

Rabbi James Mirel
YIZKOR 2008/5769

The hour of *Yizkor* on Yom Kippur is the most painful and poignant of the entire year. Our community gathers and looks around and sees amidst the hundreds there, so many empty places, loved ones and friends taken by death during the past year added to the losses over the many years. It is so painful to acknowledge, especially as we grow older, those who are present only in spirit outnumber the ones with us physically. Silently we remember grandparents, parents, siblings, loved ones, and friends, a favorite teacher or beloved aunt or uncle. And I can not fathom the feelings of those who sit here bereft of a life-partner of 30, 40 even 50 or 60 years, next to whom you sat so many *yizkors*, so many Yom Kippurs, and now that place is empty. Words are inadequate to express the depths of sorrow and anguish of one here today remembering a child or grandchildren whose death overturned the natural progression of life and death - what unmitigated sorrow.

The Jewish tradition is gentle but clear. Death is the destiny of all life-and no one can know how long the path of life will be for any of us. Our tradition is also teaches the value of each life no matter how long or short. Most importantly, Judaism affirms the hope that that which is given to us-the gift of life-is finite only in earthly terms-life eternal-as inexplicable as that idea may seem to us- is the destiny of each soul. But even if we can hold on to that hope, it amny do little to assuage the sadness that comes when we can no longer see or touch or talk to our loved ones.

This year-from last Yom Kippur to this Yom Kippur saw the greatest number of deaths in our Temple community that we have ever known-nineteen of our Temple members and so many more dear parents, loved ones and friends who were honorary members-who visited us over the years and shared in joys and sorrows. As I do each year, I will give a brief tribute to each of our departed TBT members since last Yom Kippur in the order of their passing. A few words about each, knowing that each one deserves an entire book or memory and praise.

Just a week after last Yom Kippur, PHYLLIS COHEN was taken from us. She had just reached the Biblical age of strength 69 years and left behind a loving husband of 61 years, our fellow member Dick, children, grandchildren and a great grandchild. She was the heart of her family and a loyal member of our Temple. She is greatly missed.

Two months later, a long time Temple member died MARILYN (MARY) MILLER. Mary lived her entire life in the Seattle area. She was much beloved and her death was a blow to her dear husband Ralph, our fellow member and only child Stephanie. She was a source of strength to many and lived a full and righteous life. This gentle soul will be sorely missed.

ARTHUR KULMAN died in December and left behind an amazing legacy of public service. He was well-known in this region as a pioneer or radio and marketing. But even more importantly, he was a loving and supportive husband to our fellow member Shirley,

father, we mention our fellow member Debbie Lawson, grandfather, great-grandfather, loved one and friend. His candle was bright and luminous; sadly it was extinguished this past year.

A truly tragic death came to us in January, that of JERRY ROSENTHAL who was stricken by a virulent form of cancer and died at well before his 60th year. Jerry was an extraordinary man, a hard worker who loved sports and especially fishing. But at his heart, he was a family man. He was the best friend and soul mate to his wife Stephanie, our fellow member and an outstanding Dad and he was even blessed to see a grandson before he left us. Jerry contemplated his death with courage and his concerns were only for his family. What a brave man and what a tragic death.

We lost SAM CALVO in January after a long and productive life. Sam and his dear Dodie were recent members of our Temple, but Sam was a life long Seattle native and proud sephardic Jew. He was an artist who left behind beautiful metal work, some in our local synagogues. A gentle soul; we will all miss Sam.

Another person who left as all too soon was MARC HERSHMAN, just 65 years old. Marc was a well-known professor of marine policy and an advocate for maritime policy and education. His death was noted throughout the world and his career lauded. Marc was also an intense but fun-loving hiker and tennis player who touched many lives, especially those of his wife Carol and his children. He loved being a member of TBT and we will miss him.

Our 7th death was especially painful to our Temple, because DR. JOSEPH SCHUSTER had been the heart and soul of our Temple for over 30 years; a past president and visionary. He was one of the most regular attendees of services week in and week out, so his absence is so palpable. Only 70 years old when he died, Joe leaves behind his dear wife Rabbi Arlene, his children including fellow members Brian and Mark and many grandchildren. All of us owe a debt of gratitude to Joe Schuster; he kept our temple alive and vibrant and we will be missed.

On the same day in March, fellow member HAROLD DREBIN died at age 91. Harold was a proud WWII vet who had served with General Eisenhower in Europe. He was a loving husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather loved one and friend. He and his dear Priscilla our fellow member loved nothing better than to take long drives to see our beautiful state of Washington in its pristine beauty. He had a great sense of humor. His motto was “shake the hand of the man who shook the hand of the great John L.”

We miss TED ALTSCHUL who died on March 20th after a difficult struggle for several years. Ted was an out-going man strong of body and spirit. Ted spoke from his heart and did not mince words. He was a family man and he and his beloved Marilyn raised a loyal loving family including our fellow member Jeff. He loved the Temple and was an advocate for those in need. He was a good man with an unusual sense of humor. We all miss Ted Altschul.

LAUREL JONES was another one of us taken all too soon at the age of 61. Laurel was an outstanding mother and she and her dear Jerry raised two great kids. Sadly her son Aaron died a few years back and it broke her heart. She was courageous in her struggle with cancer and determined to live as long and as fully as she could. She died peacefully at home. Laurel Jones advocated for those who could not advocate for themselves. She was a true hero.

Another person taken much too soon was LAUREN CHAJFEC. She was plagued with many health problems which cumulatively ended her life. She and Hector worked hard to raise their kids and had their share of challenges. Lauren persevered in the face of a difficult set of circumstances. We trust she is now at peace.

EDYTHE (Cookie) COHEN was a special person who loved life. After she lost her husband whom she adored her life was difficult but she persevered. She was fortunate that her two children, our fellow members Aimee and Fred, took excellent care of her as she declined. Her family has been part of our local Seattle Jewish community for six generations and continues through her grandkids. Cookie was one of a kind and will be remembered always with a smile.

We also lost our dear LORRAINE SCHUPACK in early July. Lorraine and her late husband Sam were charter member of TBT and she was passionate in her volunteer efforts for us. Lorraine experienced much sadness in her life especially the death of her daughter. She never complained and was stoic in the face of her struggle with ALS. She lives behind her son our fellow member Jay and his family and many loved ones and friends who will cherish her memory.

ARLENE WALDBAUM was taken from this earth in July after a long series of health crises. She was left a widow at a young age and raised her children well including our fellow member Heidi Seligman. She was also a very loving grandmother. Arlene loved all children and she was affectionately known as Aunt Arlene when she ran a very successful day care. She was proud to be a member of Temple B'nai Torah and even though she was unable to attend during her last years, she kept up her membership and interest throughout her time. Rest in peace, Arlene.

DOROTHY GRUNDSTEIN lived the longest of all our members who died this year, well into her nineties. She came out to Seattle after her husband died to be close to her son, our fellow member Leon, and her granddaughter. She was a passionate person active in public life and politics. She was insistent that she be a member of our temple after a many decade association with her Reform temple in Cleveland. Leon honored her wishes, of course. When Dorothy first arrived she gave me a precious book, the sermons of her rabbi, the great Abba Hillel Silver. I cherish that book and the memory of Dorothy Grundstein.

We also lost CY BLANTON during this past summer. Cy was an usual man with many talents. Our Temple really became his family and he enjoyed a warm friendship with

many, especially Jerry and Diane Benson. Cy loved being part of our Temple family and the Brotherhood. We will miss him.

EMMA DENA GRIEFF died a month ago after a long struggle with Alzheimer's disease. She was a loving mother and grandmother who as young widow raised her children with strength and dignity. Her second marriage to Henry was a god-send and they enjoyed many glorious years until his death. It has been a difficult end of life for Emma and we know she is at peace now.

DOROTHY SCUSTER - September marked the end of a very special generation. Dorothy was the last of a four generation family in our Temple preceded in death by her in laws George and Toots and her husband Boris, all proud members of our temple family. Dorothy enjoyed services almost every Friday, coming here from the Kline Galland. When her eldest son Joe died in spring, her will to live waned and she died peacefully to join him and Boris in the world to come. A shining presence, she leaves behind children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren many who are members of our temple family.

MARJORIE KIRSCHENBAUM was a loving mother and grandmother, two of whose children Robert and David are members of TBT. She came out to this area from Omaha, her life-long home, after the death of her husband. She immediately joined our temple and became active in the sisterhood and seniors group. Sadly she, too, was beset with health challenges including Alzheimer's, which had also taken her husband Morrie from her and had her active life cut too short. She was a delightful person with a great sense of humor who faced challenges with cheer and seemed to thrive even in difficult circumstances. An avid golfer in her youth, I hope she is now playing some daily rounds in the world to come, restored to vitality in some ineffable ways.

These and many others whose names appear on this year's *yizkor* list gave life and love to many of you here today, and made our lives so much better and richer. Each one continues to shine in memory and in influence. One day our names and lives will be added to theirs. When each of us leaves this world, may we too be remembered with honor and affection as they are today and every day. May this be our destiny and God's divine will. Amen.