

# University Center at Binghamton

State University of New York / Binghamton, New York 13901

Judaic Studies Program  
Telephone (607) 798-3070

## JUDAIC STUDIES NEWSLETTER

1985-1986

Vol. II No. 3

November, 1985

Dear Friends:

This Newsletter is dedicated to a special member of our Judaic Studies Program: Iz Friedland. As many of you already know, he is retiring this year after 11 years of teaching Yiddish to a host of enthusiastic students. In fact, Iz has been more than a teacher. He has been a genuine culture hero for many students and faculty members alike.

In honor of Iz's retirement, we shall be holding a party on Sunday, December 8, 1985, at 8:00 p.m. to which all are welcome at the home of Dr. & Mrs. Gerry Hubal. The Hubal's live at 2644 Purdue Drive in Vestal (off Rano Blvd.). By the way, Susan Hubal, who so graciously agreed to host this event, was herself one of Iz Friedland's students here at SUNY-Binghamton. Thanks are also due to Brenda Margolis and her volunteers for taking charge of the refreshments for the party.

If you are planning to come to the party, we would appreciate a R.S.V.P. so that we have some idea ahead of time how many people to expect. Please call Brenda at 722-7647 or Susan at 797-3132 or the Judaic Studies Program Office at 777-3070. (If you will be calling the Judaic Studies Program Office, please call between 8:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Monday through Friday).

What follows is a personal tribute to Iz Friedland by Ted Sommer. Ted is himself a graduate of SUNY-Binghamton and is Vice President of the SUNY Foundation as well as a leading lawyer and communal figure.

Yedida K. Stillman  
Director  
Judaic Studies Program

Isadore Friedland's retirement from SUNY Binghamton represents the conclusion of one more chapter in the life of a remarkable man. The students at SUNY Binghamton discovered him in 1974 when he was first asked to teach Yiddish on the campus, but for over 40 years before his discovery by SUNY, Iz Friedland was a central figure in the Binghamton Jewish community, educating generations of Binghamton children and their parents in Hebrew, Jewish studies and the Arts.

He came to Binghamton with his wife Esther in 1933 to be the "principal teacher" of the United Hebrew School. It was the first time all the religious groups in the community had joined together for a common Hebrew School.

Within several years of his arrival, he was asked to also assume the position of Executive Director of the Jewish Community Center, then located in a converted home at the corner of North and Front Streets in Binghamton. For many years, Iz worked 70 hours a week running both the Center and the Hebrew School. He held virtually the entire local Jewish "portfolio". He taught the children Hebrew, formed clubs and organizations for people of all ages, edited and wrote the Jewish Community Center Reporter (predecessor to the Federation Reporter), arranged lectures and concerts, trained Bar Mitzvah boys (including one named Rod Serling), wrote and edited the annual journals, gave lectures in

music appreciation and Hebrew and literature, ran the United Jewish Appeal campaigns, etc.

Iz was not an example of a traditional "melamed". His interests and talents were wide ranging and he conveyed to his students his love of learning, beyond the usual subject matter.

His collection of classical records is one of the largest in the area. He can listen to music and identify not only the composer and work, but the movement. Like his late brother, Abraham H. Friedland, who is described in the Encyclopedia Judaica as, among other things, a poet, Izzy is a consummate writer of verse. He has a special aptitude for limericks and has translated an entire book of Hebrew limericks into English, with appropriate English rhyme. He taught himself the Russian language. He is expert at Scrabble and is a formidable Chess player.

He built his summer cottage with his own hands at his camp in Connecticut where he spends his summers. He is an athlete who can still be seen gracefully figure skating at Grippen Park during the winter. He was a good tennis player until recent years and is a regular swimmer.

He is, in short, a most remarkable man.

For over a half century, his special qualities have enhanced the Binghamton Jewish Community and many of our lives individually.

His tenure at SUNY has been the icing to an extraordinary career. This retirement is not his first. With his good health and zest for life, he can be expected to simply begin another productive chapter in his 86th year.

An anecdote told by Marian Klionsky may best express his impact on many of us. Her son, Bernard, a prominent pathologist in Pittsburgh, came to Binghamton when the new Jewish Community Center was opened on Clubhouse Road. He was escorted through the structure and asked how he felt about the beautiful new building. Thinking back to the old converted house on North and Front Streets that had been the Center of his youth, he replied wistfully:

"Ah...but we had Iz!"

\* \* \* \* \*