

Richard Forman

For me, Judaism has always been more a source of community than a spiritual outlet. Growing up in Atlanta, I spent most of my teenage years with the Jewish youth group, AZA, playing sports, practicing debate (a lawyer in the making) and attending “growing-up sessions” on sex, dating, and social life. My parents recognized the profound impact of this network and switched their membership from the Temple to the Synagogue so I could participate more fully.

Years later, after moving to Greensboro, I joined Temple Emanuel which admittedly was also largely a social decision. But it felt right to me. The Rabbi’s wife welcomed me, and I soon took root there, serving on the Temple Board in various capacities for twenty-three years total. I have held such positions as Vice President, President, President of the Brotherhood, Director, and Chairman of the Finance Committee.



In a way, my monetary contribution to the community here has been equally as unplanned as my decision to join the Temple rather than the Synagogue – and just as fortuitous. I had always given money to Jewish causes, increased my gift yearly, was Chairman of the drive one year, and served on the boards of the Federation and the Foundation. The story of a gift to the Foundation one year turned into a Donor Advised Fund; I thought that I was giving \$6,800 but accidentally gave \$68,000. Just as I have been happy to have joined the Temple, I am also glad to have accidentally added that extra zero. I thought it was a good idea, and I encouraged friends and clients to participate. The best thing I ever did was bringing them in to establish Donor Advised funds. I am sure I am responsible for 10 or 12 of the funds because I just thought it was such a great idea.

I sincerely hope my family will stay true to their Jewish roots. I have been willing to take personal measures to ensure this. Because my family moved when I was thirteen, I never had a bar mitzvah. When my son, Danny, reached bar mitzvah age, we decided to have our bar mitzvahs together. We each learned half of the Torah portion (Danny took the more difficult half). The whole experience stacked up with being in the delivery room when Dan was born as a big moment in my life. I am confident that our joint celebration is still the best bar mitzvah party Starmount Country Club has ever hosted.