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EULOGY OF JOSEPH SHAW

IN THE LIFE OF JOSEPH SHAW, WHOM WE MOURN TODAY, WE CAN SEE IN MICROCOSM
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GREAT JEWISH COMMUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA.

BORN IN RUSSIA IN 1900, HE MIGRATED TO CANADA AT THE TENDER AGE OF 11
IN 1911. IT WAS A TIME WHEN MASSES OF JEWS, ESCAPING PERSECUTION,
POGROMS AND POVERTY, BEGAN NEW LIVES IN THE AMERICAS

LIKE SO MANY OTHERS, JOE WOULD QUICKLY LEARN THAT THE STREETS WERE NOT
PAVED WITH GOLD - THAT A BETTER LIFE COULD BE HAD - BUT ONLY AS THE
RESULT OF SWEAT AND SACRIFICE.

LIKE SO MANY FIRST GENERATION JEWISH CANADIANS, JOE WORKED HARD SO HIS
CHILDREN COULD HAVE THE THINGS HE LACKED. SIXTY-THREE YEARS AGO, HE
AND HIS BELOVED MOLLY WERE MARRIED. TOGETHER THEY MOVED FROM WINNIPEG
TO SMALL TOWNS IN WESTERN CANADA - OPENING SMALL BUSINESSES.

MOLLY REMEMBERS MOVING TO THE COUNTRY IN 1945. THEY WORKED THEIR SMALL GROCERY STORE IN SHIFTS - "HE STAYED UP LATE," SHE RECALLS, "AND I GOT UP EARLY" - THE FAMILY LIVED ON TOP OF THE STORE.

ROSALIE RECALLS THAT "MOM AND DAD WORKED HARD, TOGETHER. THERE WAS NOT A LOT OF LEISURE TIME FOR HOBBIES, BUT HE REALLY LOVED HER. HE CALLED HER EVEN AT THE END, STRICKEN WITH THE ILLNESS THAT WOULD TAKE HIS LIFE - HAVING DIFFICULTY COMMUNICATING, THERE IS A NOTE ON HIS MEDICAL CHART - PLACED THERE BY A NURSE AS TO HOW HE WAS ABLE TO DELIVER A PHONE MESSAGE TO SAY "I LOVE YOU" TO HIS WIFE OF 63 YEARS.

TOGETHER THEY RAISED THEIR THREE CHILDREN, ROSALIE, ROY AND SELMA. TOGETHER THEY STRUGGLED TO GIVE THE CHILDREN AN EDUCATION - TO SEE THEM FULFILL THE DREAM OF FIRST GENERATION JEWISH CANADIANS - A COLLEGE EDUCATION.

TOGETHER THEY TOOK PRIDE THAT ALL THREE CHILDREN BECAME PROFESSIONALS. ROY AND ROSALIE AS PHARMACISTS AND SELMA AS A TEACHER.

AS A FATHER, HE HAD THE ABILITY SO MANY PARENTS LACK, TO TRUST HIS CHILDREN - TO ALLOW THEM TO GROW.

ROY RECALLS THAT WHEN HE WAS AT UNIVERSITY, MOM HAD THE FEELING THAT HE WASN'T HITTING THE BOOKS HARD ENOUGH, THAT HE WAS SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME GOING OUT.

JOES RESPONSE? "IF HE'S NOT STUDYING HE DOESN'T HAVE TO - HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING. JACKIE RECALLS THAT HE WOULD SAY "IF THIS IS WHAT ROY WANTS, I APPROVE." AND TO ROSALIE - INSECURE SOMETIMES IN HER STUDIES, "IF ROY PASSED YOU'LL PASS TOO."

HE HAD THE ABILITY - WITHOUT OUTWARD SIGNS OF AFFECTION TO COMMUNICATE HIS LOVE FOR HIS CHILDREN - EVEN AT THE END WHEN HE COULD HARDLY TALK - HE WOULD ALWAYS BE ABLE TO TALK TO HIS RUCHELE.

GARY SAW JOE AS A QUIET MAN WHO ALWAYS SEEMED HAPPY. PERHAPS IT WAS

BECAUSE OF HIS ABILITY TO SEE THAT WHATEVER WAS HIS WAS TOPS. HIS WAS
THE BEST WIFE, THE BEST CHILDREN, THE BEST GRAND-CHILDREN.

HE CALLED HIS GRANDCHILDREN HIS HIS BEAUTIFUL
GRANDCHILDREN. AND HE LOVED THEM ALL DEARLY.

STUART RECALLS HIS BAR MITZVAH WHEN ZEYDE WAS VERY SICK. BUT NO MATTER
WHAT - HE WAS NOT GOING TO MISS HIS GRANDSON'S ENTRANCE INTO ADULT JEWISH
LIFE. HE TOLD EVERYONE IN THE HOSPITAL THAT HE WOULD BE THERE - AND
HE WAS. WHEN STUART FINISHED CHANTING HIS PORTION HE WALKED OVER AND
KISSED HIS ZEYDE.

HIS LITTLEST GRANDSON HART REMEMBERS PUSHING HIS WHEELCHAIR IN THE
HOSPITAL - HELPING HIS ZEYDE GET AROUND - YOU SHOULD GET A LICENCE ZEDE
TOLD HIM.

MOST PEOPLE SAW JOE AS A QUIET, SHY TYPE OF PERSON - PERHAPS BECAUSE
HE HAD A LIFELONG HEARING PROBLEM HE WAS SOMEWHAT RETICENT WITH

STRANGERS. HIS FAMILY RECALLS THAT THERE WAS A DIFFERENT SIDE TO JOE. HE LIKED MAKING SPEECHES AT FAMILY GATHERINGS - OFTEN REHEARSING TALKING TO HIMSELF FOR DAYS PRIOR TO THE EVENT. ROSALIE RECALLS SUCH A SPEECH AT THEIR WEDDING AND AT PARTIES IN HER HONOUR.

HE WAS VERY INTERESTED IN POLITICS - A STAUNCH LIBERAL, HE WOULD WATCH THE NEWS REGULARLY AND READ NEWSPAPERS AND THEN ARGUE POLITICS. HE WAS AN ASTUTE MAN - WHO KNEW ABOUT AND HAD AN OPINION ON EVERY SUBJECT. HIS LEFT ARM WOULD TRIUMPHANTLY RISE AND HE WOULD ASK RHETORICALLY "AM I RIGHT?"

THE WESTERN CANADA THAT JOE MIGRATED TO IN 1911 WAS A JEWISH WILDERNESS.

IT WAS HARD LATER TO BE THE ONLY JEW IN A TOWN WHERE HE HAD TO LEARN UKRANIAN TO COMMUNICATE WITH HIS CUSTOMERS - NEVERTHELESS, JOE ALWAYS SHOWED A GREAT DEAL OF LOVE FOR EVERYTHING JEWISH. HE WOULD TRAVEL IN FOR THE HOLIDAYS IN THOSE DAYS - LATER, GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY IN EDMONTON - HE BECAME A REGULAR SHUL GOER - SOMEONE WHO COULD ALWAYS

BE COUNTED ON FOR A PERHAPS BECAUSE HE HAD
DIFFICULTY HEARING - HE WOULD CHANT REAL LOUD - DROWNING OUT THE CANTOR

AT HOME THERE WAS ALWAYS A SPECIAL SHABBOS MEAL - WITH JOE RECITING
THE KIDDUSH EVEN AT THE VERY END. WHEN HE REACHED HIS 75TH AND 80TH
YEARS - THE MOST NATURAL PLACE TO CELEBRATE PART OF THAT MEMORABLE DAY
WAS AT HIS BELOVED BETH SHALOM AND GARY RECALLS THE PRIDE HE HAD WHEN
HE WAS CALLED UP FOR AN ON THOSE OCCASIONS.

COMING TO OUR SHORES AS HE DID AT THE TENDER AGE OF 11, JOSEPH SHAW
PROBABLY WOULD HAVE FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO ARTICULATE WHAT HIS NEW LIFE
WOULD MEAN. HE CAME AS PART OF A GENERATION WHO DREAMED OF BUILDING
A NEW LIFE IN A NEW LAND.

HE WORKED HARD, LOVE HIS FAMILY EDUCATED HIS CHILDREN AND ENJOYED
FFROM HIS