

Judith Abraham

My parents were quiet people. They were Holocaust survivors, and though I never heard their story, I know they escaped the camps. I was eight years old when we moved to Greensboro from New York City in 1948. My parents opened a general store on East Market Street, which kept them so busy that there was not much time for Synagogue. Still, my parents made sure we followed Jewish law in our home, and I grew up Jewish. Mother kept kosher as well as she could, which was not easy at that time in the South (it mostly amounted to keeping the dishes separate), and we kept Shabbat. I became a Bat Mitzvah at Beth David, and the Bible I got from the Sisterhood is one of my prized possessions to this day. As a young girl, I worked for Rabbi Simcha Kling. I also assisted in teaching Sunday school to kindergarteners at Beth David.

As an adult, I have created a more unconventional form of Judaism for myself: accepting and loving others as the main tenet of my religion. Perhaps this is a result of feeling ostracized growing up in a family of Jewish immigrants with strange accents and being a sickly child. I graduated from Greensboro Senior High School the first year they admitted an African-American student. I sat near her in class, and was called names because I did, and because I was Jewish.

I think people of every race, religion, and sexual orientation deserve respect. My ex-husband and I were married at the U.N. by a rabbi and a priest, acknowledging each of our faiths. I believe that community-wide events should also acknowledge the diversity in our community.

Though I am no longer religious by strict practice, I am very proud of being Jewish; everyone who knows me knows that I am a Jewish person above all else.

I was very blessed to have had an aunt who, like my parents, survived the Holocaust in Germany. The German government evicted her from the country, and for this reason Germany later paid her a reparation sum. I inherited this money, so it seems only fitting that I should use it to create a legacy to help the Jewish people in my community. I am proud to also be able to help where I believe help is needed.



