

Joe LeBauer

Greensboro was a wonderful place to grow up Jewish. That was not so for every southern town at the time. We owe a lot to the Cone family, who came here in the 1800's and made a good name for themselves, contributing so much to the general community and most notably to Cone Hospital.

Their legacy, and the legacies of other well-respected Greensboro Jews, made it much easier for other Jewish families like ours to rise to prominence too-- and for me and my brothers to feel as comfortable as we did going to public school here. My parents were both great examples for me, concerned with helping others and making Greensboro a great community to live in for both Jews and non-Jews. One year, in particular, my father was president of both the YMCA and Temple Emanuel at the same time. We grew up observing Jewish holidays, attended Sunday school and were confirmed; but it is a testament to how accepted Jews were here that I barely noticed I was different from our many non-Jewish friends.

It was not until I went to Duke University that I even realized I was a minority. At Duke, there were separate fraternities for Jews because we could not join the non-Jewish ones. That came as a surprise to me as my family had always been so involved in things in Greensboro that I had never felt excluded before. Still, I quickly made friends in both circles, and again I felt comfortable being Jewish. I did not have much time for fraternity life anyway as I spent much of my time studying so I could complete my undergraduate degree in three years. I always knew I wanted to go straight to medical school and one day return to Greensboro and join my father and his brother, and later my younger twin brothers, Sam and Gene, in our medical practice, LeBauer Healthcare.

When I returned to Greensboro as a young physician, I joined the Greensboro Jewish Federation Young Leadership group. In the Jewish community, specifically, I have been chairman of the Federation's Men's Campaign and the Israel Bonds Drive. I served on the boards of the Temple, the Federation and the Foundation for a number of years, and as a member of the American Physicians' Fellowship for Israel, which supports Israeli doctors who come to the U.S. for their fellowship programs.

Israel is important to me, and I hope my three sons feel the same way. I traveled there with Young Leadership and, most recently, an interfaith mission organized through the Federation. My brothers and I took our family on a mission to Israel and later my boys traveled there by themselves on various occasions. I have supported AIPAC for many years.

I hope my sons will give back to their communities, too. I included them in my endowment with the Jewish Foundation of Greensboro because I want them to be able to participate in deciding where our charitable dollars will go, both in the realm of Jewish and non-Jewish organizations. And I hope they will stay true to their roots. I love seeing my granddaughters attend school at B'nai Shalom, which lets me know my family will continue the Jewish values that are so important to me.

