

Elaine & Cuppy Katz Legacy Endowment Fund

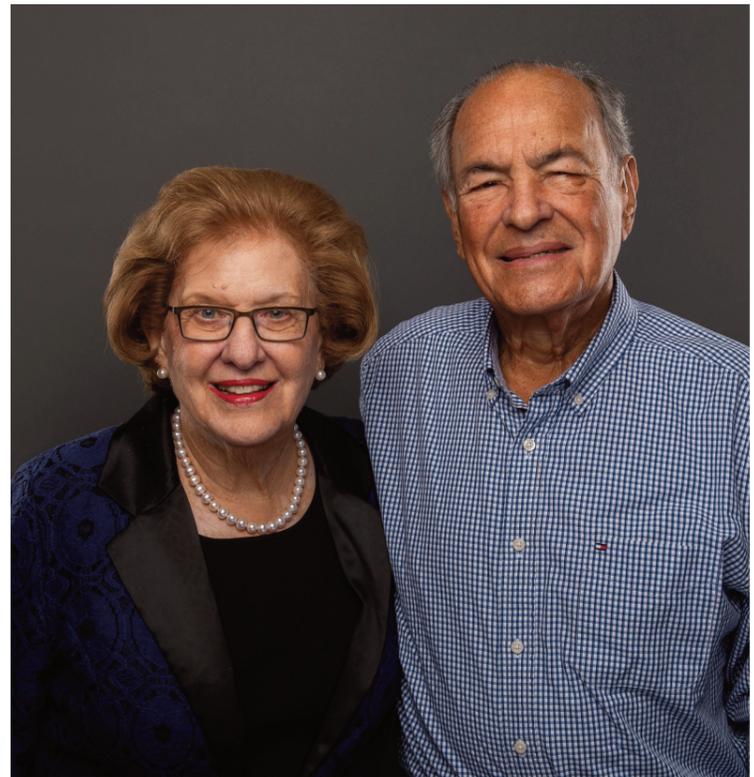
Cuppy and Elaine Katz are steeped in the Jewish values they inherited from their parents. Elaine grew up in the rural Ontario community of Acton, the daughter of the only Jewish family in town. Her father Ben Rachlin, a prominent and respected businessman, was elected mayor of Acton in 1952. At the time, he was one of only two Jewish mayors in Ontario. Cuppy was born into a family of hardworking Polish immigrants, whose lives revolved around the old Cannon Street Shul (the precursor to the Adas Israel).

Elaine's Jewish education began in elementary school when a thoughtful teacher, seeing that her student was excused from religious classes given by the town's ministers, suggested to her mother that Elaine present something to her classmates about the Jewish holidays. That experience planted the seeds of what would become Elaine's strong sense of Jewish identity and a future teaching career.

Cuppy and Elaine share a deep attachment to Israel, where Elaine has a large extended family. She got to know her Israeli family during the 10 months she spent in the country as a young woman, not long after graduating from teachers' college. The stories she heard from her relatives, some of whom were among the country's earliest pioneers, and some of whom had survived the Holocaust, made a lasting impression on Elaine, further strengthening her sense of Jewish identity and solidarity. Upon returning to Canada, Elaine resumed her teaching career. A good number of her students were part of Toronto's multi-cultural immigrant population in Toronto, and Elaine took a keen interest in helping their families acclimatize to their new life in Canada.

A major turning point in Elaine's life occurred during the Six-Day War in 1967 when she was already teaching in Hamilton. Dismayed by her public school colleagues' indifference to how Arab threats to send every Israeli into the Mediterranean Sea was affecting her, Elaine came to a sudden realization about the importance of Jewish education. Cuppy and Elaine vowed then that their own children would receive a Jewish education, at the same time committing to support any endeavour that furthered Jewish children's opportunities to learn about their heritage.

Cuppy and Elaine went on to set up a family endowment fund with the Hamilton Jewish Federation. Their fund provides scholarships for Camp Kadimah, March of the Living, and Israel experience programs, as well as supporting Jewish Social Services, Beth Tikvah, Jewish day school and supplementary school programs.



Combining their love of gardening (the garden at their Burlington home has won several awards) with their love for Israel, Cuppy and Elaine have been actively involved with the Jewish National Fund for more than 30 years. In recognition of their devotion, the JNF named the Katzs their 2001 Negev Dinner honourees.

Cuppy and Elaine see their contributions "as our way of paying back for everything we have received over the years. It is very simple. The money should go to help people who need help."

