



SOUTHERN JEWISH HERITAGE

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Myra Dreifus . . .

True Humanitarian - Mental Health Advocate

Memphis First School Lunch Program

by Dr. Selma Lewis

This is the thirteenth in a series of biographical sketches of Jewish community leaders included in our forthcoming book, "Chronicles of the Jewish Community of Memphis."

At barely four feet ten inches tall Myra Dreifus had to stand on a stool to reach the podium. Making speeches was never her favorite occupation. She wrote them out and then read them, "to avoid feeling nervous." Her message, however, was eloquent, calling out to the best that was in her fellow Memphians, asking them to join her in what finally did become a community crusade. From an initial Food for Fitness committee of ten, the Fund for Needy School Children movement grew to include church and synagogue congregations in all areas of Memphis. Even some businesses, generally those located close to schools, also made contributions to the welfare of children. Newspapers and television provided favorable publicity. It was Dreifus' position, reflected on a button created for her by one of her volunteers, "You cannot educate a hungry child." The Memphis Board of Education was initially deaf to this point of view, believing that its responsibility was only to educate the children, not to feed them. The two positions were incompatible until an aroused public, alerted by this diminutive but determined woman, influenced the Board of Education to agree finally that the ability to learn was tied to freedom from hunger.

While working to assure school lunches for needy children, Myra Dreifus encountered a principal of an inner-city school who opposed free lunches in his school, fearing that the children would become dependent, unable ever to provide for themselves. Dreifus said to him, "My lunch has always been provided for me, first by my father and later by my husband. It has not made me



Myra Dreifus

dependent." The principal, looking at this dynamic woman standing before him, realized that he had never met a more independent person. He became an ardent advocate for the free lunch program.

Dreifus was born Myra Finsterwald, to German-Jewish parents in Detroit, Michigan. She married Fred Dreifus and they moved to Memphis in the 1930's to start a jewelry business. In Detroit she had an important unpaid volunteer job at the head of a Big Sisters Agency where she learned many useful things about the management of a group of volunteers. When she moved to Memphis, Dreifus continued to work as a volunteer, establishing a summer camp for children at Ridgeway Country Club. Realizing that there was no Mental Health Association in the city, she re-established an agency that had languished for years.

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JHS To Honor New Members At February Meeting

As we go to press, our most successful membership drive since the founding of the Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and The Mid-South is drawing to a close. And, our new members will be honored at our General Membership Meeting--Neighborhood House Reunion-- Sunday, February 18, 2:30 p.m. at the Jewish Community Center. Emily Baer, who has studied and written about "The Pinch" and early Memphis Jewish History, will be our guest speaker. Mrs. Baer will talk specifically about Neighborhood House, how it served the many immigrants who made up the early Memphis Jewish Community and how it continues to serve our newest immigrants from Russia. Several people who have been associated with Neighborhood House over the years will join Mrs. Baer. Also, audience par-

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Brownsville Trip Enjoyed By All

On Sunday, May 21, forty-three members of the Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South met at the Jewish Community Center to take an historic first bus trip to Temple Adas Israel in Brownsville, Tennessee. Program chairman Joel Felt gave us a brief outline of the day's events and soon we were headed for Brownsville.

As we neared our destination, the bus stopped to pick up one of our Brownsville members, Robert Kalin, who joined us on the bus. Mr. Kalin is a retired professor of history from Florida State University who moved to Brownsville approximately 4 years ago to join his daughter who is presently living there. As he directed our bus driver, Mr. Kalin, who has a keen sense of history, told us about the early Jewish

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**JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MEMPHIS AND THE MID-SOUTH - FOUNDED IN 1986
P.O. BOX 17304, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38187**

President's Message



Steven Biller

Elie Wiesel in his publication of his memoirs titled *Tous Les Fleuves Vont a La Mer* (All Rivers Run To The Sea) writes "in Hitler's day Jewish life was in danger. Now it's Jewish memory that is at risk." When questioned as to what he means by "Jewish memory is at risk", Wiesel responded by reflection on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the

Liberation of Auschwitz as the best example. Wiesel advises that the international ceremony initially did not mention the word Jew, but for a few minor times. Wiesel was able to change this grave omission through his friendship with Lech Walesa. But Wiesel asks the questions -- who will preserve the Jewish memory thirty years from now? Who will see to it that the Jewish component of the Second World War (Holocaust) is preserved?

So it is in our community. Who will see to it that the Jewish component in the history of Memphis and the Mid-South is preserved. It can only be all of us. So as never to forget, we must remember. To remember is to preserve our past. To preserve our past, we must actually participate through and support the Society by contributing our time, our memories (oral histories and artifacts) and monies. Let us hear from you. Call one friend or relative and ask them to join us. ★

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I must apologize to all of our members for the long delay in getting this issue of "Southern Jewish Heritage" to you. Numerous problems during the summer and fall of 1995, both personal and business, left little time for the Newsletter. We're now back on track and already working on our next edition.

David Schneider, Editor

Welcome To Our New Members

From Memphis . . .

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Congratulations Mr. President !

Our own, Dr. Berkly Kalin, Professor of History at Univ. of Memphis was installed as President of the Southern Jewish Historical Society at their annual meeting in New Orleans in October. Also, Patricia LaPointe, Senior Reference Librarian at the Memphis-Shelby County Library was elected Secretary.

The Memphis Music of Berl Olswanger



Berl Olswanger, 1946.

The following articles have been reprinted with the permission of Anna Olswanger, from her publication "The Memphis Music of Berl Olswanger." The book, edited by Ms. Olswanger, tells the story of her father's musical career through the use of newspaper articles and pictures. Also included is a booklet of songs written and published by Berl Olswanger. The book is available from Anna Olswanger Bookes, 7117 Harps Mill Road, Raleigh, NC 27615.

City's Versatile "Mr. Music," Berl Olswanger, Dies at Age 63

Berl Olswanger-whose life was a tune everybody could hum-died at 9:25 a.m. yesterday after a six-month battle with cancer. He was 63.

Olswanger was a pop musician who could play "highbrow", "middle-brow", and "lowbrow" with both hands. Small wonder. Everything he touched turned to music. The touch was so obvious that people called him "Mr. Music."

He was going to be a concert pianist, but a bout with the mumps changed his direction.

"I was supposed to go to Chicago to study," he once told an interviewer. "Arrangements had been made for me to have a job as an usher so I could hear all the concerts. The stage was all set. But I got to thinking about it while I was sick. And it was just too depressing."

He was a child prodigy. He started playing the piano when he was 3. By

the time he was 12, he'd landed his first professional job-staff pianist for WMC radio. At 18, he was the leader of the station's band.

By then, he'd already made a name for himself at Central High School and nearby student hangouts.

"He was a likable, easy-going sort of fellow," recalls Sam Mays, a fellow student at Central. "He wanted people to like him, and they did. He had talent and he used it to make people happy. The first song he ever played at Central was 'Dinah.' It became a sentimental thing for him-a trademark.

"He also played at Fortune's Jungle Garden. Fortune's was a popular teenage hangout on Union. Everybody went there for ice cream. The kids would say, 'I'll meet you at Fortune's,' and the mamas would pass out. Anyway, Berl played the piano inside Fortune's on Sunday afternoons."

When World War II broke out, he was half of a piano duo known as 'Cats on the Keys.' The other cat was Jack Morgan, who joined the Army. Olswanger enlisted in the Navy. He was serving on a destroyer in the South Pacific when Admiral William F. Halsey heard him play. Halsey made him an entertainment officer, and he was discharged in 1945 as a lieutenant.

A few months after his discharge, Olswanger put on a concert of "middle-brow" music to raise money for a trip to New York and a shot at the big time. He played "Clair de Lune" and "O! Man River" and "Begin the Beguine." The concert packed Ellis Auditorium and got high praise in both Memphis newspapers. It also got Olswanger to New York where a booking agency worked up a program designed to make him a big star in three years.

Olswanger thought about it and decided he didn't want any part of it. "I figured I'd rather come home and be poor and be with people I love than to make a lot of money in that rat race," he said.

Thus Olswanger returned to Memphis, opened a music store on Union Avenue, married Edna, the girl he'd met at the radio station, put together a band and proceeded to become the most influential music man in the city. (He maintained a store on Union until 1979, long after the nation's musical appetites shifted from pianos to guitars.)

Olswanger played for dances, country club parties, conventions, receptions, charity balls, civic club dinners, and just about anything else that wanted a little "happy music." Although he occasionally accompanied superstars like Bing Crosby, Jack Benny and Judy Garland, he was known best for his appearances before small hometown audiences of all kinds.

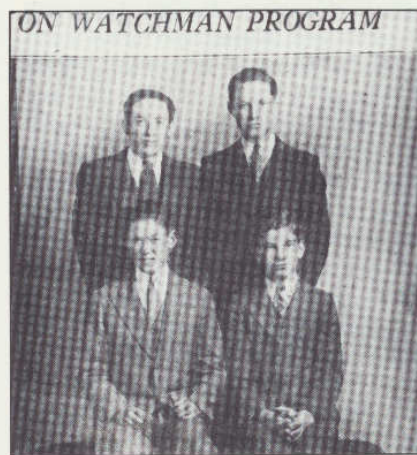
John Kenny, who later became a close friend, remembers:

"We went to a party in a restaurant in northern Mississippi where it seemed doubtful if anybody would recognize him. He was just starting to eat his dinner when the owner came up and asked him to play. Berl left his dinner and played the piano for the next half hour and everybody loved it. He was always cordial. I've seen people sit for hours at the end of his piano stool talking in his ear while he was playing. He never lost his patience.

"He had a song for everybody he knew," Kenny said. "This person would walk into the room where he was playing and he'd shift into that person's song. He was that close to people. To him nobody was a face in the crowd."

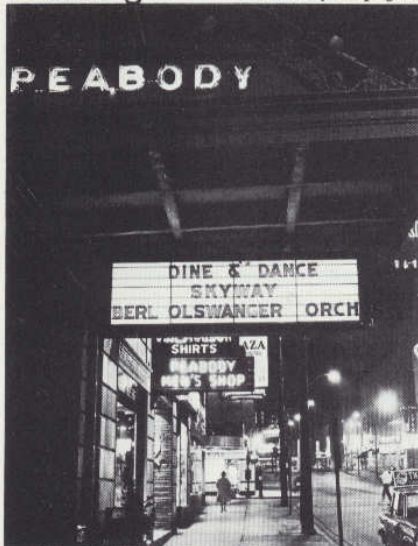
If the people in his audience didn't have a song, he would create one for them. Often, he picked out a tune and made up lyrics about the people he was playing for. The lyrics were usually funny, but never harmful.

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Berl Olswanger with
Nat Buring and His Orchestra

Above is the Nat Buring Orchestra who have been heard many times over Station WNBR on The Hebrew Watchman Hour. Standing in the rear is Nat Buring who handles the drums, and Carl Stark who plays the saxophone. George Gage (left) strums the banjo, and Beryl Olswanger (right) plays the piano.



The Peabody Marquee, c. 1960.

Olswanger wrote music as well as performed it. He composed numbers like "Juice Harp Rag" and "Berl's Boogie."

In 1956, he developed the "Berl Olswanger Complete Piano Course," which was used as a manual by both teachers and pupils. A wide range of people took the course, including children, housewives, businessmen, vocalists and prospective accompanists for the choirs of 563 Memphis churches. (In those days, the city boasted more churches than gas stations.)

Through the music store, literally thousands of people took lessons not only on the piano but on the organ, guitar, drums, ukulele, and banjo. Eventually, he set up an entertainment bureau that provided performers for different events throughout the city.

Olswanger went to considerable lengths to make contact with people. Once, for example, he organized a dance club that met monthly just to dance to Olswanger music. And friends say he was always mailing newspaper clippings to people whose name appeared in the newspapers.

Mays credits Olswanger for the popularity of Central High School reunion. "We graduated together in the class of '34," Mays said. "Berl called up one day back in the '70's and said we ought to have a 40th reunion because we might not live till our 50th. He did most of the work getting people together. We had a dinner dance at the University Club and Berl sent orchids to all the

ladies."

Olswanger was one of the musical pioneers in local television. From the late 1940's through 1965, he had shows on WMC-TV, WHBQ-TV and WREC-TV, now known as WREG-TV. He also was a well-known performer at special events at The Peabody, the Balinese Ballroom and the old Claridge Hotel.

He was closely associated with Memphis press circles, having provided the entertainment annually for the Mid-South Editors Luncheon, sponsored by The Commercial Appeal; served as chief Goodfellow for the Memphis Press-Scimitar's Christmas charity, from 1971-73; and served as music director for the annual Gridiron shows, from 1961-1980. He was given the Gridiron Headliner Award, in 1975.

Olswanger graduated from Memphis State University in 1943, and then went back almost 20 years later. He earned a master's degree in 1960 and had done work on a doctorate.

In 1970, Olswanger was named music and art consultant and public relations director for the Shelby County School system. His secretary, Carolyn Kealy, nominated him Boss of the Year.

Although he was a member of literally dozens of organizations, he was



BIRTH OF BLUES -- Berl Olswanger and W.C. Handy gave "The Newspaperman's Blues" its world premiere Monday night at The 30-Club, newspapermen's club at 632 Union, the organization to which Handy dedicated it. Lyrics are by George Sisler, staff features writer for The Commercial Appeal. Accompanying the famed trumpeter at the piano is Berl Olswanger, and looking on is Paul Flowers, columnist. Memphis Commercial Appeal, December 1, 1953.

most active in the Kiwanis Club. He was installed as president in 1961, and received the club's 1971-72 T.G. Kirkpatrick Memorial Award for outstanding service and leadership in the community. He also held the Jewish Welfare Fund award and the YMCA's Man-for-Boy award.

In 1980, he celebrated his 50th anniversary as an entertainer by giving free programs for many of the organizations that had supported him through the years. At one such program he received the mayor's award of merit.

By then, everybody knew that Olswanger had not simply spent his life making Memphis music—he'd made Memphis musical.

Memphis Commercial Appeal, Oct. 12, 1981

The Song Has Ended for Berl Olswanger

A little piece of Memphis' heart will die tomorrow when they bury my good friend, Berl Olswanger.

Somewhere along the way, someone dubbed Berl "Mr. Music of Memphis." It was more than a title. He was just that.

I would be hard to find a Memphian today who, at one time or another, has not danced to Olswanger's music, whether it was at a high school prom, Kiwanis or Rotary Club dance, or a country club function. If music was involved, Berl was there at one time or another.

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CLOSE HARMONY -- In his studio store at 1531 Union Berl Olswanger launched the sixth of his successful classes of multiple piano instruction. The students, all playing and learning at the same time by a revolutionary new method of teaching, are Suzette Cathey, Lenora Reinhardt, Mrs. Mel Olswanger, Norman Shirley, Helen Braswell, Josephine Lowrance, Mrs. Charles Hull and June Richmond.

Always involved in learning, even into her eighties, in the 1930's Dreifus formed a group of women to study topics of general interest under the leadership of a college professor. With sly humor, the group informally named itself "Culture." Dreifus' interest in children and in the arts led her to become chairman of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra's Children's Concerts.

When Dreifus became a local celebrity as organizer of the Fund for Needy School Children, her advice and participation were sought by many agencies dealing with the changes in the role of government in the 1960's. Working with Frances (Mrs. Benjamin) Hooks, a leading black citizen and teacher, Jewish philanthropists Willie Loewenberg, Alfred Alperin and many others, she created Riverview Day Care Center in a neighborhood that desperately needed such a facility. She and her husband helped to establish Operation Action, Op-Act for short, an organization that provided supervised after-school activities for inner-city children of working parents.

The summer of 1968, the year of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination in Memphis, threatened to be dangerous for the city if teenagers, in particular, had no jobs or time-consuming useful activities. Working with the Fund for Needy School Children Steering Committee, Dreifus determined to prevent trouble by providing jobs for some young people and scholarships for training for others. Assisted by guidance counselors from the schools, needy young people were identified. But raising money to fund the program remained to be done. Dreifus believed that the city and county should allocate the money, deeming it a valid expenditure of public funds because it would demonstrate the concern of government for the welfare of its people. After several weeks of lobbying, members of the city Council and the County Court granted a sum of \$200,000 to fund the program. Memphis remained quiet over the long summer, while many other cities in the nation did not.

One of her friends told Myra Dreifus that she would be lonely when she became old because she did not play cards. As an advocate for racial harmony and for the welfare of all children,



Mrs. Dreifus busy with one of her most loved programs, her City School Free Lunch Programs.

Courtesy
University of Memphis
Library, Mississippi
Valley Collection

she never had time to feel lonely or old. Dreifus was the recipient of many honors, among them: the Humanitarian Award by the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and an honorary doctorate by Southwestern (now Rhodes) College where she served on the President's Council. Her actions and ideals inspired the community as a whole and her own children in particular. Her son, Jed, has devoted much of his life since retirement from the Dreifus Jewelry Company as President of the Board of Directors of LeMoyné-Owen College, a black institution in Memphis. Her daughter-in-law, Jeanne (Mrs. Jed)

Dreifus, was president of the National Council of Jewish Women's Memphis branch and served on its national board. Both she and her mother-in-law received the organization's prestigious Hannah G. Solomon award.

Long before the women's movement arose, Myra Dreifus commanded respect in a male-dominated world as she fought against racism and social inequality. Devotion to the cause of human welfare gave her the courage and wisdom to approach and grapple with difficult problems. By challenging Memphis to reach its highest potential, she was the conscience of the community. ♀

Special Conference Draws Wide Support

The Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South co-sponsored an important conference at the Memphis Radisson Hotel, March 30, 31, and April 1. President Stephen Biller welcomed the participants and delegates. The co-sponsors included Bornblum Judaic Studies, the Southern Jewish Historical Society, the Marcus Orr Center for the Humanities, and the University of Memphis Department of History. The Magdovitz Foundation also underwrote the event. Dr. Berkley Kalin, program chairman and President-Elect of the SJHS, concluded the meeting was "a resounding success." Delegates to this special conference looked back several decades to examine Southern rabbis' involvement in black civil rights.

"The meeting had a large attendance and great support from the greater Memphis community. People also came from Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, and all parts of the U.S., plus about 150 Memphis delegates. This included educators,

political leaders and Jewish leaders," Kalin said.

Kalin credited the Memphis Commercial Appeal for giving front page coverage in the Sunday paper a week before the conference. Many blacks also attended, and if not for the NAACP annual dinner held at the same time, there would have been more black participants," Kalin stated. "Nevertheless, we had an average of 50-75 attendees in each session with comments and discussions continuing into the halls."

Local scholars who participated included Rabbi Harry Danziger, Rabbi Micah Greenstein, Dr. Abraham Kriegel (U. of M. Dept. of History), Dr. Patricia LaPoint (curator of the Memphis Room, Memphis Public Library), and Dr. Kenneth Goings (professor of African-American Studies, U. of M.). Rabbi Howard Greenstein of Jacksonville, Florida and Rabbi Myron Berman of Richmond, Virginia were among the outstanding scholar/writers who came to participate.

Trip

Continued from page 1

community of Brownsville and pointed out several homes of prominent Jewish families who contributed greatly to the growth of the city. Our first stop was at College Hill, a complex which was at one time a women's college, later the local high school and currently, a museum. Here we enjoyed our picnic lunches and the chance to socialize with all of the participants.

From there, we proceeded to the Temple where we had an opportunity to leisurely inspect the beautiful stained glass windows, the Ark and other memorabilia that had been brought in for us to enjoy. We then assembled as a group and Bob Kalin passed out historical outlines about two of the early Jewish families and told us several interesting facts about the early Jewish history of the city. He then introduced Mayor Webb, who greeted and thanked us for coming to Brownsville. This was the first group of Jewish tourists to make a trip of this nature to visit the Temple. Next, Mr. Kalin introduced Rev. Donald Brooks, Vicar of the Episcopal Church of Brownsville, which is directly across the street from the Temple. Since coming to Brownsville seven years ago, Rev. Brooks has been interested in the Temple and has updated and rewritten a history of Temple Adas Israel which he presents as a tour guide to those visiting the Temple. Each member of our group received a copy of this most interesting history.

Rev. Brooks shared some fascinating facts about the early history of the Temple explaining that one of the Torah scrolls was brought to Brownsville from Europe and is well over 125 years old. In the earliest days of the Jewish community, it was kept in private homes where services were held and later transferred to the Temple when it was completed in 1882. Rev. Brooks then gave vivid descriptions and explanations about six of the beautiful windows and told of a German glazer who was brought in to do the windows for one of the local churches. It is believed that he also did the windows for the Temple. There is no information about the actual designer or how some of the details of the windows were selected, although obviously, there were some very learned people in the community who selected the word-

Members

Continued from Page 1

participation will be invited and welcomed. Our Membership Co-Chairpersons, Harriet Stern and Sumner Levine and their Volunteer Committee have given much time and great effort putting together a direct mail campaign with telephone follow up that has brought 70 new members to the Society. We really appreciate all of the hard work Harriet,

Sumner and their great volunteers have done to make this membership campaign such a success. Several members of the Telephone Call Committee still have contacts to make and we feel certain our grand total of new members will be even more than 70. Congratulations to Harriet Stern and Sumner Levine and the entire Membership Committee for a wonderful membership drive. ✨

Dr. Jacob Marcus Dies at 99

Jacob Marcus, the Father of American Jewish History, Founder and Director of the American Jewish Archives at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati died in November, 1995. Our Society along with Temple Israel had the pleasure of having Dr. Marcus as a guest lecturer in December, 1993, at Temple Israel. In our Winter 1993 issue, we published an article "In

the Presence of Greatness", about Dr. Marcus, written by one of his greatest student admirers, Rabbi Mica Greenstein of Temple Israel in Memphis. Dr. Marcus recognized the growing importance of American Jewish History and dedicated his life to studying, teaching and preserving our Jewish past. We will all miss the greatness of his presence. ✨

SJHS Observed 20th Anniversary

At its New Orleans meeting October 27, 28 and 29, The Southern Jewish Historical Society celebrated its 20th year. The conference was a great success with many outstanding sessions and speakers. During the Sabbath dinner and services held at New Orleans' Temple Sinai, delegates joined the congregation in celebrating its 125th anniversary. At the end of the conference two buses took delegates to visit the Godchaux Reserve Plantation, a sugar plantation once belonging to the Jewish family of Leon Godchaux. They heard the fascinating story of the Godchaux family related by family members.

In our next issue we will have a more detailed report about this fine conference.

ing and helped design them. (For complete descriptions of the windows, see *Southern Jewish Heritage* Vol. 7, No. 1-1994 & Vol. 8, No. 1-1995.)

From the Temple, we went to the Jewish cemetery which dates from approximately 1875 and found the burial plots and grave stones of most of the early founders of the Jewish community in Brownsville. Several of our members on the tour found the burial plots of early members of their families. After an interesting visit there, we returned to the museum at College Hill where we were able to leisurely look through the Felsenthal Lincoln collection which had been given to the museum by the Felsenthal family. The collection was excellent and contained many interesting items and historical facts about Abraham Lincoln

as a young man and his life prior to becoming President of the United States. At one time the museum building at College Hill was used as Brownsville High School and large framed pictures of the various graduating classes were displayed in the hallways. Again, several of our members found pictures of their early descendants in the graduating classes. From there, it was back to Memphis, arriving at the Jewish Community Center at about 4:00 p.m. Program Chairman Joel Felt along with Marsha Bicks did an excellent job of planning the tour and everyone on the bus really had a wonderful time. Our thanks to Joel and Marsha for all their hard work and effort. The question most heard as our members left the bus was, "Where are we going next?" ✨

Olswanger



Berl Olswanger, c. 1980

His music will be missed, true, but what I will miss even more than his music will be Berl Olswanger, the man. Berl Olswanger, who always flashed that ready smile that never seemed fake because it wasn't. Berl Olswanger, who was never heard to speak a disparaging word about a soul. Berl Olswanger, the established musician who was always more than willing to give a newcomer a chance.

No matter the mood you were in at the time you chanced across Berl, within minutes he had you feeling it was great to be alive; to be in Memphis; to be on that dance floor letting it all hand out as Berl, as always, plinked the black and white ivories and surveyed the floor to look at all the happy faces.

Berl never worried about what could have been. He could have been as big a star as Roger Williams or Liberace had he chosen a life on the road.

Instead, 'He preferred having a family life and he loved the people of Memphis, so he chose to stay at home. He was a perfectionist. he practiced on that piano two hours every day of his life, no matter how he felt.'

If Berl loved the people of Memphis, that love was returned a thousand times over.

For Berl Olswanger, the song may have ended, but his melody will always linger on in the lives of those of us he touched. ☆

Bill E. Burk, *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, Oct. 13, 1981.



Berl Olswanger, April 1942



Berl Olswanger, c. 1952

The National Conference of Christians and Jews Honors Sam Margolin with Humanitarian Award

On June 1, 1995, The National Conference of Christians and Jews made their first Posthumous Humanitarian Award in the 34 year history of the organization. Mr. Sam Margolin was so honored on this evening along with Fred Davis, Frank Lewis McRae and Brother Adrian Powers. The following sketch is reproduced from the 34th Humanitarian Awards Program.

Sam Margolin has always had the best interest of our community at heart. A native Memphian and product of Leah Grammar School, South Side and Memphis Law School, he was admitted to the bar for private law practice in 1929. After graduating from law school at night, while working for The Press Scimitar, he founded Southern Law School in 1932, graduating over 1,000 lawyers during its existence. This night law school provided the opportunity for individuals who otherwise would not have had the possibility to become lawyers. Southern Law School merged with Memphis State University Law School in 1964. Always recognized as a

gifted speaker, Mr. Margolin could frequently be found at the Hebrew day school or speaking on behalf of Orthodox Judaism. In 1945 he joined his brothers in becoming one of the city's largest home builders. Recognizing a need they established National Mortgage in 1951 specializing in home mortgages. Not content with his community efforts, he and his brothers established the Memphis Hebrew Academy in 1949, and he served as President and Chairman until 1965. The school, now named Margolin Hebrew Academy, stands as his proudest achievement providing children the opportunity to be trained in Judaism and Americanism. Mr. Margolin has also served as president of Baron Hirsch Congregation and as Regional Vice-President, Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America. Mr. Margolin and his efforts have reached every corner of our community making it a better place for all its citizens.

Over the years, many Memphis Jewish Leaders have been honored by being presented The National Conference Humanitarian Award and we are pleased to present the names of all of the award winners from our Jewish Community who are among the 71 recipients given this honor by the National Conference of Christians and Jews since the first award in 1962.

1964 Abe Plough*
1969 Sam Cooper
1974 William A. Lowenberg
1978 Rabbi James A. Wax*
1979 Philip Belz
1980 S.L. Kopald, Jr.
1981 Leo Bearman, Sr.*
1982 Jack Belz
1983 Benjamine Goodman*
1984 Myra Dreifus*
1985 Ira A. Lipman

1986 Avron B. Fogelman
1987 Lester A. Rosen
1988 Elias J. Goldsmith, Jr.
1989 Honey Hohenburg Scheidt
1990 Nina Katz
1991 W.I. Lowenberg
1992 Irby Cooper
1993 Leo Bearman, Jr.
1994 Herschel L. Feibelman
1995 Sam Margolin*

* Deceased

The JHS would like to acquire National Conference Programs for each of the years honoring these fine people so we can build a complete set for our archives. If you can contribute a copy of any of these programs, please contact Harriet Stern, David Schneider or Leonid Saharovici.

On November 13th those who attended the JHS/JCC Book Week Program featuring author Theo Richmond were fascinated by the story of his search for a lost Polish Shtetl. Mr. Richmond, introduced by JHS Program Chairman Joel Felt, told how this project took over seven years of his life, culminating in his completion of this wonderful book, "Konin: A Quest." Mr. Richmond, using slides from Poland, told how and why he became so obsessed with his subject and what it took to recreate this world that is gone forever. For those who missed this wonderful evening, we are printing Mr. Richmond's press release in its entirety.

"Theo Richmond's quest for the story of a lost Polish Shtetl named Konin is a remarkable display of powerful narrative skills and the grand human impulse to revive and exalt tales which many wanted obliterated. In its combination of personal and historic drama, it is unique, engrossing and triumphant."

Upon its publication in England earlier this year, Theo Richmond's new book was lauded by critics and adored by readers. Called "moving and unforgettable" by *The Independent* (London) and an immediate bestseller,

KONIN: A QUEST (August 28, 1994: \$27.50) by Theo Richmond will now be published in the United States by Pantheon Books.

Since his early childhood, Theo Richmond heard a word that stayed in his mind, the name of a place – Konin – the Polish shtetl from which his parents came. But this town vanished, along with members of his family, when the German army swept through Poland in 1939. KONIN is the story of his quest for this lost community, his quest to place on record a town, rich with history that has been destroyed. ★

MARK YOUR CALENDAR AND JOIN US !!

**Let's All Welcome our New Members at the
"Neighborhood House Reunion" at our General Membership Meeting
Sunday – February 18 – 2:30 P.M.
Jewish Community Center
Refreshments Will Be Served**



**SOUTHERN
JEWISH
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