

Barbara and Eugene Weisberger

My mother and father, Barbara, z"l, and Dr. Gene, z"l Weisberger, lived their lives as a blessing to others. Through acts of kindness and compassion, they made the world a better place. Their greatest gift to me was the opportunity to learn from their example; and it is my privilege to record their story from the perspective of a grateful daughter, Beloved Heartsong.

My father was born in 1919 in Piston, Pennsylvania, one of seven children. His parents were immigrants from Czechoslovakia; and he grew up in an orthodox household, without a lot of money. He saved every cent he made from loading railroad cars and making deliveries at his brother's butcher shop---enough money to be the only one of his siblings to go to college. He then decided to become a podiatrist, because as he has always said: "When your feet hurt, everything hurts."

My mother was a native New Yorker. Her mother had been an opera singer, attending the New England Conservatory and performing on Broadway with Al Jolson. Her father grew up in Durham, attended Duke and moved to New York, becoming hugely successful in the textile industry. Her family was supportive of Hadassah, though not religiously observant. She also attended Duke, attaining membership in Phi Beta Kappa and a degree in sociology in 1950.

A best friend from childhood, Lee Kay lived in Greensboro; and along with his wife, Fran, he played a pivotal role in my father's move here and also in his marriage to my mother. The Kay's close friends from Durham were Blue and Abe Greenberg, and Blue was coincidentally my mother's roommate at Duke. They arranged for Gene and Barbara to meet and made a match that would last for 56 years.

My father started his practice in the Guilford Building downtown, and my mother worked in his office in the early years. After we were born, she was always fundraising for charities; and for many years, she volunteered as a docent for the Greensboro Historical Museum and as an advocate with Guardian ad Litem. For 30 years, my father visited residents at the Blumenthal Home in Clemmons every month to offer podiatry treatment. We belonged to Beth David Synagogue, and my father got so much joy from the traditional prayers and tunes of the service.

My mother was always hosting and giving, and she had a strong sense of treating people fairly and justly. She loved her family and friends, especially close Greensboro friends, the Stangs, Hymans and Kays--and our house was the gathering place for holidays and celebrations. I never heard my father complain or say anything hurtful, and he constantly reminded us that "if you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all." As a teenager, I worked in his office and remember how kind, loving, tender and present he was with his patients.

I am convinced that it never would have occurred to me to be the way I am if I had not been exposed to the way that my parents lived their lives. I believe that their giving spirit lives on in me and my three children. They believed that people had given to them and that they should pay it forward, and I am certain that is why they set up a legacy to ensure the future of institutions in this community that were important to them.