

LASTING LEGACIES

When we hear the words “Greatest Generation,” we most often think of the brave men and women who served in the armed forces during World War II, and certainly this column is about one of them. But there were others of that generation who at the same time made a difference in other ways, and as you will see, this column is about them, too.

A few months ago, a generous check arrived at the Savannah Jewish Federation representing a grant from the Irving S. Weinstein Philanthropic Fund, a donor-advised fund at the Jewish Communal Fund in New York City. It included a brief note that said:

“This grant was recommended by Mr. Jerry Weinstein, in honor of his uncle, Irving Weinstein, a WWII veteran who served in the US Army Air Corp in Savannah and was befriended at that time by the Halperin Family; he learned much about being an electrician from the family who had a business in Savannah and became a successful electrical contractor, and owed a part of his success to the experience of 1942-45. Kindly acknowledge this grant to the Halperin family.”

It took some investigating, but it was discovered that the family that befriended Irving Weinstein 72 years ago actually was the *Alpern* family — in fact, the family of Irving and Annie Alpern.

“My mother wanted to have every young man she could get a hold of to come eat with us on Shabbos. And they would be thrilled because they were stuck out there at Fort Stewart,” said Simone (Alpern) Fluke, Irving and Annie’s surviving daughter, who now lives in Orlando. “This one particular person [Irving Weinstein] became very attached to my father because my father was an electrical engineer, but he never got a chance to work at it when he came over from the ‘old country,’ so he became an electrician. This man wanted to be an engineer when he got out of the service and he stayed close to us.”

Jerry Weinstein, the Trustee of the Irving S. Weinstein Philanthropic Fund, said of his uncle: “I believe he learned much from Irving Alpern about the electrical contracting profession in which he prospered upon returning from the service.”

But the friendship between the Alperns and Irving Weinstein grew much deeper than one of just ‘professional’ interest. And its impact would be felt a number of ways. “Whenever

Irving could get away, he came to us. He practically lived in our house... During the war you didn’t get much of anything. I think as children we did not realize that,” said Simone. “Everybody that you met helped you along. Irving would bring us stuff from the PX like coffee and of course, candy for us kids. And my mother would let us eat it all. But we saved some of the other things he brought.

“Once a week we would get out these paper shopping bags and fill them up with all kinds of stuff. And because my mother did not drive, we would take the bus over to the old Candler Hospital; next to that they had built this high-rise apartment building and a lot of the older Jewish people had apartments there and we would distribute food that we had saved, partly from what Irving had brought from the base and partly from what she had gotten with [ration] stamps she had saved.”

How fitting then, that the Savannah Jewish Federation used the generous gift to establish the *Irving Weinstein Fund* at the Jewish Community Foundation of Savannah. Each year, in

perpetuity, the Fund’s appreciation will be used to make a gift to the Federation’s annual campaign to support community needs —

continually providing for the elderly and less fortunate, educating about the Holocaust, helping to strengthen Jewish identity, and so much more.

“When he was in Savannah, I was a boy of six. I remembered the war years very well and knew how important your city was to him. So here was a way of giving to the Jewish community and in a sense, recognizing the importance of his military experience,” Jerry Weinstein said of the gift. He also wanted to “reiterate the importance of a Jewish connection and specifically to the Alpern family at a time and place that was significant to [my uncle]. I thought that a gift to the Savannah Jewish community is the best way to memorialize those events that took place over 70 years ago.”



Annie Alpern



Irving Alpern

Beverly Alpern, who was married to Irving and Annie’s late son Bill and lives in Chicago, said: “I tell my grandkids; a good name is never forgotten. Isn’t that the moral of this story?”

Create a Fund

A designated fund can benefit a specific purpose dear to your family or the community at large. Funds can be created and activated now or established with a bequest or other financial instrument. To discuss establishing a Lasting Legacy for your family with a fund at the Jewish Community Foundation of Savannah, contact Adam Solender at (912) 355-8111 or adam@savj.org.



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