

Joan and Sam LeBauer

I first spotted Joan walking down the aisle at Temple Emanuel, and I thought, “Gee, she’s cute!” I was home from Duke for the High Holy Days; she was studying at Women’s College and did not have time to go back home to celebrate with her family in D.C. The rest is history.

I have always felt very close to Judaism, even though when I was growing up here the Jewish community in Greensboro was very small and assimilated. I was one of a dozen Jews in my high school class. Joan’s public school, on the other hand, was mostly Jewish. Her parents were both active in Jewish organizations – great role models for her future involvement here in Greensboro.



My family was active too. We belonged to Temple Emanuel and my father was president, at one time. When Joan and I moved back to Greensboro for good in 1974, we both immediately got involved in this wonderful community.

In my lifetime, the Jewish community in Greensboro has grown and grown. During my childhood, only one boy I knew had a bar mitzvah. But our two daughters, and almost all of their friends, went through that process. It was expected of their generation, and now our grandchildren are doing the same thing, which is very exciting to see.

My participation in this community has also grown. I have served the Jewish community through the Temple, Synagogue and Federation. I have also relished the greater Greensboro community’s acceptance of Jewish influence in the public realm. My greatest commitment is to the Eastern Music Festival (EMF), which I was instrumental in starting. I have been on the EMF board my entire adult life, and I have been chairman for a number of years. I am especially proud to see all the support EMF has received from members of the Jewish community and to know how involved Greensboro Jews are in the arts in general.

Joan headed the Federation’s women’s campaign and served as president of the Women’s Cabinet and as a member of the Federation board. A mission to Prague and Israel made a big impression on her and a big impact on the rest of the community as Greensboro participants joined women from around the country in raising their pledges to the newly established Lion of Judah gift level. Later on, Joan endowed her Lion pin so that her contribution will continue in perpetuity to ensure the future of the Greensboro Jewish community that has been such an important part of life.

Connecting with our heritage has been important to us and has given us a wonderful opportunity to form significant relationships with long-lost relatives. Joan is a sixth-generation descendent of the Luchs family to have lived in DC; and her decision to visit the small German town where her family originated led to the discovery of an elderly cousin who lived in Brooklyn and was a sole survivor of the Holocaust among his immediate family. We located relatives in West Virginia through the help of a campaign speaker who had come to Greensboro. Accompanied by one of our daughters, we also visited the gravesites of my family's ancestors in Poland and Eastern Europe. Several visits to Israel have given us an amazing bond with the Holy Land.

We have raised our children to value our Jewish history and traditions. Growing up with Jewish ethics has taught them to be good citizens and to respect one another and their communities. We hope they will follow our example of the importance of giving back to the communities where they live.