

MHA/FYOS

Alumni and Friends



Issue 26

Highlighting the
graduating classes
of **2001-2005**

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The 2004-05 Cooper Yeshiva High School for Boys' varsity basketball team: (front row, from left) **Shlomo Gersten** (MHA '01, FYOS '05), **Max Kats** (MHA '01, FYOS '05), **Meir Gersten** (MHA '03, FYOS '07); (back row, from left) **Josh Baum** (MHA '02, FYOS '06), **Yair Ben Ishai** (FYOS '05), **Shaka Berry** (FYOS '06), **Daniel Lewis** (MHA '01, FYOS '05), **Jonah Kaufman** (MHA '02, FYOS '06), **Eli Friedman** (FYOS '05), **Chaim Eli Safier** (MHA '02, FYOS '06) and Coach Robert "Jake" Jacobson.

For more on Coach Jake, see the Spotlight feature on page 33.

We mourn with profound sadness the recent passing of two treasured alumni:

J. Alan Kutner (MHA '62), z'l

Our sincerest condolences to his wife, longtime MHA faculty member **Barbara (Katz) Kutner** (MHA '64, YOS '68); his siblings, **Gail (Kutner) Silver** (MHA '60), **Lynne (Kutner) Levine** (MHA '65, YOS '69) and **David Kutner** (MHA '67); and his children, **Ephraim Kutner** (MHA '85), **Shifra (Kutner) Leitman** (MHA '86, YOS '90), **Yoni Kutner** (MHA '88) and **Eli Kutner** (MHA '92).

Mark Wender (MHA '70, YOS '74), z'l

Our sincerest condolences to his wife, Sally; his parents, Razelle and Stanley Wender (a past-president of our board of trustees); his siblings, **Jill (Wender) Friedman** (MHA '73, YOS '77), **Elliot Wender** (MHA '79, YOS '83) and **Margo (Wender) Gruen** (MHA '82); and his children, **Brian Wender** (MHA '96), **Rebecca (Wender) Chubak** (MHA '99) and **Kevin Wender** (MHA '06).

May the Kutner and Wender families be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem, and may the memory of these two beloved and outstanding alumni always be a blessing to all who knew them.

MISSED AN ISSUE? ARCHIVES

All previous issues of our alumni publication are now conveniently available at mhafyos.org/alumni.

Joanne Kahane, alumni chair
Amara Levine-Reich (MHA '94, FYOS '97), editor
Shoshana (Yaffe) Cenner, copy editor
Noam Davidovics, technology support
Layout by Ruthie Rashkin, ruthrashkin@gmail.com

To learn more about MHA/FYOS, please contact marketing and recruitment director **Jessica (Baum) Sukhodolsky** (MHA '99) at 901-682-2400 or jessica.baum@mhafyos.org.

MESSAGE TO ALUMNI

Joanne Kahane, alumni committee chair

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Dear MHA/FYOS alumni and friends:



In this issue, we are very excited to announce a wonderful new alumni initiative that our school is undertaking. Please take the time to read our feature on page 26 that introduces the Alumni Dedication Wall project.

Purchasing a tile on the Alumni Dedication Wall is a meaningful way to express gratitude to your alma mater and ensure your legacy as a graduate or former attendee of our beloved school. When the idea of the alumni wall was first presented to me, I was nearly brought to tears. I know that those of you who are able to contribute will certainly want to become an immortal part of the MHA/FYOS campus. Moreover, if your parents or children are alumni, dedicating a tile in their honor would be a beautiful gift! We look forward to hearing from many of you in the weeks ahead so we can add your name to the growing list of alumni wall contributors.

A few weeks ago, we lost a precious member of the MHA/FYOS family with the passing of Mr. Al Thomas, z'v. In general, we limit memorial features in this newsletter to those who attended or worked at the school; Mr. Thomas did neither of these.

However, he dedicated so much of his life to ensuring the continued existence of the MHA that we felt an exception was warranted. Those who knew him — and even those who knew of him by reputation alone — will hopefully agree. Our tribute to Mr. Thomas and his devotion to our school can be found on page 30. Once again, we have lost a pillar of the community on whose shoulders we've stood. If you have any memories of Mr. Thomas and his support of the school that you'd like to share, please submit them to alumni@mhafyos.org and we'll run a selection of them in the next issue.

As we prepare for Pesach, the festival of freedom, my wish for all of you is freedom from illness, sadness and conflict. May we know true freedom — the freedom to serve Hashem.

Have a joyous, kosher and inspiring Pesach holiday. Please continue to let us hear from you.

Joanne Kahane, alumni chair
joannekahane111@gmail.com



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Deena Davidovics

Dear MHA/FYOS alumni and friends:



This Pesach is a special one for me personally as, with thanks to Hashem, my daughter is turning 12 and becoming a bat mitzvah. As we approach this milestone, right at Pesach time, I am reminded of the teaching that our redemption from Egypt was in the

merit of righteous women. As it says in the Gemara in Sotah 11b:

דרש רב עזרא בשכר נשים צדקניות שהיו באותו הדור
נגאלו ישראל ממצרים

“Rav Avira taught: In the merit of the righteous women that were in that generation, the Jewish people were redeemed from Egypt.”

The Gemara continues to explain that the Jewish women in Egypt would draw water and Hashem would send half fish and half water to their buckets. They would then cook the fish, heat the water, and bring two pots to their husbands working in the fields: one pot to wash them and one pot to feed them. Despite their separation, the harsh work and the environment, the women would ensure that they continued to care for their husbands, live as married couples, and have children.

I was intrigued by this account of righteousness. What was it about their actions that merited the redemption of the Jewish people from Egypt, the defining moment of our nationhood and Jewish future?

In fact, we see this concept taken even further by the Yalkut Shimoni on Nach 606:19, where it says:

אין הדורות נגאלים אלא בשכר נשים צדקניות שיש בדור

“Generations will not be redeemed but for the merit of righteous women of that generation.”

What is this quality that the righteous women possessed — not only in Egypt but in every generation — and how can we emulate it?

To delve further into the nature of צדקות (righteousness), one may look to other references to the same root term in the Torah.

In Bereshis 6:9, it says:

אלה תולדת נח איש צדיק תמים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו אֶת־
הָאֱלֹקִים הַתְּהַלֵּךְ־גַם

“This is the line of Noach. Noach was a righteous man; he was blameless in his generation. Noach walked with Hashem.”

Rashi connects the first part of the *pasuk* (verse), which introduces the descendants of Noach, with the following phrase describing him as a righteous man and suggests that one explanation is that it “teaches us that the real progeny of righteous people are their good deeds”:

לְמַדְךָ שֶׁעָקַר תּוֹלְדוֹתֵיהֶם שֶׁל צְדִיקִים מַעֲשֵׂים טוֹבִים

Righteousness, in this context, speaks to purity, walking in the way of Hashem, and doing good deeds.

Another example of this terminology in the Torah is in the story of Yehuda and Tamar, where it says (Bereshis 38:26):

וַיִּכַּר יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר צְדָקָה מִמֶּנִּי כִּי־עַל־כֵּן לֹא־נִתְּתִיָּה לְשָׁלָה
בְּנִי

“Yehuda recognized them and said, ‘She is more in the right than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah.’” In this context, the term implies that Tamar was correct and followed the right course of action in trying to bear a child for her late husband.

The term **צְדָק** is used as a directive in Devarim (16:20), when having just discussed judges, it says:

צְדָק צְדָק תִּרְדָּף לְמַעַן תַּחֲיֶיהָ וַיִּרְשֶׁתָּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־הָאֱלֹהִים נָתַן לָהּ

“Justice, justice shall you pursue, that you may live and inherit the land that Hashem your G-d is giving you.”

In this context, righteousness is pursuit of justice and carries a steep reward; in fact, our very lives and future in the land of Israel depend on it.

The Gemara expands on this topic in Sanhedrin 32b, explaining that justice applies to both judgment and compromise,

כִּדְתַנִּיא צְדָק צְדָק תִּרְדָּף אֶחָד לְדִין וְאֶחָד לְפִשְׁרָה

“As it is taught in a *baraita*: When the verse states: ‘Justice, justice, shall you pursue,’ one mention of ‘justice’ is stated with regard to judgment and one is stated with regard to compromise.” The Gemara provides an example of two boats or two camels trying to pass through a narrow path at the same time. Both will surely fail unless they compromise, in which case both will be able to succeed.

Interestingly, the language of the pasuk **צְדָק צְדָק** — **תִּרְדָּף לְמַעַן תַּחֲיֶיהָ**

that you may live” — has similar phrasing to the *pasuk* that describes the actions of the midwives in Egypt. This brings us back to the righteous women to whom we owe our redemption. As it says in Shemot 1:17:

וַתִּירְאֵן הַמִּילְדוֹת אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים וְלֹא עָשׂוּ כַאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֱלֹהֵן
מִלֶּךְ מִצְרַיִם וַתַּחֲיֶינָן אֶת־הַיְלָדִים

“The midwives, fearing God, did not do as the king of Egypt had told them; they let the boys live.” In Gemara Sotah 11b, it explains that the midwives didn’t just let the babies live; they gave them sustenance and kept them alive:

וַתַּחֲיֶינָן אֶת הַיְלָדִים תַּנְא לֹא דַיִן שָׁלָא הַמִּיתוּ אוֹתָן אֶלָּא שְׁהִיּוּ
מְסַפִּיקוֹת לָהֶם מֵיָם וּמֵזֶן

“A sage teaches: It is not only that they did not kill the children as Pharaoh had commanded them, but that they would even provide water and food for them.”

While we have explored seemingly different explanations of righteousness, a common theme emerges. **צְדָקוֹת** is rooted in sustaining others, often involving self-sacrifice and compromise, to ensure that every individual has what they need to succeed — thereby ensuring collective success.

Noach’s righteousness was his good deeds, which involved sustaining the inhabitants of the *teiva* (ark), each according to their needs, to ensure the survival of life on Earth during the *mabul* (flood). Tamar’s righteousness involved self-sacrifice and determination to uphold the living legacy of her deceased husband. The women of *Mitzrayim* (Egypt) went to great lengths to not only survive slavery, but to nurture and nourish their husbands and

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Deena Davidovics

ensure that babies were brought into the world with every chance to grow and thrive. These righteous women pursued justice in every sense of the word, recognizing and providing what each member of the Jewish people needed to be sustained, so that they could succeed collectively.

The Rambam in Mishneh Torah (Repentance 3:4) brings a quote from Proverbs (10:25) and explains the vast power of righteousness:

יצדיק יסוד עולם זה שצדק הכריע את כל העולם לזכות
והצילו

“A righteous person is the foundation of the world. One who acted righteously tipped the balance of the entire world to merit and saved it.”

It is no wonder, then, that we were redeemed from Egypt in the merit of righteous women and that righteousness continues to be our salvation.

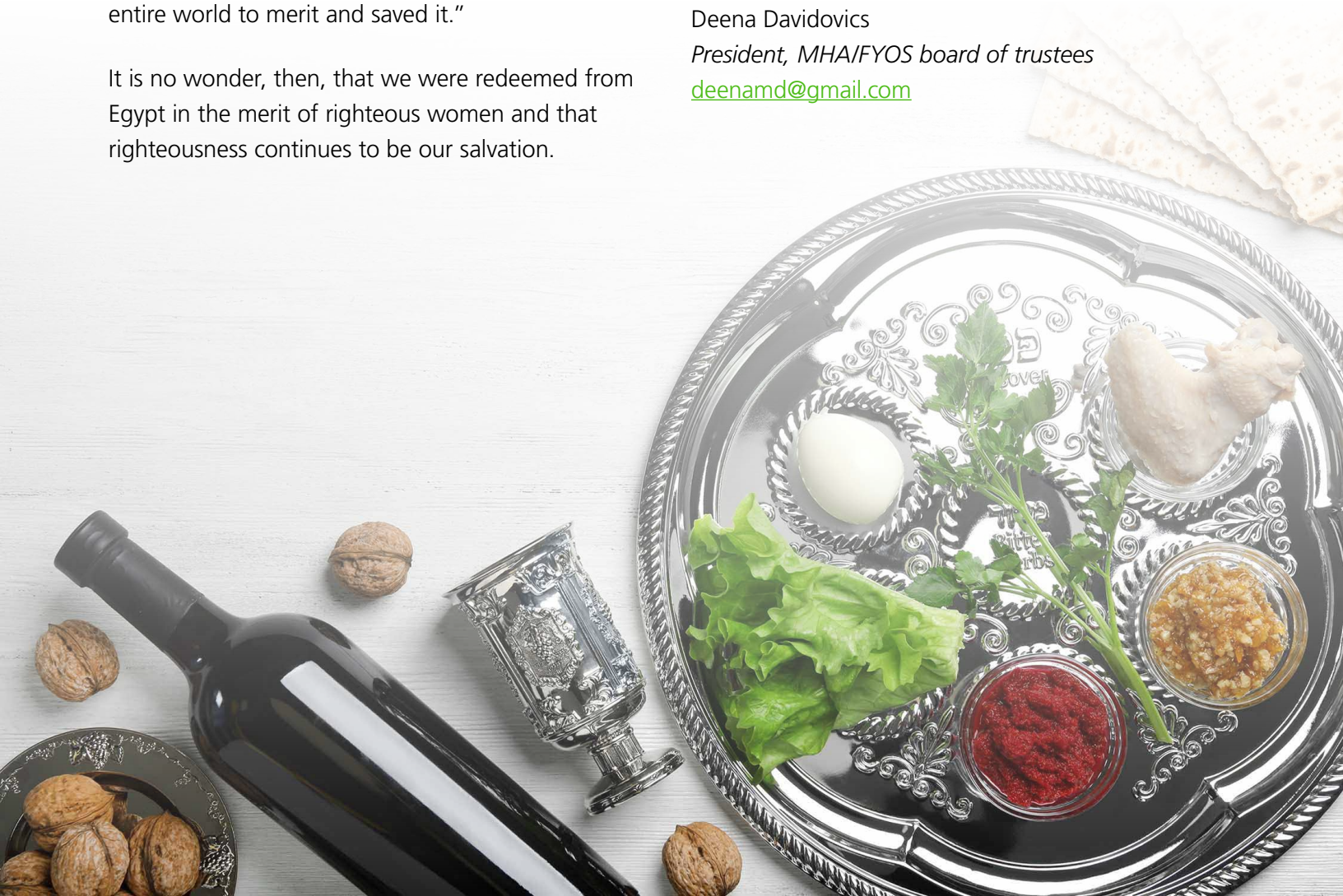
May we all strive to be like the נשים צדקניות — righteous women of each generation — pursuing justice in our personal deeds and prioritizing the needs of others. My hope for my daughter as she becomes a bat mitzvah at Pesach time is that she learns from the righteous women of the generations before, to whose credit we are here today, and that she grows to be one of the righteous women of our generation who will ensure our Jewish future.

Wishing everyone a happy and kosher Pesach, with a blessing that we should all merit to sustain each other in righteousness, rooted in compassionate compromise and collaboration, so that we can thrive as a school, a community and a people.

Deena Davidovics

President, MHAIFYOS board of trustees

deenamd@gmail.com



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AND ALUMNI CHAIR

Community Responses

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We welcome your feedback on the alumni newsletter at alumni@mhafyos.org. Here are some of the responses we received to [Issue No. 25](#).

I'm amazed at the spotlight article you put together. You did such a wonderful job! I feel honored and blessed and can't thank you enough.

-Mrs. Joyce Casada, former faculty member

The spotlight article you ran about my mother is fabulous! She is gushing and so flattered by it. It captures so well her life and the strength and dedication to family that have defined her. Thanks so much!

-Max Casada

Thank you so much for this great issue and for the beautiful tribute to my mother, Mrs. Regina Belsky, z'l. You always do such a nice job!

-Naomi (Belsky) Homnick (MHA '74, YOS '78)

Thank you for another great issue!

-Noson Yanofsky (YOS '85)

Beautiful!

-Julie (Goldstein) Brown (MHA '76, YOS '80)

Wonderful alumni newsletter — as usual!

-Laurie Cooper (MHA '65)

I've been doing historical research on the Memphis Jewish community and found some things that pertain to the earliest years of the MHA.

The [first issue](#) of the alumni newsletter includes a caption indicating that the photo was taken in 1956, when the MHA was housed in the Baron Hirsch Synagogue on Vollentine. Based on my findings, it's probably mislabeled. I think the picture is actually from around 1952 and was taken at the Baron Hirsch near downtown at Fourth and Washington. More precisely, it was probably taken at the Menorah Institute that was right next to the synagogue building, as I believe that's where the school held classes around that time.

That was the second home of the MHA. Before that, school was held in a house. I am trying to remember whether it was the Makowsky house near North Parkway.

When I was in second grade, the school moved to the Anshei Sphard building on North Parkway for two years — around 1953-55. The new MHA building on White Station Road was ready for occupancy in 1956, and that's when we moved in.

If you or anyone else has any more details to share, please let me know. Thanks so much for all that you do!

-Lynnie (Katz) Mirvis (MHA '62)

Response from editor and alumni chair:

Thank you, Lynnie, for providing this useful information. We are thankful to have you so we can accurately report on those early years. We hope you will continue to be our resource.



TRIVIA ANSWERS

1981-1985

Thanks to everyone who sent in responses to the trivia questions featured in our [25th issue](#).

The winner of our trivia contest from that issue is **Laurie Wieder** (MHA '81, YOS '84), who correctly answered six out of 10 questions.

After Pesach, she will receive a tin of cookies from [Ricki's Cookie Corner](#) — owned and operated by **Ricki (Thomas) Krupp** (MHA '66, YOS '70).

Below are the answers to the trivia questions from issue 25. How many did you know?

1. Who taught advanced biology in the high school in 1984?

ANSWER: **Issar Mordechai (Edward) Fuchs** (YOS '75).

2. At the 1983 Purim shpiel, the GMSG students dressed up as teachers in the school. Which faculty member did **Laurie Wieder** (MHA '81, YOS '84, pictured here) dress as?

ANSWER: Mrs. Basya Belsky.

3. In that Purim shpiel, who did **Dawn (Pries) Smith** (MHA '80, YOS '84) dress as?

ANSWER: Mr. Jack Baxter.

4. Which longtime MHA staff member celebrated her 30th anniversary at the school in 1983?

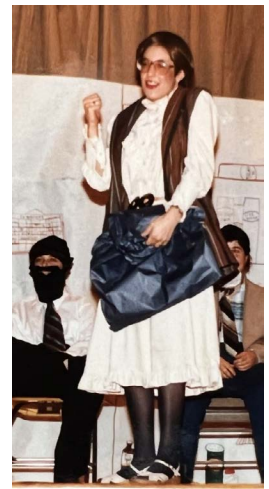
ANSWER: Head cook Georgia Thomas.

5. Which MHA sixth grader won the 1981 citywide read-a-thon benefiting a multiple sclerosis charity?

ANSWER: **Rochel (Goldfein) Rosenberg** (MHA '83).

6. Which two MHA seventh graders won the Memphis and Shelby County Science and Energy Fair in 1981?

ANSWER: **Jonathan Epstein** (MHA '82, YOS '86) and **Ehud Kamin** (MHA '82).



7. What was Rabbi Herbert Russ known for doing when he passed students in the hall?

ANSWER: Pinching their cheeks.

8. In the 1980s, the MHA participated in a program for schools that was sponsored by the Memphis Arts Council. What was the name of this program, and what was it about?

ANSWER: Through the Artists in the Schools program, local artists visited our school and led art projects for the students.

9. The MHA took first prize among local schools in the Memphis in May presentation competition in 1983. What country was honored that year?

ANSWER: Israel.

10. Who coached the MHA boys' basketball team in 1984?

ANSWER: **Marc Hanover** (MHA '77).

TRIVIA QUESTIONS 2001-2005

Regardless of when you graduated, have some fun with these trivia questions!

Send your answers to joannekahane111@gmail.com. The person who gets the most answers correct (or in the case of a tie, the earliest respondent) will win a tin of Ricki's Cookies, made by **Ricki (Thomas) Krupp** (MHA '66, YOS '70). Good luck!



1. Who achieved notoriety by doing the best-ever impression of Rabbi Yonason Gersten in a Purim shpiel?
2. Which two rabbis from this time period often played basketball with their students during recess?
3. What did Rabbi Yonason Gersten famously serve for "breakfast" on a shabbaton?
4. Name one (or both) of the movies regularly shown to MHA elementary school classes by substitute teachers. (Remember the TV/VCR cart that was wheeled into the room for such an occasion?)
5. From which book were students required to copy while serving detention in the office of Mrs. Shelley Kutliroff?
6. Shortly before Purim each year, a local rabbi was chosen to give a special lecture to the community in memory of a beloved alumnus. What was the title of the *shiur* (class)?
7. In 2003, the Cooper Macs varsity basketball team achieved something they had never done before and have not done since. What was it?
8. Math teacher Mrs. Karen Schmitt had an annual tradition of bringing in a special treat for her students on a particular day. What was the treat, and which day of the year was it?

2001-2005 TRIVIA QUESTIONS

Win a tin of Ricki's Cookies

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9. Who comprised the dynamic triumvirate that produced the 2003 CYHSB yearbook on their own?
10. A messy "war" broke out during the 2003 GMSG kidnap. What was the nature of this "war"?
11. What article of clothing did Mrs. Sandy Gersten wear that showcased her creative side?
12. What song did MHA students sing in the choir, led by Cantors Aryeh Samberg and Ricky Kampf, at the school's 50th anniversary scholarship banquet?

THANK YOU

We express our deepest appreciation to all those who gave of their time to help us publish this issue. First, thank you to the staff at the MHA/FYOS, most especially **Francie Schneider** (MHA '68, YOS '72), **Jessica (Baum) Sukhodolsky** (MHA '99), Amanda Davidson, Erica Stoltz and Laura Timms. Second, thank you to the alumni and friends who assisted us by supplying photographs, identifying individuals in those pictures, and providing historical background, trivia questions and more, including **Reuven Stein** (MHA '98, FYOS '02), **Jenny (Steinberg) Sved** (MHA '99, FYOS '03), **Binyamin Ehrenkranz** (MHA '00, FYOS '04), **Jessica (Morris) Hoffman** (FYOS '04), **Esther (Crystal) Stark** (FYOS '04), **Sheera (Graber) Moskowitz** (MHA '01, FYOS '05), **Yair Ben Ishai** (FYOS '05), **Aviva (Krupp) Lewis** (MHA '02, FYOS '06), **Meir Gersten** (MHA '03, FYOS '07), **Miriam (Samberg) Levson** (MHA '04), **Yaakov Yitzchok Schreiber** (MHA '04), **Avishai Schlesinger** (MHA '04, FYOS '08), **Isaac Krupp** (MHA '06, FYOS '10), Sandy Gersten, Jim Jacobson, Anat Kampf, Kim Moore and Talya Tsuna.

Dayenu: a letter of hakarat ha'tov

In the Passover Haggadah, we find the famous passage of *Dayenu* — “It would have been enough.” Based on Psalms, it is intended to remind us of the many gifts Hashem granted us as we left Egypt. He took us out of slavery, gave us the Torah, brought us to the Land of Israel, gave us the Holy Temple, etc. In and of themselves, each of these gifts would have been enough.

One of the *middot* (character traits) that each of us must refine and perfect in ourselves is *hakarat ha'tov*. This is often translated as “gratitude,” but it literally means “noticing the good.” It’s a character trait we must continually cultivate, and perhaps most especially during this season of *Dayenu*.

In his writings on gratitude, Rabbi Tsafi Lev explores how to build this character trait. One of his recommendations is to make a “gratitude list.” He suggests writing down the people, activities and things that have made you better. Then, he says, reach out to those people and share your gratitude — especially if they are responsible for the things for which you are grateful.

It’s been more than 18 years since I graduated from the GMSG. However, there is no statute of limitations on gratitude, so I will now proceed to share my gratitude list and count my Memphis blessings.

Even thinking about Memphis puts a smile on my face. For me, it’s a word of memories. A word of freedom. A word of healing and comfort in my heart. It’s where I came in so lost but emerged

found. It’s where I could just be. It’s where I found a love of Torah and *yiddishkeit* (Judaism) that lit a fire in my heart.

In Proverbs (22:6), it says: חנוך לנער על פי דרכו גם כי יזקין לא יסור ממנה — “Educate a child according to their way, that they should not stray from it when they grow old.” It’s hard to express the multitude of ways in which the Memphis Jewish community was my way. It was my place of fulfillment, a place that gave me the opportunity to open my heart to dream big. I came from a place of confusion and found a cozy oasis of fulfillment that enabled me to love life. Hashem put me in Memphis to heal and to find how my heart could thrive. It’s the place that opened me up and set me free — free to choose what is good and right.

So many families in Memphis were exceptionally kind to me — kindness that I didn’t even know existed. I have vivid memories of my first Shabbos in Memphis, eating meals at the Addresses’ home. *Dayenu*.

I remember learning how to do homework for the first time in my life. *Dayenu*. My skills were about three years below grade level when I arrived in Memphis. I worked with Mrs. Joanne Kahane and told her with conviction and certainty that I had a learning disability. Looking straight at me and with strength in her voice, she said, “I test children for learning disabilities, and you, Esther, do not have one. You simply never did your homework.”

She worked with me for hours every day after school for years, and that is no exaggeration. (Often, she even invited me for my favorite supper: salmon.) Thanks to her, within just over a year, I advanced to two years above my grade level. In my heart, the whole world was telling me, "You can't." But there was such euphoria and inspiration in discovering that I can and I did. I graduated from high school with honors. The opportunity to work with Mrs. Kahane was just one of the tremendous kindnesses I received in Memphis. *Dayenu.*

Rabbi Reuven and Esti Stengel welcomed me to their Shabbos table nearly every week for years. Holiness permeated their home. They treated me like their own daughter and gave me foundations in Torah that are with me to this day. I've tried to establish their values in my own home and will keep them in the depths of my soul for the rest of my life. There is a famous saying from Rabbi Moshe Ibn Ezra: **דברים היוצאים מן הלב נכנסים אל הלב** — "Words that come from the heart enter straight into the heart." Memphis taught right from the heart. The Torah permeated my soul and stayed with me. *Dayenu.*

My friend **Suri (Samberg) Weiner** (MHA '99, FYOS '03) was a role model for me and inspired me to be the best version of myself that I could. How apropos that she and her husband, Rabbi Yisroel Weiner (MHA/FYOS head of school), are now leading and inspiring the Memphis community. Suri is a true gem. *Dayenu.*

Shelby (Winestone) Baum (MHA '77) and her family were beyond welcoming to me. Her grandparents, who perished in the Holocaust, saved the lives of my grandfather and his brother during

World War II. She continued that legacy of kindness, making sure my needs were met again and again and again. *Dayenu.*

The Address, Baum, Epstein, Kahane and Stengel families graciously allowed me to stay in their homes during school breaks, when I had nowhere else to go. *Dayenu.*

I cherish my friendship with the Zeitlin family. *Dayenu.*

I have such sweet memories of the girls' dorm and of how much love Mrs. Anat Kampf poured into each of us. *Dayenu.*

If I had \$1 billion to give, it still wouldn't be enough to repay the time, energy and emotion that the Memphis Jewish community invested in me. My experience at the GMSG gave me the strength and desire to build the beautiful family for which I am so grateful. My time in Memphis empowered me to even dare to dream big and gave me the willpower to hold fast to my dreams.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 teaches us: **כָּל אֲשֶׁר תִּמְצָא יָדְךָ לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּכַחַךְ עֲשֵׂה כִּי אֵין מֵעַשָׂה וְחִשְׁבוֹן וְדַעַת וְחִכְמָה בְּשֵׂאוֹל אֲשֶׁר אֶתֶּה הַלֵּךְ שָׁמָּה** — to paraphrase, everything that comes to your hand, do it with all your energy, because you only have one chance here in this world and nobody will be around forever. Memphis — and **Mrs. Chana (Anet Yaffe) Silver** (MHA '76, YOS '80) in particular — taught me the importance of "carpe diem," or seizing the moment and making it alive! As Mrs. Kampf always told us, "Take the initiative." *Dayenu.*

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D'VAR TORAH

Esther (Crystal) Stark (FYOS '04)

Psalms 118:17 says: **לֹא אָמוּת כִּי אֶחָיָה וְאֶסְפָּר מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה** — in other words, don't kill time. As long as you're alive, make every moment meaningful and alive by singing the praises of Hashem.

I am overflowing with gratitude to Hashem for putting me in Memphis for my high school years. Thanks to that safety net, I've been able to flourish and blossom. Memphis, thank you for everything.

Esther (Crystal) Stark (FYOS '04) lives in Jerusalem with her husband and their beautiful children: Chana, Nechama, Ben Zion, Chaim Aharon, Chaya Ita and Rivka. She runs her own business, helping mothers become fit and strong through her Deluxe Transformation diet and exercise program. She can be reached at fruitflair@gmail.com.





ENGAGEMENTS/ WEDDINGS:

Mazel tov to:

Dovid Yehoshua Samuels (MHA '12) on his March 19 wedding to Shalhevet Abenaim in Ashdod, Israel. The newlyweds are making their home in Givat Shmuel in the Holy Land.

Shaya Katz (MHA '12, FYOS '16) on his engagement to Tehilla Dubin. They will marry May 15 in Lakewood, New Jersey. Mazel tov also to the groom's parents, MHA faculty member Michelle and **David Katz** (MHA '88); his grandparents, Esther and **Allan Katz** (MHA '65, YOS '69); and great-grandfather, Izzy Katz — all of Memphis.

BIRTHS:

Mazel tov to:

Bill and **Annette (Silber) Eisenberg** (YOS '74) of Memphis on the March 6 birth of granddaughter Colette to parents Leigh and Jeremy Less of Memphis. Mazel tov also to big sister Camille.

Sylvia and **Erwin "Bubba" Albert** (MHA '71) of Memphis on the March 3 birth of granddaughter

Addison Rae. Mazel tov to parents Wendi and Jason Stec and big brother Myles, also of Memphis.

Dinah and **Gary Makowsky** (MHA '74) of Memphis on the Jan. 7 arrival of grandson Sonny, born to Ellen Makowsky and Abe Jacobs of Los Angeles. Mazel tov also to big brother Lev.

Rabbi Yisroel and **Julie (Brown) Roll** (MHA '75, YOS '79) of Baltimore, Maryland, on the Feb. 18 birth of grandson Yehoshua Meir, the first child of Yehuda and Sara Roll, also of Baltimore.

Bart (YOS '77) and **Cindy (Cooper) Ehrenkranz** (MHA '76, YOS '80) of Memphis on the March 2 birth of granddaughter Yehudis Golda to Adina Bayla and Mordechai Ehrenkranz of Queens, New York. Mazel tov also to siblings Esti, Ezra, Naftali, Betzalel, Yisrael Zev, Yosef Shalom, Dovid and Zisha Meir.

Former MHA executive director Shimon and **Anna (Fink) Kaminetzky** (MHA '84, YOS '88) of Atlanta, Georgia, who became grandparents with the Feb. 23 arrival of granddaughter Riva Baila. The proud parents are Jessica and Yehuda Ordan

of Queens, New York. Mazel tov also to great-grandmother **Gerry (Margolin) Fink-Platsky** (MHA '59) of Jerusalem.

Rena and **Ephraim Kutner** (MHA '85) of Lawrence, New York, on the March 5 birth of grandson Yehuda Avraham to Hannah and Aaron Kutner of Far Rockaway, New York. He is the great-grandson of **Barbara (Katz) Kutner** (MHA '64, YOS '68) of Lawrence, New York, and the late **Alan Kutner** (MHA '62), z'l, for whom he is named.

Ariella and **Hershel Moskowitz** (MHA '03, FYOS '07) of Atlantic Beach, New York, on the March 16 arrival of daughter Emmanuelle Maya. Mazel tov also to big brothers Phillip and William and grandparents Yaki and **Shirley (Loterstein) Moskowitz** (MHA '73, YOS '77) of Memphis.

Scott and **Miriam (Samberg) Levson** (MHA '04) of Silver Spring, Maryland, on the March 3 birth of son Asher Mayer. Mazel tov also to siblings Shoshana and Eyli and grandparents (and former MHA faculty members) Cantor Aryeh and Adina Samberg of Memphis.

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ALUMNI NEWS

Mazel Tovs & More

Haley and **Aaron Kirshtein** (FYOS '15) of Teaneck, New Jersey, on the Jan. 21 birth of their first child, daughter Shulamit.

BNEI/BNOT MITZVAH:

Mazel tov to:

Kevin and **Rivka (Katz) Braverman** (MHA '89, YOS '93) of Memphis on the Feb. 18 bar mitzvah of their son Eitan, a seventh grader at the MHA. Mazel tov to grandparents Esther and **Allan Katz** (MHA '65, YOS '69) and great-grandfather Izzy Katz, also of Memphis.

Jean and **Phillip Paley** (YOS '93) of Atlanta, Georgia, on the March 4 bar mitzvah of their son Eli.

Ben-Zion and **Tami (Thomas) Radinsky** (MHA '92, FYOS '96) of Woodmere, New York, on the Feb. 16 bat mitzvah celebration for their daughter, Juliana. Mazel tov to grandparents Wendy and **Ira Thomas** (MHA '70, YOS '74) of Far Rockaway, New York, and former FYOS faculty members Rabbi David and Mrs. Barbara Radinsky of Memphis.

Scott (FYOS '99) and **Sarah (Richstone) Saltzman** (FYOS '00) of Denver, Colorado, on their son Max becoming a bar mitzvah.

Deborah and **Beryl Joffre** (MHA '98, FYOS '02) of Houston, Texas, on their son Micah becoming a bar mitzvah Feb. 25. Mazel tov also to grandfather **Michael Joffre** (MHA '69) of Memphis.

Mati and **Jenny (Steinberg) Sved** (MHA '99, FYOS '03) of Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, on their daughter Annabelle becoming a bat mitzvah Feb. 26. Mazel tov also to grandparents Alvin and **Emily (Evensky) Steinberg** (MHA '63) of Memphis.

MAZEL TOV!

SEND US YOUR ALUMNI NEWS FOR THE NEXT
ISSUE AT ALUMNI@MHAFYOS.ORG.



THE MHA/FYOS CLASSES OF 2001-2005

Where are they now?

'97

'01

Yoni Graber (MHA '97, FYOS '01) lives in Atlanta, Georgia, with his wife and three children, ages 4 to 13. He is the head of talent acquisition for a tech startup firm.

He fondly remembers the annual CYHSB canoe trips to the Spring River in Hardy, Arkansas. Among his favorite teachers were Mr. Thomas Johnson, Rabbi Yonason Gersten and the late Mrs. Karin Schmitt.



Graber family



Kaplan family

Anshel Kaplan (MHA '98, FYOS '02), a father of three boys ranging in age from 1 to 7, lives in Teaneck, New Jersey. After working for an international law firm for nearly 10 years, he recently became vice president and assistant general counsel for a large financial institution.

Submitting his alumni questionnaire just before the start of the NCAA "March Madness" basketball tournament, Kaplan — ever loyal to his Memphis roots — had one message to share: "GO TIGERS, GO!!"

He misses his classmates and invites them to reach out at anshelk@gmail.com.

'98

'02

'98

'02

Heather (Braverman) Schneiderman (MHA '98, FYOS '02) is a mother of two boys (ages 9 and 11) and lives in Richmond, Virginia. She works as the assistant director of a child care center.

"After moving to Memphis and joining the school in sixth grade, it quickly felt like I'd always been there," she said. "Memphis really is one of a kind. I wish my classmates and I were better at keeping in touch. I hope everyone is doing well!"



Braverman-Schneiderman family

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THE MHA/FYOS CLASSES OF 2001-2005

Where are they now?

Among her favorite MHA memories are going out for ice cream with classmates, putting on school plays, and hanging out with friends between classes. Her favorite teacher was Mrs. **Peninah (Fink) Salid** (MHA '82, YOS '85).

'98
'02

Reuven Stein (MHA '98, FYOS '02) and his wife Raanana (a former MHA faculty member) now live in Chicago, Illinois. They have five children, ages 4 to 15. He works as director of management for a commercial real estate company.

"I have a lot of great memories from my time at the school," Stein said. "I stay in touch with most of my classmates. In fact, **Daniel Katz** (MHA '98, FYOS '02), **Anshel Kaplan** (MHA '98, FYOS '02), **Richard Lewis** (MHA '99, FYOS '03) and I just agreed to start learning *daf yomi* (a page of Talmud a day) through Zoom. We would love for any other classmates reading this to join us!"

Stein readily admitted that one of his most formative MHA/FYOS experiences was not his favorite at the time. "My parents insisted that I learn Torah every day after school; it was mandatory. I would learn with Rabbi Jay Salid or one of the kollel members every day, without fail. Although sitting and learning for an hour after school each day was tough at my age, those learning sessions helped to build in me a strong foundation and *ahavas Torah* (love for Torah). My father [**Mike Stein** (MHA '72, YOS '76)] would often come to the Yeshiva during the day, and we would learn during lunch or break. I spent a lot of time in the *beis midrash* (Torah study hall), and it became a second home to me. I would like to publicly thank my *rabbeim* and my parents for that!

"I enjoyed all of my teachers and appreciate the time and energy they spent educating us," he said. "We miss seeing everyone and look forward to visiting our friends and family in Memphis soon."



Jenny (Steinberg) Sved (MHA '99, FYOS '03) lives in Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, outside of Philadelphia. She recently made a career change, joining the fundraising team for Jewish National Fund's young professionals' group, [JNFuture](#). She, her husband and their three children (a 12-year-old daughter and 8-year-old twin boys) enjoy visiting Memphis — usually for Sukkot or during the summer — to see her parents, Alvin and **Emily (Evensky) Steinberg** (MHA '63).

'99
'03

"I loved the MHA/FYOS," she said. "Our classes were small, but it didn't matter. Everyone was friends with one another, and the warmth of the school was so apparent among

"I loved the MHA/FYOS," she said. "Our classes were small, but it didn't matter. Everyone was friends with one another, and the warmth of the school was so apparent among

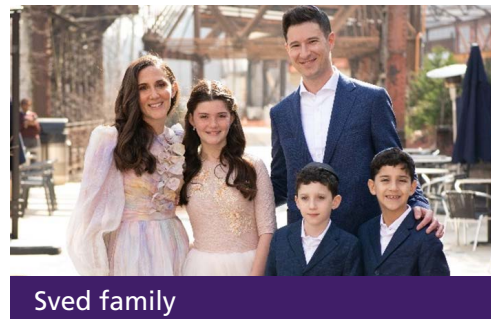
THE MHA/FYOS CLASSES OF 2001-2005

Where are they now?

19

everyone. I have wonderful memories of traveling on shabbatons and with our basketball team to tournaments in Boston and Florida. Hard to believe that it's time for our 20-year high school reunion!"

Her favorite teacher and administrator was Mrs. Anat Kampf, who served as principal of the GMSG while Sved was a student there. "I still love schmoozing with her when we visit."



Sved family

'01

'05

Tamara Schachter (MHA '01, FYOS '05) lives in Teaneck, New Jersey, and works as a registered nurse specializing in women's health.

"It's hard to believe it's been as long as it has since my time at the MHA and GMSG," she said. "I always love coming back to Memphis on visits, and I feel right back at home whenever I come to town."

Among her best MHA/FYOS memories are involvement in the school plays (particularly in high school) and her senior class "kidnapping" the GMSG freshmen. Schachter's favorite teachers were Mrs. J-Jaye Hurley and Mrs. Anat Kampf.



Levson family

Miriam (Samberg) Levson (MHA '04) is a speech language pathologist working with adults. She and her husband, a clinical psychologist, live in Silver Spring, Maryland, with their three children — a newborn, a 5-year-old and a 7-year-old.

She appreciates all the opportunities and experiences that were afforded to her growing up in Memphis and attending the MHA. "I learned and now encourage others to be open to new ideas, people and their differences," Levson said. "We're all on the same team and have similar goals. We just need to be open to trying new opportunities as they arise."

"My favorite memories were in the GMSG, under the guidance of Mrs. Anat Kampf. She always encouraged me to take on more leadership roles, and I believe these opportunities helped me gain confidence and skills that have helped me into adulthood and in my career."

'04

Levson also remembers how Mr. Dana Vaughn "truly went above and beyond to help me with math after school hours," she said.

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THE MHA/FYOS CLASSES OF 2001-2005

Where are they now?



Schreiber family

Yaakov Schreiber (MHA '04) is a third grade Judaic studies teacher at a day school in Baltimore, Maryland. There, he and his wife, a registered nurse who co-developed a revolutionary tobacco cessation approach, are raising three sons, ages 2 to 7.

"I've learned over the years, and especially through my students, that every person is awesome in their own way," he said of his classmates. "They only need to be nurtured and supported in order to excel through realizing their unique potential."

Among his favorite MHA teachers was Mrs. Shelley Kutliroff. "I vividly recall the feeling of empowering satisfaction I achieved after mastering her lessons on the Constitution and its amendments," he said.



Charles LaVene (MHA '05, FYOS '09) and his wife live in Linden, New Jersey, with their 6-year-old daughter. He works as a project manager for a consumer electronics company. "I wear multiple hats and run around fixing problems that I've brought up, so not much has changed," he quipped.

"The Memphis Jewish community is still, in my mind, the epitome of what a Jewish community in *galut* (outside of Israel) should be like," LaVene said. "Tight-knit but inviting and open, big enough to have everything it needs, and small enough to have everyone involved."

He will always cherish his memories of the CYHSB steak dinners. His favorite teacher was Rabbi Yonason Gersten, whom he called "the GOAT (greatest of all time)."

LaVene invites any classmates traveling in or near New Jersey to reach out about making Shabbat plans together.



LaVene family

Want to connect with other MHA/FYOS alumni?

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK! 

Alumni eke out victory over CYHSB varsity at 2023 Irby and Bernice Cooper Alumni Basketball Game



The 2023 alumni team included (front row, from left) **Jeffrey Owen** (FYOS '17), **Ezra Cooper** (MHA '15, FYOS '19), **Joel Weinstein** (MHA '16, FYOS '20), **Mark Fertel** (FYOS '17), **David Mashinsky** (MHA '16, FYOS '20); (back row, from left) **David Silbermann** (MHA '12, FYOS '16), **Benjamin Mendelson** (MHA '17, FYOS '21), **Asher Silbermann** (MHA '09, FYOS '13), **Benjamin Wachtel** (FYOS '13), **Isaac Graber** (MHA '10, FYOS '14), Coach **Pace Cooper** (MHA '77, YOS '81), **Jonathan Wogan** (MHA '94), **Josh Kahane** (MHA '93, FYOS '97), **Justin Wruble** (MHA '09, FYOS '13), **Avi Katz** (MHA '11, FYOS '15), **Isaac Krupp** (MHA '06, FYOS '10), **Hershel Krupp** (MHA '97) and **Richard Lewis** (MHA '99, FYOS '03).

The MHA Moss Gym was filled with anticipation and enthusiasm on Saturday evening, Jan. 14, as the Cooper Yeshiva High School for Boys' varsity basketball team faced off against a team of graduates in the 21st Annual Irby and Bernice Cooper Alumni Game. This year's alumni team included 17 members, making it one of the largest in the history of the matchup.

The alumni bench strength and depth of talent helped make the game especially exciting, with the lead changing hands multiple times throughout the four quarters. Toward the end of the game, the alumni decisively pulled ahead of the varsity Macs. At the final buzzer, the alumni savored the sweet taste of victory with a 79-68 win.



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ALUMNI GAME

An energetic crowd of alumni, students, faculty and community members was on-hand to cheer for both teams throughout the game. Spectators were treated to delicious refreshments, outstanding school spirit and some excellent basketball.

On behalf of the MHA athletics department and alumni committee, we express our appreciation to everyone who participated in this event. The Alumni Game is a highlight on the school calendar each year, and it showcases the best of the past, present and future of the MHA/FYOS. We are already looking forward to next year's matchup!



This year's father/son faceoff pitted **Jonathan Wogan** (MHA '94, right) against **Dovid Reuven Wogan** (MHA '19 and current 12th grader).



Brothers **Asher** (MHA '09, FYOS '13, left) and **David Silbermann** (MHA '12, FYOS '16) helped the alumni team to victory.



Among those in attendance were (first row, from left) **David Cooper** (MHA '78, YOS '82), **David Katz** (MHA '88), **Rena Mashinsky** (MHA '14, FYOS '18), **Mark Fertel** (FYOS '17), **Joel Weinstein** (MHA '16, FYOS '20), **Jeffrey Owen** (FYOS '17), **Hershel Krupp** (MHA '97), **Larry Graber** (MHA '71, YOS '75), Rabbi Yonason Gersten, **Richard Lewis** (MHA '99, FYOS '03), **Shayna Kahane** (MHA '16, FYOS '20), **Isaac Krupp** (MHA '06, FYOS '10), **Isaac Graber** (MHA '10, FYOS '14); (middle row, from left) **Angela Snyder** (MHA '82, YOS '85), **Jessica (Baum) Sukhodolsky** (MHA '99), **David Winestone** (MHA '74), **Shelby (Winestone) Baum** (MHA '77), **Stacy (Zalowitz) Sanderson** (MHA '88), **Amara Levine-Reich** (MHA '94, FYOS '97), **Jonathan Wogan** (MHA '94, with his son), **Josh Kahane** (MHA '93, FYOS '97), **Elana (Krupp) Kahane** (MHA '92), Ben-Zion Radinsky; (top row, from left) **Allan Katz** (MHA '65, YOS '69), **Rivka (Katz) Braverman** (MHA '89, YOS '93), **Aviva (Krupp) Lewis** (MHA '02, FYOS '06), **Dvora (Stein) Weisfogel** (MHA '96, FYOS '00), **Bracha (Stein) Einhorn** (MHA '04, FYOS '08), **Pace Cooper** (MHA '77, YOS '81), **David Silbermann** (MHA '12, FYOS '16), **Justin Wruble** (MHA '09, FYOS '13), **Ezra Cooper** (MHA '15, FYOS '19), **Benjamin Wachtel** (FYOS '13), **Avi Katz** (MHA '11, FYOS '15, holding his son), **Asher Silbermann** (MHA '09, FYOS '13), **David Mashinsky** (MHA '16, FYOS '20) and **Jason Schubert** (MHA '17, FYOS '21).



Save the date for the 73rd annual scholarship banquet

The MHA/FYOS recently announced that this year's banquet, to be held May 21, 2023, will honor some of the school's most dedicated and ardent supporters. Sarah Bracha and **Jonathan Wogan** (MHA '94) will be the evening's guests of honor; Michelle Katz, longtime MHA faculty member and volunteer and the wife of **David Katz** (MHA '88), will receive the Eishet Chesed Award; and Evelyn and Marlin Graber, z'l, will be recognized with a legacy tribute for their indelible contributions throughout the school's storied history.

Funds raised from the banquet and ad journal will benefit the MHA/FYOS scholarship fund, which enables our school to provide a high-quality and nurturing Judaic and general studies education to the children of all interested families in the Memphis Jewish community.

To make a reservation for the May 21 banquet or to place an ad in the scholarship journal, please visit mhafyos.org/journal or email journal@mhafyos.org.

Thank you in advance for your generous support.



SAVE THE DATE FOR THE
MARGOLIN HEBREW ACADEMY-FEINSTONE YESHIVA OF THE SOUTH

73rd Annual
SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET

SUNDAY, MAY 21
COCKTAILS AT 6:00 PM | DINNER AT 6:30 PM
BARON HIRSCH SYNAGOGUE



**MICHELLE
KATZ**

EISHET CHESED
AWARDEE



**SARAH BRACHA AND
JONATHAN WOGAN**

GUESTS OF HONOR



**EVELYN AND MARLIN
GRABER, Z"L**

LEGACY
TRIBUTE

FOR TICKETS AND ADS, VISIT MHAFYOS.ORG/JOURNAL

ALUMNI DEDICATION WALL

MHA/FYOS alumni now have a special opportunity to leave a permanent mark on our school's campus and a lasting legacy for future generations.

The soon-to-be-renovated school lunchroom, located next to the Moss Gym, will include an Alumni Dedication Wall adorned with the names of graduates and former attendees of the MHA/FYOS. The project serves to inspire current students and to offer alumni a meaningful way to give back to the institution that has given them so much.

Each tile on the Alumni Dedication Wall costs \$500 and will feature the name of one alum. We express our gratitude to those who have already reserved their alumni tiles*:

Lee Baum (MHA '74)

Shelby (Winestone) Baum (MHA '77)

Julius Besser

Dylan Cooper (MHA '09, FYOS '13)

Elan Cooper (MHA '13, FYOS '17)

Ethan Cooper (MHA '09, FYOS '13)

Jeremy Cooper (MHA '08, FYOS '12)

Laurie Cooper (MHA '65)

Pace Cooper (MHA '77, YOS '81)

Serena Cooper (MHA '18, FYOS '22)

Yael Cooper (MHA '18, FYOS '22)

Moshe Davidovics (MHA '17, FYOS '21)

Bart Ehrenkranz (YOS '77)

Cindy (Cooper) Ehrenkranz (MHA '76, YOS '80)

Denah Emerson (MHA '01, FYOS '05)

Rabbi Dov Emerson (MHA '91)

Rabbi Michael Emerson (MHA '99, FYOS '03)

Yoni Freiden (MHA '96, FYOS '00)

Sarah (Emerson) Helfand (MHA '95, FYOS '98)

Aidan Kahane (MHA '19)

Elana (Krupp) Kahane (MHA '92)

Josh Kahane (MHA '93, FYOS '97)

Shayna Kahane (MHA '16, FYOS '20)

David Katz (MHA '88)

Lisa (Wruble) Kaufman (MHA '73)

Aaron Kirshtein (FYOS '15)

Asher Kirshtein (FYOS '19)

Avi Kirshtein (FYOS '12)

Zevi Kirshtein (FYOS '22)

Hershel Krupp (MHA '97)

Ricki (Thomas) Krupp (MHA '66, YOS '70)

Amara Levine-Reich (MHA '94, FYOS '97)

Aviva (Krupp) Lewis (MHA '02, FYOS '06)

Richard Lewis (MHA '99, FYOS '03)

Brittany (Baum) Lindenfeld (MHA '04)

Chaim Lubin (MHA '93, FYOS '97)

Shmuel Lulky (FYOS '18)

Shoshana (Somer) Mehler (MHA '07, FYOS '11)

Benjamin Mendelson (MHA '17, FYOS '21)

Elise Mendelson (MHA '18, FYOS '22)

Jacob Musicante

Meryl Musicante (MHA '11)

Robert Musicante (MHA '05)

Robin (Friedman) Musicante (MHA '82)

Evan Rosenthal (FYOS '17)

Talia (Kaufman) Sand (MHA '03, FYOS '07)

Ari Sauer (MHA '90, FYOS '94)

Rina Soffer (FYOS '19)

Akiva Somer (MHA '10, FYOS '14)
Ezra Somer (FYOS '21)
Rafi Somer (MHA '20)
Shmuel Somer (MHA '09)
Jessica (Baum) Sukhodolsky (MHA '99)
Suri (Samberg) Weiner (MHA '99, FYOS '03)
Jered Weinstein (MHA '14, FYOS '18)
Joel Weinstein (MHA '16, FYOS '20)
Sara Weinstein (MHA '18, FYOS '22)
Jonathan Wogan (MHA '94)

Aaron Wruble (MHA '12, FYOS '16)
Alyssa Wruble (MHA '11, FYOS '15)
Dena (Rosenberg) Wruble (MHA '84, YOS '88)
Emma Wruble (MHA '20)
Gary Wruble (MHA '77, YOS '81)
Justin Wruble (MHA '09, FYOS '13)
Sophie Wruble (MHA '16, FYOS '20)

**as of March 20, 2023*

Please join us in this exciting endeavor so we can add your name to our growing list of alumni supporters. To reserve your tile on the Alumni Dedication Wall or to learn more about the project, visit mhafyos.org/alumniwall or email jessica.baum@mhafyos.org.

Thank you in advance for your support and for setting a high bar for leadership and generosity at the MHA/FYOS.

Safier brothers earn accolades for excellence in education

We always *shep nachas* (derive pride and joy) from the many honors heaped upon our alumni in all fields. However, there is an additional sense of pride when alumni distinguish themselves in the teaching profession — and especially when they are involved in Jewish education.

Recently, two of our graduates from the years featured in this issue were honored for their outstanding contributions as educators. They also happen to be brothers: **Rabbi Dovid Safier** (MHA '00, FYOS '04) and **Chaim Eli Safier** (MHA '02, FYOS '06).

On Jan. 29, the students of the Cooper Yeshiva High School for Boys surprised Rabbi Safier at their annual Steak Dinner fundraiser by naming him as the evening's honoree. In the tribute video, students acknowledged the dedication and inspiration he brings to his role as a member of the FYOS faculty.



2023 CYHSB Steak Dinner honoree **Rabbi Dovid Safier** (MHA '00, FYOS '04, second from right) with (from left) students **Gavi Peiser** and **Elisha Serman** (both MHA '19, anticipated FYOS '23) and FYOS administrator Rabbi Yonason Gersten

On Feb. 21, Mr. Safier, who teaches math at Hillel Torah North Day School in Chicago, received one of three Educator of the Year awards at a teacher appreciation event sponsored by the Hartman Family Foundation and the Associated Talmud Torahs of Chicago. Mr. Safier and his fellow honorees were selected by an impartial committee of educational consultants and community members, using criteria that include: exceptional

instructional skills in a nurturing environment; commitment to student success; superior communication with parents, students and peers; commitment to continued professional development; and contributions to their school's learning community. The award includes a cash prize.



Chaim Eli Safier (MHA '02, FYOS '06) accepting his Educator of the Year award from the Hartman Family Foundation and Associated Talmud Torahs of Chicago

We send our hearty congratulations to the Safier brothers and wish them both many more wonderful years of inspiring the next generation.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF AL THOMAS, Z'L



The Memphis community and Jewish world at large lost a powerhouse of a man with the Jan. 12 passing of Mr. Al Herbert Thomas. His death marks the loss of yet another of the pioneers who helped to establish the MHA.

Thomas was a driving force in the early years of our school — not as an educator, but as a fundraiser and public relations agent. Although he did not receive a Torah education in his youth, he was deeply committed to the cause. Thomas was instrumental in shaping the MHA into one of the nation's leading Orthodox day schools when the day school movement was in its infancy. Other cities interested in opening a day school would seek his counsel, which he shared generously and graciously.

In its first few years of operation, the MHA did not charge tuition. Thomas worked tirelessly to raise the funds needed to run the school from year to year. Every summer, he set out on a fundraising trip around the country and didn't return to Memphis until he'd collected enough to ensure the school would make it through another year. When people protested that Thomas was requesting too much money, he responded by asking whether they would forgo insurance because the premiums were too high. He firmly believed that Jewish education was protection our people could not afford to do without.

A prominent attorney, Thomas served as president of the MHA board of trustees in 1968. During his tenure, he also played an instrumental role in the establishment of the Yeshiva of the South.

Among Thomas's greatest contributions to our community and the Jewish people were the innovative Torah retreats he held annually in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, between 1964 and 1985. Working in partnership with Rabbi Meir Belsky, z'l, he brought in Torah giants from across the U.S. to teach and inspire everyone in attendance. Thomas donated use of a Gatlinburg hotel for the retreats, and a group of women from Memphis — led by his wife, Bettie, z'l — prepared the food for as many as 300 people. The retreats served two main purposes: to raise the level of Torah observance and commitment in the Memphis Jewish community and to raise money for the MHA. Thomas donated all profits from the retreats to the school.

The Orthodox Union (OU) and Torah Umesorah credit Thomas with creating the first weekend retreats for adults dedicated to Torah learning — a concept that has since been replicated and adapted by many Jewish institutions. As noted in Thomas's obituary in the *Hebrew Watchman*, "The multitude of such programs that are today run by many organizations across the world owe their existence to this brainstorm idea of Al and Bettie

Thomas of the small town in the South — Memphis, Tennessee.”

The most striking and tangible evidence of Thomas’s legacy in the history of our school is his family. All seven of his children are MHA/FYOS alumni, as are 15 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He currently has six great-grandchildren enrolled at the school. All are leading committed Jewish lives. Clearly, the Thomas family presence will continue to be felt in our hallways for generations.

Optimism was at the heart of Thomas’s ability to achieve so much during his life. “Optimism is a sturdy soldier,” he was known to say. Pessimism had no place in his world, especially when it came to ensuring the future of the school he loved so much. That is the legacy he leaves us.

We send our deepest condolences to his children — **Anna (Thomas) Kotkes** (MHA '65, YOS '69), **Ricki (Thomas) Krupp** (MHA '66, YOS '70), **Aaron Thomas** (MHA '68, YOS '71), **Ira Thomas** (MHA '70, YOS '74), **Beryl Thomas** (MHA '77, YOS '81), **Deena Thomas** (MHA '76, YOS '80) and **Josh Thomas** (MHA '83) — and his many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren. May they be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem, and may the memory of Al Thomas forever be a blessing.



At the 1968 dedication of the Yeshiva of the South, Thomas (right) helped to carry the *chupah* (canopy) during the Torah procession.



In 1970, Thomas (far right) worked on the plans for the new GMSG building with (from left) Joe Margolin, Sam Margolin and William Epstein.



Even in recent years, Thomas rarely missed an MHA activity. One of his favorites was Grandparents' Day, during which he made a point to visit the classrooms of every one of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren attending the school. He is pictured here (at left) on Grandparents' Day 2016 with great-grandson Daniel Kahane (now an MHA eighth grader) and Kahane's grandfathers, Joel Kahane and Michael Krupp.



Thomas celebrated his 90th birthday in 2021 with granddaughters **Rena Mashinsky** (MHA '14, FYOS '18, left) and Natalie Mashinsky (GMSG 12th grader).

פרנס היום

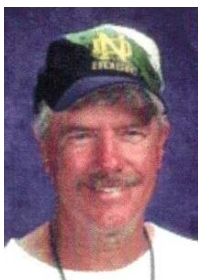
Become a Partner in our Learning

*This month's learning is
in memory of*
Al Thomas, Z"l

**Sponsored by
The Wollner Family**

The family of **George Wollner** (MHA '67, YOS '71) and **Chaya (Terry Wollner) Fuchs** (MHA '74, YOS '78) generously sponsored a month of learning at the school in Thomas's memory

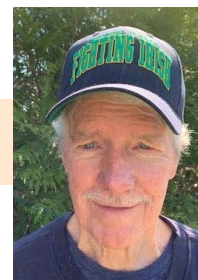
Anyone interested in making a dedication in his memory may contact **Jessica (Baum) Sukhodolsky** (MHA '99) at jessica.baum@mhafyos.org.



SPOTLIGHT FEATURE

Robert "Coach Jake" Jacobson

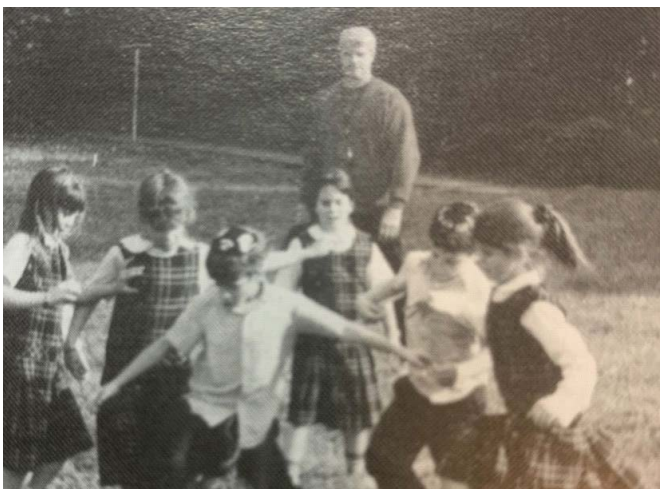
Developing student athletes of all ages



Has a classified ad ever changed the course of your life? For Robert Jacobson, responding to a job listing in the newspaper took him out of retirement from his career as an attorney and he became "Coach Jake," the physical education teacher and athletics director at the MHA/FYOS for more than a decade.

In 1994, Jacobson moved to Memphis when his wife at the time, Jana, was transferred through her job at FedEx. "I had practiced law in Florida for 25 years, and I was done," Jacobson said. "I never intended to do anything else but fish and travel for the rest of my life."

A few months later, an advertisement for an East Memphis school hiring a physical education teacher caught his eye. "Two days later, I was the gym teacher at the MHA/FYOS," he said.



Elementary school students enjoying gym class with Coach Jake outside the MHA in 1998.

The path that led Jacobson to his role as Coach Jake was a long and winding road. He grew up in Chicago and earned a bachelor's degree from Bob Jones University in South Carolina. Jacobson later attended Notre Dame in Indiana, completing a master's degree in English and a law degree. After graduating from Notre Dame, he moved to Port Charlotte, Florida, where he set up shop as an attorney and raised his three children: Jim, Jennifer and Ginger.



His first attempt at retirement was in 1989, when he stepped away from law after more than two decades and began running a horse ranch in central Florida. Five years later, Jacobson tried again to retire when he relocated to Tennessee. Fate clearly had other plans for him, leading him to the athletics department at our school.

Coach Jake's original intent was to stay for only a short time. "I thought I would finish out the school year — a couple of months — and then go back to fishing," he said. His genuine love for the job and for his students kept him at the MHA/FYOS for over 10 years.

SPOTLIGHT FEATURE

Robert "Coach Jake" Jacobson



As an educator, Coach Jake was fueled by a sense of purpose. He felt he was on a mission to help students with their physical fitness while instilling in them the values of teamwork, sportsmanship and hard work. He frequently said about teaching at our school, "We are doing something special here, and what we do is for life."

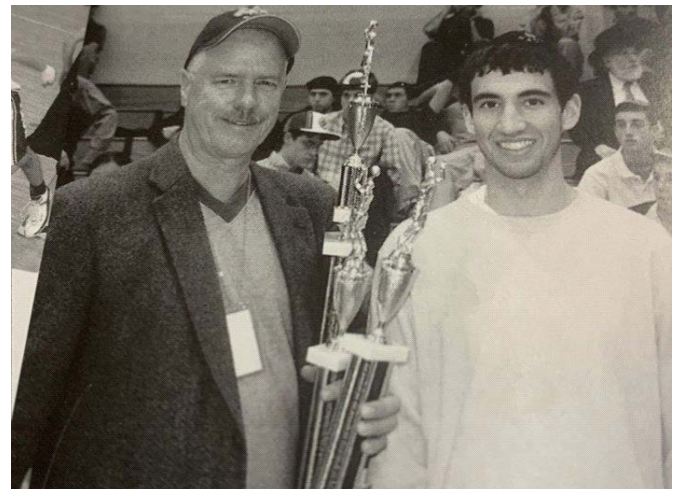


Coach Jake with high-fives for the varsity Macs before a game.

Coach Jake focused on the "total child," not just athletics. He was very serious about the academic standards required for participation in varsity sports and encouraged students to maintain good grades.

"I was struggling with my grades during freshman year, and Coach Jake kicked me off the basketball team until I made honor roll," said **Yoni Freiden** (MHA '96, FYOS '00). "It worked! I was determined never to get another C in high school. I achieved honor roll after that, and I owe it to Coach Jake. He really cared about us on and off the court.

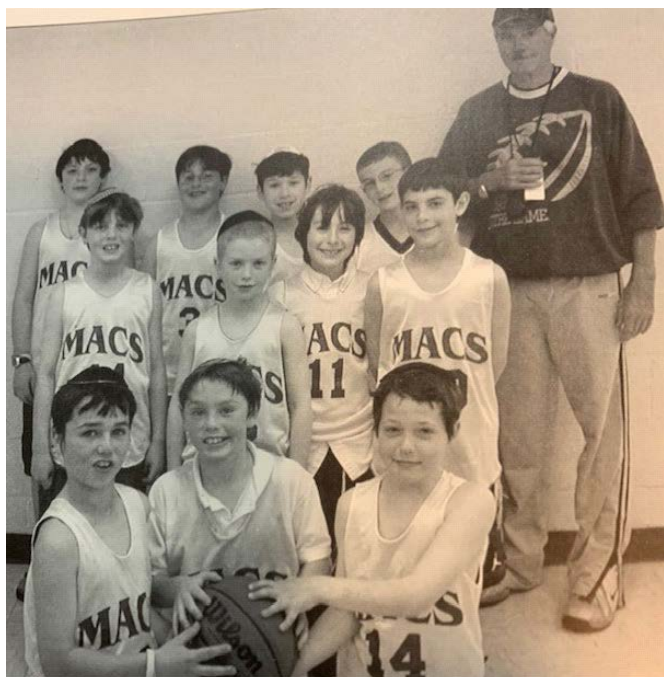
"He taught me to be a facilitator and to be unselfish in sharing the ball with my teammates," Freiden said. "That lesson enabled me to break the varsity Macs' team record for assists."



Coach Jake with varsity Macs team captain **Richard Lewis** (MHA '99, FYOS '03) at Yeshiva University's Sarachek basketball tournament in 2003.

Coach Jake worked tirelessly throughout his tenure to broaden our athletics program to include boys

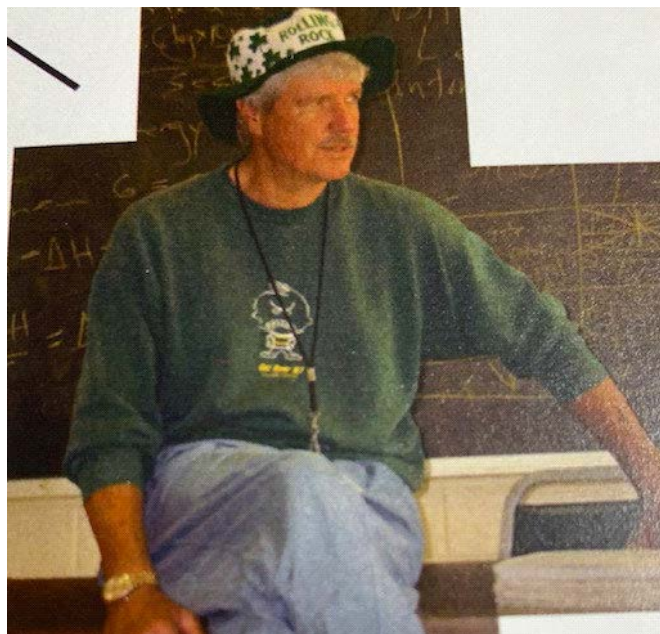
and girls, as well as a wide range of ages. For example, under his leadership, our school had multiple competitive basketball teams: the varsity Macs and Lady Macs for our high school students, junior varsity Macs and Lady Macs for the junior high school, and Mini Macs and Micro Macs teams for grades three through six. His goal was to engage as many students as possible in the joy of sports, and he succeeded. The strength of the program he built became a recruiting tool for the MHA/FYOS, particularly for the boys' high school.



Coach Jake with the 2004-2005 Micro Macs (front row, from left): **Benjamin Wachtel** (FYOS '13), **Ethan Cooper** (MHA '09, FYOS '13), Nechemiah Goldstein; (middle row, from left) **Dylan Cooper** (MHA '09, FYOS '13), **Aharon Milevsky** (MHA '09), **Lee Silberberg** (MHA '09), **Justin Wruble** (MHA '09, FYOS '13); (back row, from left) **Efroni Schlesinger** (MHA '09), Noah Thomas, **Yaakov Kaplan** (MHA '09, FYOS '13) and **Eli Osdoba** (MHA '09, FYOS '13).

"Coach Jake took our athletics program to new heights," said **Josh Kahane** (MHA '93, FYOS '97) of the man who coached him in basketball during his junior and senior years of high school. "He expanded the team offerings and brought a sense of professionalism to the athletic department. It was Coach Jake who first called us 'student athletes,' a term he used to stress the importance of working hard and succeeding on and off the court.

"But perhaps more than anything else, Coach Jake was devoted to our school and its students. He routinely gave of his valuable time after hours — working with the teams, tutoring kids, and hosting special events. Coach Jake truly loved his students, and his students truly loved him."



A man of many talents, Coach Jake also taught health and economics classes in our high schools for a few years and served as an umpire for fast-pitch softball leagues during the summers.

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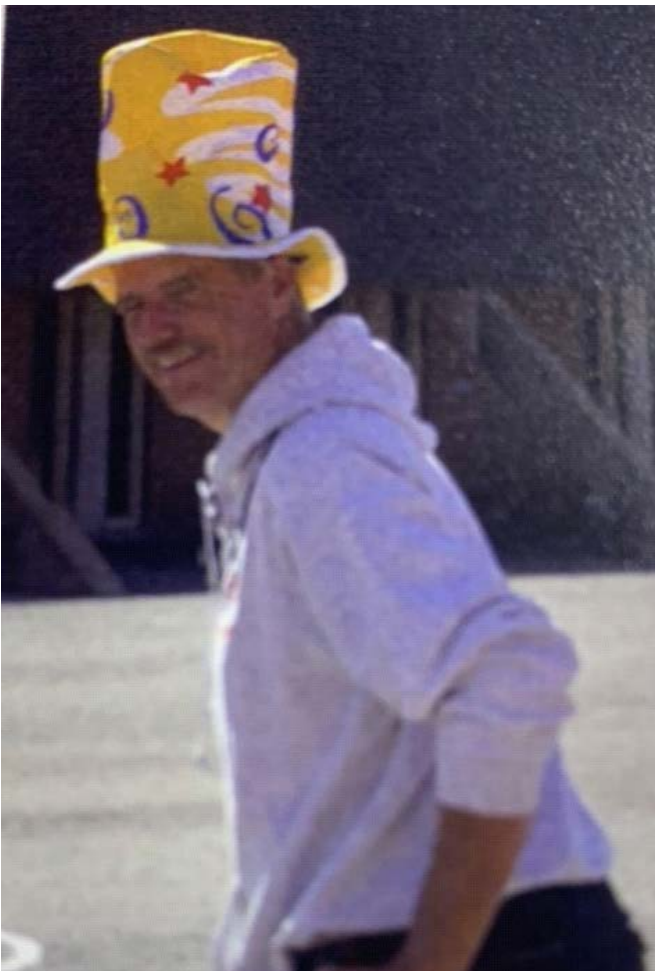
SPOTLIGHT FEATURE

Robert "Coach Jake" Jacobson

"Coach Jake was great," said **Reuven Stein** (MHA '98, FYOS '02). "To avoid even the possibility of anyone cheating, he implemented punch-hole tests and it worked.

"He was also a great basketball coach. At least, I saw him do some great coaching from my seat on the bench," Stein quipped.

Yaakov Yitzchak Schreiber (MHA '04) recalled some of Coach Jake's iconic and witty quotations, such as "Might as well hit him in the foot with it" and "I don't want to tell you his name, but his initials are ... Yaakov Schreiber!"



Coach Jake's dedication to his students was formally recognized in 2004, when he was chosen as the honoree at the CYHSB Steak Dinner. Nearly 20 years later, Jacobson still talks about that award as the highlight of his many careers. "I was Florida's Teacher of the Year in 1965. I was the Florida Bar's Man of the Year in 1984. In 2002, I became the first umpire to achieve gold level in less than seven years. (I did it in five.) Yet, the proudest accomplishment of my life, by far, was being honored by the high school boys at their dinner," Coach Jake said.



As the honoree at the 10th annual Steak Dinner, Coach Jake was presented with a basketball, signed by all the CYHSB students, by Rabbi Yonason Gersten and **Dovid Safier** (MHA '00, FYOS '04).

In 2006, he was again ready for a slower pace of life and decided to step away from his role at the MHA/ FYOS. Coach Jake continued working as a softball umpire, eventually becoming one for collegiate-level games in the Southeastern Conference, or SEC.

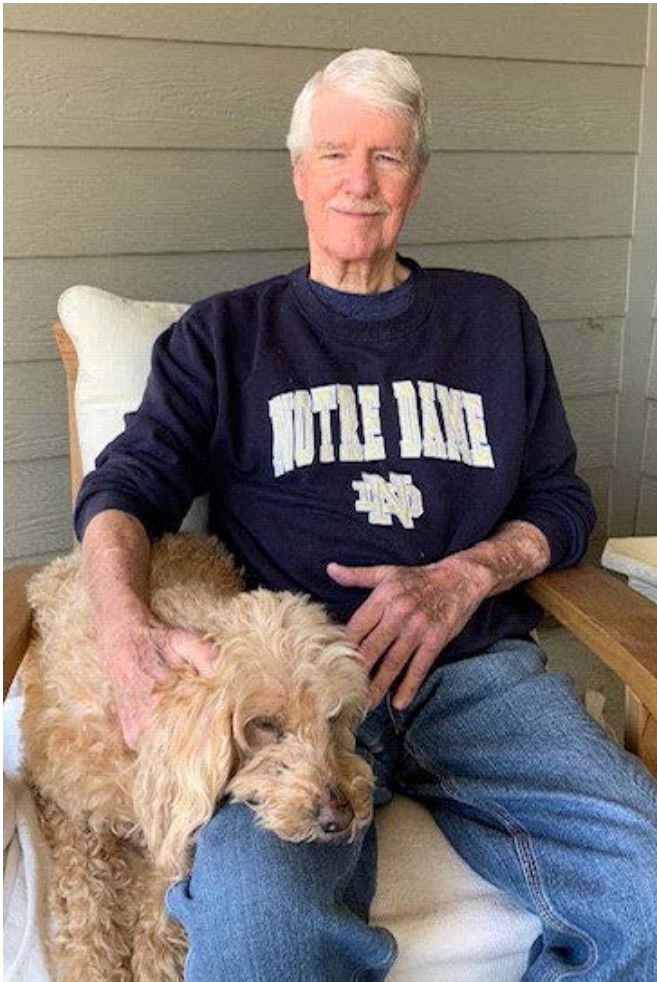
Three years ago, he once again attempted retirement, hopeful it would stick this time. He

SPOTLIGHT FEATURE

Robert "Coach Jake" Jacobson

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moved to a lovely and environmentally conscious retirement community in Peachtree, Georgia. Now a grandfather of 11, Jacobson spends his days shooting pool in the clubhouse, watching sports on TV, and walking and playing with his dog, Jasper.



Jacobson with Jasper earlier this year.

Coach Jake has worn many hats in his life. Through it all, his core philosophy of life has remained constant. "We can't win every game. Sometimes championships elude us. But like Gatsby, I believe in the green light, the future," he said, referencing the F. Scott Fitzgerald character from *The Great Gatsby*. "As the book concludes, 'Tomorrow, we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther ... and then one fine morning ...'"

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Coach Jake". The signature is stylized and cursive.

ALUMNI REUNITE

We continue to be impressed by the submissions to our “Alumni Reunite” feature.

Any time two or more alumni get together — whether for a simcha (celebration) or otherwise — we would love to get a photo. Our thanks to those who provided these pictures, especially those who took time out during meaningful family occasions to assemble MHA/FYOS alumni and friends. *Yasher koach* (kudos)!



Classmates (from left) **Julie (Brown) Roll** (MHA '75, YOS '79), **Beth (Kipper) Pasternak** (MHA '75, YOS '79), **Sarah Beth (Frager) Kahn** (MHA '75, YOS '79) and **Rabbi David Finkelstein** (MHA '75) reunited at the January wedding of Kahn's great-niece in Baltimore.



Five alumni served on the staff of Yeshiva University's National Model United Nations (YUNMUN) event in February — more than from any other high school! Pictured are (from left) **Ezra Cooper** (MHA '15, FYOS '19), **Nancy Alexander** (FYOS '20), **Sophie Wruble** (MHA '16, FYOS '20), **Shayna Kahane** (MHA '16, FYOS '20) and **Ruthie Kaplowitz** (MHA '17, FYOS '21). Kahane was selected as one of only three undersecretaries.

On Dec. 25, **Esti Samberg** (MHA '16, FYOS '20) married Shimmy Klaus in Lakewood, New Jersey. As you can see, our school was well represented at the simcha.



(front row, from left) **Nancy Alexander** (FYOS '20), **Shayna Kahane** (MHA '16, FYOS '20), **Avi Bosin** (MHA '16, FYOS '20), **Sophie Wruble** (MHA '16, FYOS '20), **Rina Soffer** (FYOS '19); (back row, from left) **Miriam (Samberg) Levson** (MHA '04), **Ruthie Kaplowitz** (MHA '17, FYOS '21), **Alexandra Goldblatt** (FYOS '19), **Chani Karasik** (MHA '16, FYOS '20), **Chana (Joffre) Goldstone** (MHA '08), **David Katz** (MHA '88), **Rebecca (Brown) Eisenstadter** (MHA '14, FYOS '18), **Shoshana Silbermann** (MHA '14, FYOS '18), **Jamie (Epstein) Gibber** (MHA '10, FYOS '14), **Batya Bosin** (MHA '14, FYOS '18), **Meira Braverman** (MHA '14, FYOS '18), **Lee Sauer** (MHA '17, FYOS '21), **Sara Weinstein** (MHA '18, FYOS '22), **Sandra Kilstein** (MHA '64), **Devorah (Adler) Weiner** (YOS '82), **Suri (Samberg) Weiner** (MHA '99, FYOS '03), **Sylvia (Kilstein) Bousi** (MHA '72, YOS '76), **Cindy (Cooper) Ehrenkranz** (MHA '76, YOS '80), **Naomi (Samberg) Vainer** (MHA '07, FYOS '11), **Meir Samberg** (MHA '03), **Yaakov Samberg** (MHA '00, FYOS '04), **Slava Bosin** (MHA '80, YOS '84) and **Joel Weinstein** (MHA '16, FYOS '20).



Bride **Esti Samberg** with two of her classmates, **Sophie Wruble** (MHA '16, FYOS '20, left) and **Nancy Alexander** (FYOS '20).



Shayna Kahane and **Joel Weinstein** (both MHA '16, FYOS '20) celebrated the first member of their class getting married.

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ALUMNI REUNITE

We like to call this adorable picture, submitted by **Hugh (Freiden) Gordon** (MHA '72, YOS '76), "Alumni Children/Grandchildren Reunite." Gordon and his wife, Debbie Freiden, recently brought their grandchildren to see the school that he and the grandchildren's parents had attended.



(from left) Debbie Freiden; Eitan Goodman, son of **Tamara (Freiden) Goodman** (MHA '03, FYOS '07); Jacob Gotlib, son of **Shirli (Freiden) Gotlib** (MHA '99, FYOS '03); Sarit Weiss, daughter of **Meirah (Freiden) Weiss** (MHA '04, FYOS '08); Amalia Schwartz and Liam Schwartz, children of **Ariella (Freiden) Schwartz** (MHA '01, FYOS '05); Alex Gotlib, son of **Shirli (Freiden) Gotlib**; and **Hugh (Freiden) Gordon**.



Jessica (Baum) Sukhodolsky (MHA '99 and director of recruitment and marketing, left) ran into **Haley Kaplan** (MHA '04, FYOS '08) while visiting Atlanta during winter break.



Rabbi Dov Emerson (MHA '91, second from left) met up with the MHA/FYOS delegation — including (from left) Mrs. Anat Kampf, Rabbi Yisroel Weiner and **Jessica (Baum) Sukhodolsky** (MHA '99) — at January's Prizmah conference for Jewish day school educators in Denver.



Suri (Samberg) Weiner and **Shirli (Freiden) Gotlib** (both MHA '99, FYOS '03) reunited in the photo booth at the December bat mitzvah celebration for Gotlib's niece, Dahlia Freiden, in Memphis.



Pictured at a February young alumni meetup in Israel are (from left) **Sara Weinstein** (MHA '18, FYOS '22), **Rena Wogan** (MHA '18, FYOS '22), **Serena Cooper** (MHA '18, FYOS '22), **Yael Cooper** (MHA '18, FYOS '22), **Coby Goldblatt** (MHA '18, FYOS '22), **Aidan Kahane** (MHA '19), **Zevi Kirshtein** (FYOS '22), **Benjamin Siegel** (MHA '18, FYOS '22) and **Zev Bosin** (MHA '18, FYOS '22).



(from left) **Moshe Davidovics** (MHA '17, FYOS '21), **Benjamin Siegel** (MHA '18, FYOS '22), **Aidan Kahane** (MHA '19) and **Zev Bosin** (MHA '18, FYOS '22) in Israel.



Classmates **Deena (Katz) Yarmush** (MHA '94, FYOS '97, left) and **Elana (Sadetsky) Avis** (MHA '93, FYOS '97) got together in Florida this January.



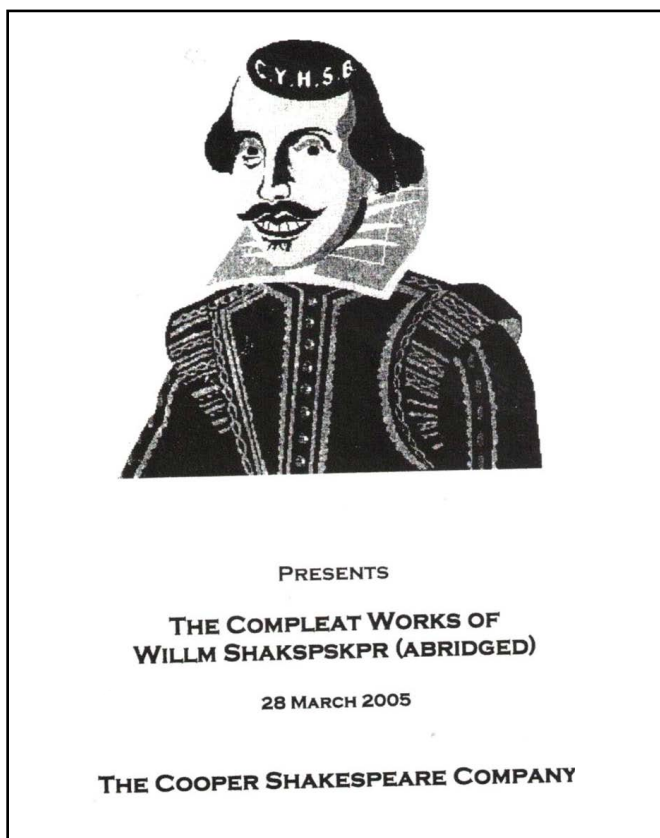
Yoni Freiden (MHA '96, FYOS '00, third from left) reunited with classmates **Ethan Eisen** (MHA '96, far left), **Talya Levin** (MHA '96, FYOS '00, second from right) and **Maren (Harrison) Magid** (MHA '96, far right) while visiting Israel this winter with his daughter, Dahlia.

FLASHBACKS

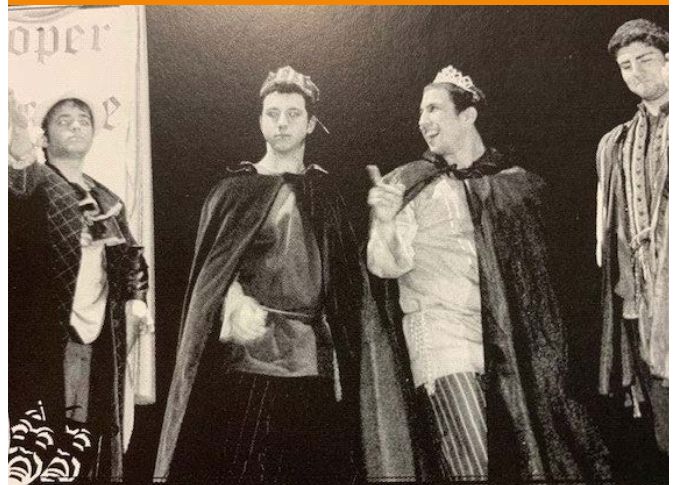
2001-2005

Photographs from the past

The 2005 CYHSB production of "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)"



(from left) **Shlomo Gersten** (MHA '01, FYOS '05), Avi Friedman, **Yair Ben Ishai** (FYOS '05) and **Daniel Lewis** (MHA '01, FYOS '05).



"Thank you for the photo. What a great show! It brings back great memories. It was hard to get through our lines without someone cracking up in laughter." –Yair Ben Ishai

The GMSG class of 2004 (from left): **Tali (Bacaner) Levy** (MHA '00, FYOS '04), **Rina (Stavsky) Weinberg** (FYOS '04), **Shaindel (Kaplan) Kahn** (MHA '00, FYOS '04), **Jessica (Morris) Hoffman** (FYOS '04), **Rivka (Cherney) Raibi** (FYOS '04), **Roni (Epstein) Berkovits** (MHA '00, FYOS '04) and **Esther (Crystal) Stark** (FYOS '04).



"I totally remember this. This is our 12th grade class! We wanted our 'professional' class picture to look old-fashioned. I remember all of us trying very hard not to laugh." —**Esther (Crystal) Stark**

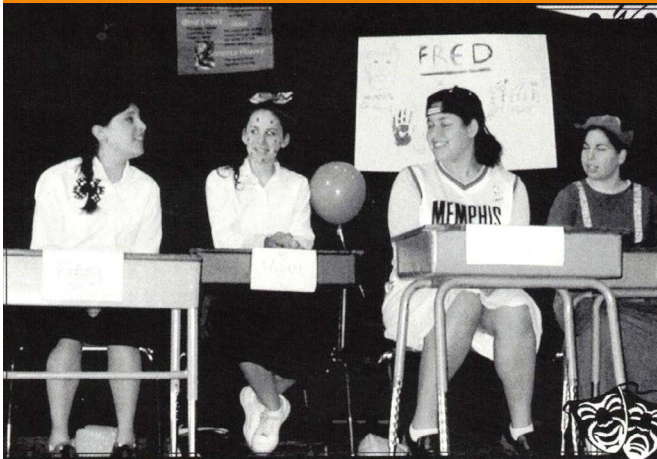
"Aw, this was so much fun! We dressed up in Bernice Cooper's (z'l) furs and took a picture by her pool. Only in Memphis!" —**Jessica (Morris) Hoffman**

(clockwise from lower left) **Isaac Krupp** (MHA '06, FYOS '10), **Avishai Schlesinger** (MHA '04, FYOS '08), Yonah Friedman and **Ezra Kaplan** (MHA '04, FYOS '08).



"The four of us could and would spend endless hours together — watching the show '24,' listening to Dave Matthews Band, chilling on Shabbos, having a blast, and laughing nonstop. Yonah left before 12th grade, and we really missed him. Every memory I had with those three is a feeling I've been missing for 15 years." —**Isaac Krupp**

We found this picture in the MHA/FYOS files from 2005's theater arts activities. The caption reads, "Laffin' School." However, none of the ladies pictured here — (from left) **Aviva (Krupp) Lewis** (MHA '02, FYOS '06), **Jerilyn (Pocrass) Oppenheimer** (MHA '02, FYOS '06), **Cheftzi Ben Ishai** (FYOS '06) and **Shoshana Kolodny** (FYOS '06) — could identify the event.



If you have any memories of the activity pictured here, please let us know at alumni@mhafyos.org and we'll publish it in the next issue.

The GMSG canoe trip in 2004 (front row, from left): **Franny (Kaplan) Waisman** (MHA '02, FYOS '06), **Ariella (Freiden) Schwartz** (MHA '01, FYOS '05), Ayelet Ben Ishai, **Sophie (Bacaner) Leach** (MHA '02, FYOS '06), a Bat Ami chaperone, **Reena Levin** (MHA '01, FYOS '05), **Mindy (Moskowitz) Klugmann** (MHA '01), **Roni (Epstein) Berkovits** (MHA '00, FYOS '04); (back row, from left) **Cheftzi Ben Ishai** (FYOS '06), **Aviva (Krupp) Lewis** (MHA '02, FYOS '06), **Tali (Bacaner) Levy** (MHA '00, FYOS '04), **Sheera (Graber) Moskowitz** (MHA '01, FYOS '05), **Rina (Stavsky) Weinberg** (FYOS '04), **Shaindel (Kaplan) Kahn** (MHA '00, FYOS '04), **Denah Emerson** (MHA '01, FYOS '05) and **Jessica (Morris) Hoffman** (FYOS '04).



"I have wonderful memories of the GMSG trips. They were always good times together with friends. It felt like the girls in the GMSG were one big family going away together. Mrs. Kampf organized everything and made sure the trips were educational, enjoyable, fun and memorable."

—Sheera (Graber) Moskowitz

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

The 27th issue of our newsletter is scheduled for publication around Rosh Hashanah. In it, we will once again highlight the eighth and 12th grade graduates from the years 1971-1975. Members of these classes will receive questionnaires by email (or regular mail) some time in July. Please return your completed survey promptly so that you can be included.

Our feature in that issue will spotlight **Mrs. Eva Loskove**, who taught kindergarten at our school from 1969 to 1991. If you have any stories, photos or memories of Morah Loskove that you would like to share, please send them to Joanne Kahane, alumni chair, at joannekahane111@gmail.com or to her attention at the school's mailing address below.

Also, be sure to submit your "Mazel Tov" events and photos for the "Alumni Reunite" feature so we can include them in our next issue. Thank you!



Rabbi Yisroel Weiner, head of school
Deena Davidovics, president, board of trustees
Jessica (Baum) Sukhodolsky (MHA '99),
marketing and recruitment director