

FIRST LIFETIME AVODAH AWARD --- MAY 15, 2023

Presented at our Annual Congregation Meeting by Co-President Bryn Biren

JERRY GROSS - recipient of the LIFETIME AVODAH AWARD

There are only a handful of people who span the decades at Temple Israel and have volunteered again, again and again. There are only a few who can answer questions that concern the 1950's. There are very few who can access a specific paragraph in the Temple Constitution at a moment's notice. And there are probably even fewer who can locate the original wires that connect the Temple office phones to the basement storage area. Who knows the codes for every computer, answering machine and every piece of electronic equipment inside this building? The answer would be our very own JERRY GROSS.

A few summers ago a prospective member and I were talking at a Friday night Oneg. The new person looked at Jerry Gross and asked him a question. Jerry redirected the question to me and said to the man, "You will have to ask her the answer to that question, I was in a coma at that time". Yes, that is a true story. How many people do you know who were Temple Presidents, went into a coma and then returned to be President for a second time? No one but our very own JERRY GROSS.

Renee, Marc and Shari Gross have sent a few words.

"Dad is a historian and a natural storyteller. He learned from the very best, our Grandpa Herbie. He delights in learning and sharing knowledge. His elephant memory assures no stone has been left unturned to solve a dilemma. He has the diplomacy and strength to lead from crisis to resolution and to cajole or coax others into helping. He resurrected and authored services for Kristalnacht and Yom Hashoah. He regularly provides the D'Var Torah and leads services in the Rabbi's absence.

What he gives comes back in return. Throughout intervals of illness and grief that he has faced, it is the community that he cares so deeply for that has reflected that care and consideration right back.

His methods of multiple copies and downloads are legendary, but they have become more environmentally friendly in recent years. It is however, sometimes difficult to locate the item. It is somewhere in the pile, and when you find it, you will find it in triplicate.

This year we decided to create an award that has never existed before. It is the TEMPLE ISRAEL LIFETIME AVODAH AWARD. We are presenting it to Jerry who is a one of a kind person. There is no need to tell you about his childhood in Brooklyn, or about his Eagle Scout background and how he is still involved in Scouting to this day. I don't have to tell you what a great son he was to his father, Herb, or what a terrific husband of 49 years he is to Karen, or of his dedication to his children and grandchildren.

Jerry, our gratitude to you for all you have done for our synagogue is immeasurable. There will never be another congregant like you. For all of your service to us day and night, night and day I present you with this lovely plaque.

CONGRATULATIONS!