Vol. 59, No. 2 (1982), pp. 153-156.

things at early stages in their career development for which they are unprepared.

Center executives responsible for balancing budgets are turning to their own local communities to recruit candidates for new and vacant positions at lower salaries. There are a growing number of individuals on professional staffs who do not see themselves as career persons with upward mobility in their agencies and who are willing to accept lower salaries. Some are in the JCC because of expedience, some see the JCC as a setting in which to gain experience and then leave to pursue their careers in a different setting. The difference in motivation, *in terms of job or career*, is critical and has far reaching consequences for the field.

Education on Center Practice

Entering workers in Centers are not adequately knowledgeable of the Center setting and Center practice. Although new worker institutes are instructive, there is a need to "teach" Center practice in a much more intensive manner.

AJCW and others should consider giving leadership to the development of the following educational elements as *prerequisite* to continuing employment in the Jewish community center.

- 1) A program of education on Center practice leading to a certificate either prior to or while an individual is on the job. This curriculum could be made available at different geographical locations or to clusters of Centers.
- 2) A major course of study in Center practice available within those graduate schools offering degrees in Jewish communal service or social work.

However, these educational requirements must be reinforced by ongoing supervision of quality.

Supervision, once heralded as a unique aspect of the Jewish community center, is tragically no longer in sufficient evidence, with correspondingly less attention now given to quality control, evaluation and training. The quality and frequency of supervision have a direct impact on professional growth and staying power of workers.

Resolution on Respectable Salaries

Another major problem of Center workers is their self-doubt about their professionalism. Beginning salaries under \$20,000 unless buffered by unusual perks make dubious contribution to the sense of dignity and level of recognition accorded the profession. A number of our Center professionals are properly irate that other professions are paid a premium while their work is less valued.

Center professionals are expected to have such a commitment to the concept of peoplehood that will transcend usual money rewards or respectable salaries. This expectation is rooted in the idea that "psychic income" substitutes for real dollars. But the Center professional feels that the value of his or her work in carrying out the Center's mission is at least comparable to that of other professions and is comparable in particular to work of colleagues employed in Federations. Center professionals are concerned about taking care of their own futures and no longer accept arguments for limiting their salaries based on balanced budgets, scarcity of resources and flat campaigns, which are, admittedly, crucial factors in the management of their Centers.

Respectable salaries will best be achieved when all executive directors collectively and individually identify the retention and recruitment of quality personnel as a major local and national priority. Their vision and effectiveness

which is demonstrated in other areas must be as bold and risk-taking in addressing this task. This is not rhetoric! If executives do not view correcting the salary issue as a priority, the Center's role in Jewish continuity will remain rhetoric; quality personnel will not be retained nor attracted. It can no longer be rationalized that "salary is only one of several factors" in retaining and attracting quality staff.

Gerald Bubis refers to the important notion in Judaism of *klei kodesh* (holy vessels) and he describes professionals as "holy vessels, for they are working in partnership and helping to evolve for and with their lay partners a sense of values, priorities and directions in the shaping of *Klal Yisroel*. It is the test of a cultured society that it find and elevate those who serve it as a career, with dignity and honor."⁶

Opportunities For Women

The sex distribution of the Center field is reflective of the changes in the Center and the changed role of women plus the larger number of women seeking careers in Center work. In 1984, of 2302 full-time professional workers, 64.6% were women, excluding nursery school teachers and directors.⁷

Women with equal qualifications and training continue to be paid less than men in most instances. The majority of women in higher status jobs have spent their entire careers in a single Center while well under half the men in similar positions have worked in only one Center, which reinforces the ob-

servation that women still tend to be less mobile than men. It is often the case that a professional may have to relocate in order to obtain an advanced position.

It is true that qualified women now have increased opportunity to rise to top leadership positions. We certainly have many more women filling middle management and assistant director positions. Will these and other qualified women move up to top positions of executive leadership during the next several years? Those qualified will effectively assume these positions if incumbent executives become more forceful and more visible in their support, more creative and more committed to taking a commanding role in changing attitudes, in making a powerful statement, in educating Board leadership and in opening up opportunities to executive positions to women on the career ladder. Unfortunately, too many now in executive positions have not provided creative leadership in establishing a climate for educating boards of directors.

Critical Role of Executive Leadership

If this article appears to be self-critical or to challenge executive directors to take risks and to be in the forefront of attempts to resolve personnel issues, it is because of a perspective that the resolution of such issues must take place "at home", in the local community. Executives must stop looking to others to do what they must do within their own Centers. AJCW guidelines and JWB Manpower Commissions are certainly necessary and supportive vehicles, but it is the local executive who is in the driver's seat. Local executives are ill advised to rely solely on national imperatives and to do nothing themselves.

⁶ Gerald B. Bubis, "Recruitment and Retention of Professional Staff for Jewish Communal Service," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Vol. 60, No. 4 (1984), p. 338.

⁷ Bessie Pine and Edward Kagan, "Professional Salary and Employment in JCCs and YW-YMHAS," JWB, 1984.

I am obviously mindful of and sensitive to the day-to-day pressures and problems which executives confront that sometimes inhibit progress in these critical areas. I also salute those executives who have provided forceful and effective leadership by giving these and other personnel issues priority and confronting them with passion. I am mindful that the role of the executive has been more complex. There is a greater distance between the executive and the process of service delivery. The executive is held more accountable and must respond to more probing and questioning by more demanding and more knowledgeable board members. The changes in the composition of boards and board leadership and in their expectations of executive directors are of serious consequence.

The executive must have initiative in management and must also be able to articulate a sense of vision and be able to lead and command respect for his/her leadership.

This new brand of executive, more than ever, also needs a committed, quality staff. The success of today's and tomorrow's executives is keyed to how they develop the connections between themselves and the total staff.

Today, staff on all levels have to experience a sense of ownership with management and executive staff, as changes we are facing today require all of our talent and input. Our Centers have to produce a work culture in which line staff and management as well as the executive are devoted and experience a reciprocal accountability, a mutuality of purpose.

The sharing of a sense of serving a "common cause" is applicable to all professionals within a given agency as well as to the larger field of Jewish communal service.

Jewish Educational Effectiveness

The implementation in the future,

of the *JWB Report on Maximizing Jewish Educational Effectiveness of Jewish Community Centers* will have highly significant consequences for the Center's role in Jewish continuity . . . and in the clarification of mission, professional identity and competencies required of our professionals.

Although some "turf" issues have surfaced, the impact of the JWB field visits in conjunction with the study and implementation process has had a catalytic effect on getting all segments of the community, including Federation, talking to each other about Jewish education, their respective roles and the Center's distinctive and collaborative role. A momentum for change and a sense of excitement have developed in several communities.

In specific reference to the JCC and Jewish educational effectiveness, the Commission's definition specifies that staff competence in the area of Jewish enrichment is as essential an ingredient as all other professional skills employed in Centers. The report emphasizes the need for a greater number of Jewishly committed and Jewishly knowledgeable professional staff in JCCs. At the same time, Centers must continue to increase the level of Jewishly knowledge and skills of existing staff.

David Dubin's thoughtful article on "Essential Competencies for the JCC Professional" points to "the mission of Jewish objectives as inextricably related to the essential skills of professional practice". However, Dubin states that "a Jewishly committed Center worker is ineffective if he does not have the skills to market and engineer an important cultural program".⁸ The committed, Jewishly knowledgeable worker with his or her heart in the right place is not enough. We now expect the Cen-

⁸ David Dubin, "Essential Competencies for the Jewish Communal Professional," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (1983), p. 17.

ter professional to possess the capacity and compassion for human relationships, Jewish knowledge and commitment, organizational and planning skills, communication and intervention skills, marketing talents and business acumen.

A Personal Jewish Vision

In considering the Jewish component of their work, Center professionals have an added responsibility. They cannot ask their constituencies to do what they themselves are not prepared to do. Jewish life is important. Purposeful Jewish living is even more important. It can't be important for Centers and their constituencies and not be important to the worker. The worker as a role model must say with his or her behavior that being a Jew and living Jewishly in a significant way are important for "me". Jewish community center professionals must be able to comfortably articulate a personal Jewish vision. The idea that the same expectation is applicable to Board leadership is yet another significant challenge.

Thus, for the worker in a Jewish community center devoted to Jewish continuity, there must be a blending of knowledge, value and skill reinforced with personal commitment.

The response among some Center personnel to the expectations and demands placed upon them has been marked by a hesitancy in their readiness and a limitation in their ability to integrate this blending of their Jewishness, their professional discipline, their commitment to the Center's role in Jewish communal service and their use of self in a disciplined way.

The implementation of "Maximizing Jewish Educational Effectiveness of JCCs" means a call to action, to give major direction and assistance to a change in our priorities over a period

of time. The timeliness of the JWB imperative is significant as there is a readiness and receptivity among Center members and users of services to seek knowledge and to experience Judaism in its many forms.

Maximizing Jewish educational effectiveness is a timely challenge when being Jewish in the 80s is for many more public, more visible and more comfortable. One can be Jewish or walk away from being Jewish. Many Jews have stopped walking away. They can contribute to a campaign or feel proud about Israel and in so doing feel good about "belonging".

Being Jewish has also become trivialized as there are so many varied options for identifying oneself as being Jewish. We seem to be bursting today with Jewishness which is defined narrowly by so many Jews. Jewish continuity, however, withers when there is little substance. The "openness" of the Center and its unique non-doctrinaire stance enables it to attract the broadest spectrum of people. Centers also make it easy to be Jewish.

I also acknowledge the large number of Jews who are intimidated by their feelings of inadequacy of Jewish knowledge and tend to run away. They, too, need the Center. The Center, if it is to assure Jewish continuity, must be vigorous in reaching out to all of its members, including intermarried couples, to engage, to inspire, educate, elevate—and enjoy—Judaism. If we only make it easy to be Jewish, we weaken Judaism.

The JWB initiative in Jewish education also comes at a time when thousands of Jews express pride in asserting their ethnic and religious identity while there are others receptive and eager to learn to live Jewishly. The engagement and interrelationship of Jews of all beliefs and persuasions within the Center setting is one of its greatest

strengths. The Center has become a significant form of Jewish affiliation for many Jews.

We are challenged as never before to assure Jewish continuity by giving greater depth and substance to Jewish education and Jewish experiences in our Centers and by engaging in a total communal initiative with other Jewish education instruments within our respective communities.

Cultural Arts and Jewish Continuity

Baltimore is the most appropriate place in the world for AJCW members and colleagues to reflect on the value of Jewish education, particularly in Jewish cultural arts, because just a few streets away was born the forerunner of the Jewish community center in America—literary societies, where poets and writers, their readers and audiences, came together.

The Center's championing of the Jewish cultural arts could become a significant factor in maximizing its Jewish educational effectiveness. "Woe to him that builds mansions for the body and not for the soul!" are the wise words of one of our sages, which Center professionals have unfortunately ignored. They have, however, adhered to the Rambam's axiom that "perfection of the body has preference over perfection of the soul". They have not advanced the arts in Centers to the same status and in the same magnitude that they have appropriately advanced physical fitness. They have built "mansions for the body" and neglected nurturing the heart and soul of the poet. They also need to exercise that which is beautiful and aesthetic in the lives of men and women of all ages.

Centers are eminently qualified to continue to play the leading role in the furtherance of Jewish culture. There is no other institution so fully engaged

in the promotion of Jewish culture and performing arts in our local communities.

In the 1970's, Centers were challenged by Rabbi Eugene Borowitz at a JWB Cultural Arts Conference to become the "infra-structure" of a growing community involvement in Jewish cultural arts. This has not yet become a reality in a number of communities.

Ironically, the endowment of the universal arts, cultural centers and concert halls in many cities, small and large, is owed to the generosity and financial support of Jews, many of whom are or were on the boards of Centers and Federations.

The Jewish philanthropic contribution to the universal arts and culture of American cities is outstanding and assures a continuing American culture. The Jewish community must also respond generously and forcefully to the continuing Judaic cultural component of our lives. The arts may not offer solutions to problems confronting the Jewish community but they do make us more human, inspire a passion for Judaism and produce Jewish creativity and Jewish creators to assure Jewish continuity.

Centers should assume a mandate to become Jewish cultural centers of distinction in their communities and maximize every opportunity to raise their standards to a new level of quality, visibility and prominence. Centers are the only institution in America that can effectively achieve becoming *the* Jewish cultural hub of the entire community.

The cultural linkage between the American Jew and Israel continues to have a profound and lasting impact on our Centers and communities representing a major resource and potent force to maximize understanding of Israel and to deepen its meaning to Jewish continuity.

In the final analysis, the quality,

knowledge and commitment of the professional and the profession of Center work will help strengthen a creative Jewish continuity. It must be a profession which is tied to an accepted value base, a profession which is clear about its mission, a profession which derives much from the Jewish past and is devoted to *Klal Yisrael*, a profession that produces leaders, not technicians, a profession that will reestablish responsible education toward social action, a profession which strives for excellence, a profession that will engage and cooperate with other arms of the Jewish community, a profession that is linked to "common cause" within the setting of the Jewish community center and with the field of Jewish communal service, a profession whose axiom is to perfect the body *and* the soul, a profession which enjoys the dignity of the Jewish notion of *Klei Kodesh*.

The honor we bestow upon Max Tas-

gal as *our klei kodesh* is in the spirit of the man himself for, to a great extent, Max Tasgal is one of those who originally set a high standard of professionalism.

Thank you, Max, very dearly, for teaching me to be people-oriented, for demanding of me a certain quality of work, for sharing with me your insights, your love, your compassion and your sensitivity, for encouraging a sense of humor. Thank you for the times you pointed out my deficiencies and thanked me for my efforts even when the project failed. Thank you for continuing to be a beloved mentor and friend and, most of all, thank you for your humanity. You have helped many of us to strengthen the role of the Jewish community center in Jewish continuity. We must now rekindle the spirit and substance of professionalism and excellence you and others have pioneered.