

Sara Lee and Paul Saperstein

My roots in North Carolina are long and deep. I give loving credit to my great-grandparents, grandparents and parents for never missing an opportunity to build a strong Jewish presence in a small southern town. Growing up in High Point, we had a Rabbi who sang off-key but made learning Hebrew fun, large and spirited holiday gatherings with family, friends and anyone who would otherwise be alone, and parents who, with others, made a concerted effort to promote a network of Jewish friends for the children of our community.

Paul grew up in suburban Maryland, where just about everyone was Jewish. His father was a chief architect in the drafting of social security and Medicare legislation in his position as Deputy Counsel for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. His mother was a career teacher and volunteered with a National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) group who helped to acculturate diplomatic wives to the DC area. He came to North Carolina for his college years; we were married and moved to Greensboro – and it did not take long for him to consider himself a southerner.



We are both ambassadors for the dynamic lives that we have had in this unique community. We attribute that to close friendships with people who care about important issues and each other. Many of our lifelong friendships were made in the Federation's first Young Leadership group, where we were inspired and challenged. These friendships and others we have made along the way solidified as a result of working together on common goals. We also assemble for signature holiday celebrations with a closely-knit group of family and friends, making memories for our children and grandchildren with the distinctive styles and flavors that make it our tradition over so many years.

Paul is a worker and a doer, who has concentrated his energies on his business; but he is happiest when performing acts of kindness to help others. He treats a small project for a friend with the same intensity as he supports a global need. He has been involved in the Boys and Girls Club in High Point, has served as president of the Temple Brotherhood, and helped to make possible the Arthur Cassell Transitional House, a living facility for homeless men who desire to make a transition to productive lives. He has been the only public member of the North Carolina Medical Board to serve as its president. We have also supported the Eastern Music Festival for many years and Paul has served on its board.

I have worked for causes that are adjuncts to my beliefs and have concentrated my efforts on doing what I can to improve and enhance Jewish life here and abroad. My terms as president of the Federation, chair of the Jewish Foundation of Greensboro, chair of the Women's Drive and president of the Women's Cabinet have been challenging and fulfilling. Several years ago, I became interested in preserving the history of the Jewish community of North Carolina and joined the effort of the Down Home committee to produce an engaging and interactive traveling museum exhibit, documentary and school curriculum – and the icing on the cake for me, a beautifully written book that was dedicated to my mother for her role as a matriarch of the Jewish community. I particularly enjoyed my work from home as project coordinator for Hunger Relief 2000, a bike ride across America to create awareness and to raise funds to combat hunger.

We are so pleased to see that our children are motivated to be involved in their communities and are eager to pitch in. We can already tell that through word and example they are setting the tone for the next generation, our exceptional grandchildren.

Greensboro consistently sets the bar for generosity when compared with other Jewish communities around North America. It has given us a comfortable and supportive place to live and raise our family. It is a pleasure to create a legacy that will ensure the existence of our institutions into the future.