

LONG TIME MEMBERS WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE

INTERVIEW WITH Jane & Richard (Dick) LEVY - 2022

Richard (Dick) and Jane Levy were both raised in Greensboro. Both families were members of Temple Emanuel, but growing up their lives took them on separate paths.

In 1946, Jane's father, Edward Loewenstein, a renowned architect in Greensboro, designed and built for his family the Modernist home that Richard and Jane are still very proud to call home.

While Jane is a native of Greensboro, Richard was born in New York City where his mother was from. His father, Bert Levy, was from South Carolina and yearned to get back to the South. Daddy "loved the ocean and the mountains" and concluded that North Carolina was better than South Carolina; the Triad was better than Charlotte or Raleigh and Greensboro was better than Winston-Salem or High Point.

Choosing Greensboro, Bert Levy moved his family of then three children to the Lindley Park / Sunset Hills area of Greensboro, where three more Levy children were born. Richard, the oldest of the 6 recalls moving again, spending his High School Years living in Starmount. When questioned about why six children; Richard's father would always reply "because we couldn't have seven".

On arrival in Greensboro, the Levy family tried both Beth David Synagogue and Temple Emanuel but found, as Southern Reform Jews, a more comfortable fit for their family at Temple Emanuel.

Richard, lover of sports but mesmerized by Rabbi Asher's sermons, would often pop into services late, just to hear the sermon, then off to the high school football or basketball game.

Jane, although a member of Temple Emanuel, admits she was a sporadic attendee at Sunday School but an avid equestrian.

Neither Richard nor Jane experienced overt anti-Semitism growing up.

Richard did recall some awkward moments. A rival high school football game, between Grimsley (then called Greensboro Senior High) and Page High School was scheduled on Yom Kippur. Both head cheerleaders were Jewish, and the Jewish Community wanted the game re-scheduled. The experience caused the City of Greensboro to be mindful of the Jewish calendar, and they are today.

While in junior high, Richard was asked to solo in the chorus. His parents, amazed at this because of Richard's notably poor voice, asked what song he was singing. Richard remembers he gave his parents a loud, spirited rendition of "*Lord, I Want to be a Christian*". There were no solos that year.

As a teen, Richard entered a contest the newspaper sponsored. He had to write an essay on "What Christmas Means to Me". Sticking to the subject and fearing that he did not have a chance because the judge was a local Christian Minister, Richard was happy and proud to be chosen for first prize.

The late Eli Evans, who wrote "*The Provincials*" and was a great authority on Jews of the South, once told Richard he had visited every city in the South with a Jewish population and found Greensboro was unique in its friendliness and welcoming of the Jewish People.

Greensboro was a segregated city when growing up. Richard and Jane remember the Jewish community, as their parents were on the front line of civil rights. Ed Loewenstein was the first white architect in North Carolina to hire Black employees, and one of Bert Levy's first hires when he opened his mechanical contracting business, was African American.

Richard attended Lindley School and Curry where he was recruited to play basketball. He was a Bar Mitzvah at Temple Emanuel studying with both Rabbi Rypins and Rabbi Asher and was confirmed at Temple Emanuel. A graduate of UNC with a degree in Economics, he later got a Masters in African American Literature from A&T State University.

Jane attended Ruth Rypins Prep School for a year, then boarding school in New England. She returned South to attend Duke University. After graduation she went North to live in Vermont and Canada but returned South again to study photography at Randolph Tech.

Richard spent time at the Temple as Finance Chairman; overseeing a huge renovation of the Temple building; serving on various committees, a member of the Board of Trustees and President of Temple Emanuel from 1984 to 1986. Jane recalls that, at their wedding reception, Richard had to put down his champagne glass and run to the Temple to be installed as President.

While Richard was busy pursuing Temple activities, Jane took on various civic and arts venues. She was active in Weatherspoon Art Museum as well as the Art and Interior Architecture Departments at UNC-Greensboro. She served on the Greensboro Opera Board and Preservation Greensboro, and was a leading fundraiser for the Edible School Yard at the Children's Museum.

Richard & Jane raised two children and several dogs in the Loewenstein Modernist house. Son Edward, now married and living in London with his wife Eliza and four children; and daughter Jennie, living in Greensboro with her two children, fill the house when the family gathers. Both Edward and Jennie followed tradition and were Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Temple Emanuel.

Richard and Jane are proud to be *Life-Long* members of Temple Emanuel and active in the Jewish Community. They are still supporting the Arts in Greensboro, caring for the Temple and loving six grandchildren.

Reviewed by Midge Pines
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