

Ina's 90th Birthday Celebration

Thank you Rabbi. Shabbat Shalom! Ten years ago, I stood here on the Bimah, also celebrating an earlier birthday. Prior to that Shabbat, Rabbi Malomet & I had a conversation & I

told him I would like to come up & recite the "sheheheyanu" . He then asked me if I would like to speak, but I politely declined, he then said "But your Mother did." And I responded by saying it was her 90th Birthday,..... & that ended the conversation.

So,I knew that this time I had no valid excuse,..... but what should I say? So I started thinking about the times in my life that I have stood,Here.... on this Bimah.

My story starts in the 1940's, my parents were members of this Congregation and I grew up in this community. My parents enrolled me first in Sunday School, then in Hebrew School. I was the only girl in the class, but that wasn't a problem. Most of the boys were my classmates during the day from 9-3, in Lafayette School, one block from here on South 2nd Ave ,. Then after 3 PM we walked up Benner St. to 3rd Ave., down 3rd, crossed Raritan Ave & another block on North 3rd Ave to the original location of this Shul.

During the mid-late 40's the Highland Park community grew along with the Temple community. In the Hebrew school class the year following mine, there were 2 girls, Phyllis Yafie Chudnick & Barbara Levine Miller z'l. Also, the Temple had acquired this property on South 3rd Ave and construction was under way for a new larger building. In the legacy room there is a plaque dated 1949, commemorating the dedication of this new congregational home. On this plaque also appear the names of both of my parents - Anne & Morris Lichtenstein z'l. My father was Vice-president of the congregation, my Mother was Vice-President of the Sisterhood. This picture was

taken of my Father at that dedication. This was the “only” Shul in town

At some point during the following year, our Rabbi, Philp Ritholtz z’l decided that the girls should celebrate with a “Bat Mitzvah”. So I came home one day from Hebrew School and told my Mother, “I’m going to have a Bat Mitzvah.!” And my Mother just looked at me and calmly replied — “What’s a Bat Mitzvah?” And so.... in May 1950 , three young ladiesstood on the Bimah..... with the Rabbi to lead the “Late Friday evening Service” It was a “First time event” for the Shul, And my 1st time on this Bimah.”

I continued on with my education, high school, college, and met my beloved husband, Hilton. In 1958 we were married,.... here in the Shul.....under the Chuppah,..... on the Bimah again. And we raised our family,.... Cheryl celebrated her Bat Miztvah in 1973 and Mark celebrated his Bar Mitzvah in 1977,..... each time again standing on this Bimah

These events,... the Simchas that I have mentioned are some of the happy milestones along life’s journey. But,... sad times also occur. In July 1962, my Father passed away. That night a small group of men, some of the officers of the Shul met in my parents living room, & around 1 AM the next morning, a decision was made, led by Harry Kroll z’l the president of the Shul , to have the levaya here in the Shul..... This too, was a first. The next day I did not come to the Bimah, as it was not customary for family members to speak. Only the Rabbi spoke to eulogize the deceased. But fast forward to August 2006 when my Mother passed away....., both Cheryl & I came to the Bimah to speak and remember my Mother.

No one present that day could possibly imagine that the levaya of Anne Lichtenstein would be the last in the original building. 6 days later, the last morning of my Shiva, as we assembled for the morning minyan, someone walked into my home and said, “The Temple is on Fire”. It was totally unbelievable. But around 9am when I went outside for my traditional “walk

around the block”, it became “very believable.” You could smell the burning.....about a mile away..... on the north side of town.

But life goes on.... Under the leadership of Rabbi Malomet, the Temple continued to function in several locations in Highland Park. There were meetings, planning sessions, fund raising, numerous decisions to be made, and with the help of so many people we started to rebuild. Three years later, September 2009, the year 5769 we assembled for Rosh Hashonah to start a New Year in this beautiful new sanctuary facing east... & with a handicapped accessible bimah. The original bimah did not survive,... but our lovely stained glass windows did.

As we go through life there are many changes that force us to adapt in order to move forward. But other forces in life are constant , they do not change, we do not change. I stand here again today, on this Bimah... as I have for all my family life events, to recite the sheheheyanu . I am truly thankful and grateful for my life, my health, my family, we are 4 generations here today, my Shul , the Rabbaim throughout my lifetime, my community and my friends.

I was born on a Sunday morning,..... June 21,..... it was the 1st day of summer &.... It was Father’s Day. Tomorrow will be Sunday.....June 21.....it will be the 1st day of summer.....

.....&.....it will be Father’s Day.

(recite the Sheheheyanu)

