

Larry Rollinger Eliezer Gershon ben Israel Aharon v'Elka
December 6, 2000 10 Kislev 5761

Larry passed away Wednesday evening, in the week we were preparing to read the Torah portion Vayetzei. This portion tells the story of our patriarch Jacob leaving his parents Isaac and Rebecca, traveling north to Charan to escape the wrath of his brother Esau and perhaps to find a wife.

Rashi, the most famous interpreter of our Torah, comments that the title of this portion, taken from its first word, gives us a clue to importance that Jacob would achieve. *Vayetzei Yaacov mi Be'er Sheva...* Jacob left Be'er Sheva. Why was the first sentence not written as 'And Jacob left for Charan'. Why was the departure mentioned before the destination?

Rashi tells us that the departure of a righteous person from his place makes an impression, for while a righteous person is in the city, he is its glory, he is its brilliance, he is its splendor. Once he has left there, its glory has departed, its brilliance has departed, its splendor has departed.

As we gather today to remember Larry Rollinger, we too share a loss that diminishes our lives and our community. Reading the stories of the Patriarchs in our Torah reminds us that even in this time we have individuals who share the same attributes of leadership, wisdom, faith and family loyalty that have guided our people for 5000 years.

We may never know whether it was heavenly intervention, or merely the bureaucratic stubbornness of an immigration clerk that saw Larry's father refused entrance to the US and ending up in Edmonton, but we are thankful for this act of fate. Aaron Rollinger left Romania and found freedom from the constant threats to Jews in Eastern Europe early in the twentieth century, when he joined his sister and her husband, Uncle Ben Leibovitz, who saved him from returning overseas by sponsoring his entry to Canada.

Soon he married another newcomer, Olga Bass, and with the arrival of their four children they became active and contributing members to the Edmonton Jewish community. Their second child, Larry, took on added responsibility early in his life as the childhood illness that eventually claimed the life of his older brother Irvine, saw him spend more time caring for his younger sisters Rosanne and Serena. Despite this he still graduated from Talmud Torah day school and then high school. Larry's parents encouraged him to continue his education and he enrolled in university, but the early signs of an entrepreneur were already evident and after a year Larry left to make his mark in the world of business. At first he drove taxi for his father and later got in to the trucking business, but when he began opening used car lots with Milt Sorokin his talent for making deals became apparent.

Larry wasn't all work and no play, so when Tulane Stillpass from Minneapolis came to Edmonton to visit her aunt, Belle Greene in 1953, her son Pat fixed her up with his friend Larry. He managed to win her heart from among the many young men who were attracted to this fresh new face from the south, and a little over a year later they were married.

Meanwhile Larry's business interests continued to branch out as he began investing in real estate in the 1960's. His family responsibilities grew as well with the arrival of Irving and Lauren Gayle, and added time spent with his mother and sisters following the death of his father in 1964.

Larry always showed great respect to his father's friends and leaders of the small but active Edmonton Jewish community. In return they took notice of his abilities and his willingness to assume his communal responsibilities. While still a relatively young man, Larry was encouraged by Mickey Dlin to take on leadership roles in the United Jewish Appeal, the community's fund raising arm. He quickly found himself at the centre of action when he helped rally support for Israel after the 1973 Yom Kippur war. He joined in on the first Israel Bond mission to the Sinai desert and found himself traveling on transport planes with soldiers flying back to Israel from the front lines. This was just one of many trips to Israel that solidified his love for the Jewish homeland. Mickey Dlin also sought out Larry to take on a leadership role with Boys Town Jerusalem. Here Larry found that he could not only support Israel but also have a direct impact on young boys in need. He served as Canadian president for many years, stepping down finally to the relief of Irv Kipnes, who was running out of places to put the wooden Boys Town mezuzahs that Larry always brought back after visiting Jerusalem.

When the Hillcrest Country Club became available in the late 1970's, Larry, Irv and others community leaders saw the opportunity for a beautiful location for a Jewish Community Centre. Here Larry was able to use his business acumen to quickly put together a deal for the property. His sole purpose was to create a centre for activities and events that would unite all of Edmonton's Jews and help guarantee the community's future. A tribute dinner held for Larry raised over one million dollars and resulted in a wing of the JCC building named in his honour. In all Larry spent over ten years in leadership roles for UJA. Again others noticed his talent and in 1983 he chaired the Edmonton United Way campaign.

In 1981 Larry was awarded the prestigious State of Israel's Prime Minister's Award in recognition of his valuable commitment to Israel, an honour shared by only a few other Canadians.

Larry's business interests continued to expand but he never lost his commitment to community concerns. I came to know Larry through his long time support of Beth Shalom Synagogue. Brought on to the Board by his Uncle Ben Leibovitz, Larry eventually served as president, but this was only a small part of his total contribution to the synagogue. By the time I joined the Board in 1986, he was no longer on the executive but I quickly noticed that few major decisions were made without asking Larry for advice or an opinion. Eventually Larry's appearances at Board meetings were few and far between but no one dared suggest that he be asked to step down. Larry was here for us in the years we spent rebuilding after the 1980 fire, and through the financial crises that followed. This was Larry's shul and he had a pride of ownership in both the building and the institution that carried through in his actions. He was like a father who would let you take a few chances and perhaps get in to a bit of trouble, but at the last minute step in and fix the problem. His name will be linked to us forever through the Torah he purchased, the memorial boards he dedicated for our walls and the unselfish financial support that he gave. Every Yom Kippur Larry proudly took his place on the bima with other past presidents and synagogue leaders to hold a Torah during the Kol Nidre service. Then he returned to his row of life seats where surrounded by his family he proudly watched a new generation lead his synagogue. We were able to repay his devotion in a small way by conferring the title of Honourary Life Board member on him and I'm sure we will find further ways to honour his memory.

There may be newcomers to our community and younger people who aren't aware of what he has done for us, as, for the past 15 years he has chosen to stay out of the spotlight so that others could take on leadership roles. But they should know that every institution and charity in our Jewish community has benefitted from his generosity. His membership in Beth Shalom did not stop him from helping Chabad and Beth Israel Synagogue in their campaigns. His support for Talmud Torah continued through the years as both Irving and Lauren Gayle, his Edmonton grandchildren, Sydney and Elly, and hundreds of our community's youth have benefitted from his support for the school's educational and building programs.

Larry enjoyed his life and he loved to share what he had with others. His venture into the restaurant business with Irv Kipnes when they established Walden's, Bones and the Creperie gave him even more opportunities to entertain, while giving Edmonton the quality of food and service that he experienced in larger cities. The hi-rises, residential and commercial real estate developments and other businesses he has been a part of have contributed to the quality of life of this city through both increased employment and tax dollars. Few business people have experienced the loyalty and trust he received from business partners and employees. He will be missed by his personal secretary Jean Way, who was with him for over 40 years. His successes have been acknowledged by both the business community and political leaders at all levels.

Through all his years however his number one interest in life was his family. Irving remembers how important it was to his father that he learn to show respect for elders. He will never forget how his father insisted that he always gave people such as Doc Goldsmith and Harry Bloomfield the honor they deserved. This obligation of caring for and respecting elders is evident as both Irving and Lauren Gayle became medical professionals specializing in the care of the elderly.

His children will remember family vacations to the lake cottage, Hawaii and even Miette Hot Springs which was the favourite destination for Larry's father. By sharing a little bit of his past with his kids he instilled in them an appreciation for the strong family traditions that they carry on today. The success of Larry and Tulane's children is a testament to the atmosphere that they were raised in and the values they were taught.

Over the past few years' new interests took over much of Larry and Tulane's life. They doted on their grandchildren. Pride and love radiates in the pictures of Larry with his grandchildren that fill the Rollingher and Pearson homes. Arin, Daniel, Sydney and Elly know they were loved and know that they had the best grandfather in the world. Spending winters in Phoenix over the last few years meant time for all of them. Arin's Bat Mitzvah last year was a beautiful event that brought memories that are even more meaningful now, and will be carried by the family forever.

I believe that Larry epitomized the Jewish tradition of L'Dor v'Dor, from generation to generation. He absorbed the teachings of his elders and unselfishly taught his business skills to younger associates, his organizational abilities to younger community leaders, and his belief in respect for others that he passed on to his children and grandchildren.

The other passion that Larry and Tulane have pursued over the past few years is the dream of building a home for Edmonton's Jewish seniors. The Beit Horim project has grown out of early work initiated by Jake Superstein and Shelley Alexander. Again Larry chose to stay behind the scenes as he supported Tulane as she assumed the leadership of this new organization. He has been an advisor, a confidante and has taken a hands-on role when needed as the project comes closer to reality. Beit Horim has grown in part due to contributions he has made and those made a few years ago, as he chose this project as the beneficiary of tributes from his friends when he celebrated his 65th birthday. The family has chosen Beit Horim to once again be the recipient of any remembrances that friends wish to make as a way of even furthering the legacy that Larry leaves in this community.

In 1998 Larry was diagnosed with non-Hodgkins Lymphoma, a form of cancer. He placed his complete trust in his doctors and the treatment facilities in Edmonton, believing that they were as good as any in the world. He was able to fight the disease while continuing to work and spend time with those close to him.

Until a few months ago it seemed that he had beaten it. He looked terrific, he enjoyed an Alaskan cruise with his family and continued to work hard at expanding his business interests. Unfortunately the illness returned and treatment began again here in Edmonton. He didn't want to leave but finally at the urging of his doctors he went to Houston for consultation with other specialists. Even before the appointments were completed Larry sensed that the news would not be positive. Larry has always been in control of his life, living it his way, and he chose to return to Phoenix. Here he was able to spend a final month under the loving care of his wife of 46 years, his sisters, grandchildren and a devoted doctor and nurse who also happened to be his children. Tulane says that even in this last month he never complained about pain or discomfort. He left us peacefully surrounded by his family, proud of his accomplishments, having lived a full life with no regrets.

There is another lesson we learn from the Torah portion we read this week. We read about Jacob's famous dream, in which God stands beside him and makes a covenant to give him land, children and protection. As a result Jacob names that place Beit-El, House of God. While our tradition suggests that this same location was eventually the site of the Temple in Jerusalem, Jacob viewed this holy place as a house, and we receive the lesson that we must strive to keep our own house in order. We must nurture our distinctive identities and tend to the needs of others. While much of our religious life may take place in the synagogue, it is outside these doors, in our homes, and in our relationships that we can create meaningful lives for others and ourselves. This is how Larry lived. Larry's physical presence will be missed, but his influence on us, our children and our children's children will keep him alive in our hearts for generations to come.

Tehi nishmato Tzroorah beetzror hachaim
May his soul be bound up in the bond of life

Lawrence G. Rollinger

1931-2000

For all who knew Larry, we knew him as a man of excess. Now I choose my words carefully, Larry would ask me to do that.

For none of Larry's excesses were selfish ones, except of course the chocolate ones. Growing up in the Rollinger household meant two things, never go in the dining room and there was always a bowl of chocolates.

Now, life was chocolate to Larry, and so came his excesses.

He loved this place we are in today, to excess. This was Larry's house. This was Larry's place, and it is a better house for having had Larry in it.

He loved this City to excess, his entire life lived and loved in it, he was our town's jewel, and we are a better town for having had him in it.

And for all of you his many friends, in this great room many, but only a few of them all, because there are many many more, Larry's excesses came out; kindness, concern, compassion, support, love, he was it all,

But of his family, Larry was most excessively in love, did adore and was adored by, did care most and was most loved.

His Tulane, His Leannie, His Sonny Boy, His grand-kids

Because of Larry this is a fine place, a fine time,

Excessively so.

And so, for all of you, I will give these words:

Go Now

Go now, friend, your walk is done
The place is good, we'll carry on
The place you've made is strong, it marks your hand
Go now, friend, you can go;

Go now, Zaida, My Zaida dear,
My story's read, my hand is warm, tucked in I am
You've laid the stone upon my walk, I know the path
Go now Zaida, you can go;

Go now Dad, my Dear Dear Dad,
Today my tears tear my heart,
But heart is most of what I have
From your love, from your love
Go now, my Dad, you can go

Go now, my Love, The time is now
Tomorrow I will wake, I will stand
As you would have it I will stand
In the morning sun; you at my breast
My heart will not rest
Go now my Love, you can go.

Go now Larry, you must go,
To a peaceful sleep, a quiet place
But sure I am, as there you'll be
All will know, as you state with grace

I am here.

December 10 2000
Sidney Hamson.

Good Morning Friends

I am so honoured to be with you today to share some memories of my very special friend Larry.

Larry was a remarkable man - a wonderful father, grandfather, brother, devoted husband and such a special friend.

We recall an amazing man, who touched innumerable lives and whose dedication to his community was exemplary. He

taught us all by the very fine example of his life to

appreciate the deep rewards of personal commitment to

ones fellow man and woman. —

I remember fondly particular moments with Larry:

- He once told me of his mother's amazing ability

to make each one of her grandchildren feel that

they were her favourite. Well, Larry was

certainly blessed with that wonderful quality.

We all felt we were Larry's best friend,

and we were - because Larry had room in his heart for all of us, and for strangers.

- I will never forget Larry calling me three weeks ago in Phoenix. He was concerned that I might be without a car, and insisted that I borrow one of his. ^{He was} Hardly able to take care of himself - yet he was worried about me. So typical - so caring.

Larry never expected anything in return for all his generosity and acts of kindness. ———

Larry was a very good businessman, an entrepreneur in the truest sense of the word. We had great fun working together; ~~and~~ ^{we} laughed continuously wondering how we could possibly do all of the deals that came our way - and, believe me, Larry wanted to do all the deals. He loved "tycooning" - a phrase coined by Julius to perfectly describe Larry's business activities.

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And as for Dulore - well Larry felt ~~she~~ was his greatest asset. His love for her and his pride in her accomplishments was boundless. He supported her, and she him - a remarkable team for over 40 years, their latest endeavor in support of Beit Horim - a residence for Jewish seniors in Edmonton - a project very dear to both of them, their hearts. —

We all have such wonderful memories of Larry - his ^{integrity,} kindness, his decency, his loyalty, his compassion, his honesty and his incredible generosity.

He was a gentle man and a gentleman who made himself accessible to everyone in the community - treating each one with the same courtesy and respect. —

And to you all - Larry's precious family we send our most sincere and heartfelt condolences.

Irving, ^{Laurey} ~~Laurey~~ ^{Gayle,} Daniel, Aaron, Sydney and Ellie, we know

(4)

father and

that the example your Bayda set will live on in you.

Let his legacy be one of TZEDEKAH, and TIKUN OLAM -
fully giving of oneself to the world around us. -

A popular song of our time says - "We rise
again in the voices of our children". Though Larry's
passing is incredibly difficult, may his memory be for
a blessing - and may that memory rise often in the
voices of his children, grandchildren and all those of
us who will miss his warmth and compassion.

Order
Post Our pages teach us that there are times in our lives
when we are at peace in our hearts and our souls, calm
with the knowledge that the world is revolving at a
comfortable, measured pace.

Then, we are told, there are times when everything
is spinning out of control and we seem completely out of
step with our lives.

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Larry's precarious health, and precious life have been spinning out of control.

Let us hope that our dear friend Larry is now at peace.

We have all cherished every minute you have been with us. We wish you peace and we know that Hashem will continue to watch over you. We love you, we will miss you and we will never forget you.