

1 ORAL HISTORY OF: Larry Jackier  
2 INTERVIEWED BY: Susan Citrin  
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6 Life Throughout World, Presidency  
7 of Jewish Federation

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9 MS. CITRIN: This is Susie Citrin, and I'm  
10 conducting an oral history interview with Larry Jackier at the  
11 Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit.

12 And Larry, do we have your permission to use your  
13 words and thoughts in the future for educational and  
14 historical research and documentation?

15 MR. JACKIER: Yes, certainly.

16 MS. CITRIN: Thank you.

17 Well, where do we begin? Tell me a little about  
18 your family, where they came from. I remember your mom's name  
19 is Turtletob, which is a very interesting name.

20 MR. JACKIER: Which means turtle dove. My mother's  
21 family came from Bayonne, New Jersey, and my father's from  
22 Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania. So it's appropriate to ask, what  
23 are you doing here in Michigan? Well, the answer is that my  
24 mother did her undergraduate work at the University of  
25 Michigan and my father went to the University of Michigan Law

1 School. They met and after my mother graduated, they got  
2 married. And thanks to a wonderful icon in our community,  
3 Jack Miller, who was in law school with my father, he  
4 recommended to one of the Michigan Supreme Court Justices,  
5 then Judge William Friedman, who needed a law clerk, that he  
6 consider interviewing my dad. My dad got the position, served  
7 out his clerkship, and then the judge stepped down from the  
8 bench and went back to a very prominent law firm in the  
9 community known as Friedman, Myers and Keyes, and offered a  
10 position to my father as an associate attorney, and the rest  
11 is history. My parents stayed in Detroit and this is where  
12 our family put its roots down. Myself and my brothers were  
13 born and the rest is sort of history. But that's how we ended  
14 up in Michigan.

15 **MS. CITRIN:** And you followed in their footsteps in  
16 that you went to law school.

17 **MR. JACKIER:** I did. Although not at Michigan. I  
18 went to Michigan as an undergraduate. Everybody knows me that  
19 I bleed maize and blue. There's no question about that, even  
20 today, some 45 years later. But I went to Yale Law School.

21 **MS. CITRIN:** You also followed into the law firm of  
22 Friedman, Myers and Keyes.

23 **MR. JACKIER:** Yes. Second generation in that firm.  
24 Interestingly enough, I wasn't really planning on it. When  
25 you go to Yale, because one of the nice dividends is all the

1 law firms sort of descend on the school and you get all kinds  
2 of wonderful offers. But events were such that my dad called  
3 me one day and said, you know, I really need you to come back  
4 to Detroit. I said, okay, I'll come. So that was the end of  
5 all the interviewing process. And I will tell you, Susie,  
6 that I have never regretted for one minute that decision.

7 I've thought about what it might have been like if I  
8 had been in Washington, where I had been offered a great job  
9 or in Los Angeles where I had been offered a job. Of course,  
10 we have no idea what would have happened. But my life in  
11 Detroit has been fantastic. I love the city, the people, and  
12 of course, the thing I love the most is the Jewish community.

13 We hear lots of pejorative and negative comments  
14 about living in Detroit, living in Michigan and all that.  
15 Maybe to some extent it's true, there may be cultural  
16 opportunities in other places and some other things in other  
17 places, better weather and what have you, but if you end up  
18 the way I ended up, which was having the great privilege of  
19 being involved in our Jewish community, there is no better  
20 Jewish community anywhere than Detroit. That makes up for a  
21 lot. I would never have second guessed myself and never would  
22 have traded what might have been for what was because I have  
23 loved every minute of being here.

24 **MS. CITRIN:** What was it like growing up in the  
25 Jackier household? I know you were president of your senior

1 class.

2           **MR. JACKIER:** In elementary school. Not in high  
3 school. Pasteur Elementary. I had wonderful nurturing  
4 parents. They set wonderful examples. They were both  
5 involved civically and in the Jewish community. My mother was  
6 president of the Women's Division. Later on my dad was  
7 president of what was then called the United Jewish Charities.  
8 So they set great examples.

9           We had a very close household. I had two brothers,  
10 so there were three boys. Sometimes it was chaotic and there  
11 fights and things like that, as always happens when boys are  
12 growing up. We had a great family. My parents were very  
13 encouraging of anything that I wanted to do.

14           **MS. CITRIN:** So you went off to law school, came  
15 back to Detroit. But before that you went to Washington. Do  
16 you want to describe that?

17           **MR. JACKIER:** I was very fortunate at the University  
18 of Michigan to have selected political science as my major. I  
19 did pretty well and was selected to a very, very interesting  
20 program. I was a State Department intern my senior year,  
21 after I graduated from Michigan. It's interesting you would  
22 ask that, because that's the closest I came to making a C  
23 change in my life and not going to law school and getting  
24 involved in public service and particularly in the State  
25 Department. They do a pretty good number on you while you're

1 there for ten weeks, trying to convince you to go into  
2 training for the diplomatic service. There was a program  
3 involved with Johns Hopkins, and the University of Bologna  
4 called School for Advanced International Studies, SAIS. They  
5 offered me an opportunity to participate in that program. I  
6 gave it serious thought but didn't go.

7 I was fortunate. I got assigned to the Near East  
8 desk and in the middle of the summer, unfortunately my desk  
9 officer had a heart attack, not a serious one, but one which  
10 disabled him to the point that he couldn't serve. And lo and  
11 behold, I'm the only one in the department who knows anything  
12 about the area, which was Cypress, Greece and Turkey. The  
13 subpart of the Near East department of the State Department  
14 that I was assigned to.

15 They didn't have anybody else, so they made me the  
16 acting head. I'm in college and I've been there about four or  
17 five weeks into my summer. One of the things you do, and I'm  
18 not violating any oaths of secrecy that I took then, but one  
19 of the things that you do is review intelligence assessments  
20 that are sent every day from the embassies or consulates. Lo  
21 and behold, a war broke out that summer between Greece and  
22 Turkey over Cypress. That's been a historic issue because  
23 part of Cypress is Greek and part is Turkey. Now today that's  
24 been pretty much resolved, but then it wasn't.

25 You also had Cypress being supposedly an independent

1 entity headed up by an interesting character named Archbishop  
2 Makarios, and you could never follow which way he was going.  
3 But the Greeks had about two-thirds of the island and the  
4 Turks had about one-third. Both of these countries were  
5 members of NATO. And they actually went to war. So you've  
6 got the great irony, two NATO countries fighting one another  
7 over this island and both using equipment that had been  
8 furnished by the United States. Jet aircraft, naval equipment  
9 and other equipment. It gets to be politically pretty hairy.

10 It really started to get extreme to the point where  
11 I had to spend two nights sleeping in the State Department in  
12 case there was ever anything that happened. I was terrified.  
13 In the room where I was were two red phones. If something  
14 happened, there was a marine who was there all night reading  
15 the intelligence stuff as it would come off the wire service,  
16 and if something happened, I had to look at it and pick up  
17 those two phones. One went to the Pentagon and one went to  
18 George Ball, who was the Secretary of State. Thank God,  
19 nothing happened that I had to pick those phones up. Although  
20 the marine did wake me up a couple times, but I read the stuff  
21 and determined that it wasn't that critical. So that was  
22 pretty interesting and quite a summer.

23 Eventually, toward the end of my summer, things  
24 calmed down in Cypress. Nothing thankfully ever really  
25 erupted. There was fighting. Some people were killed.

1           **MS. CITRIN:** Did that give you your taste for travel  
2 that you've had most of your adult life?

3           **MR. JACKIER:** No. But I'll tell you what it did do  
4 sort of retrospectively. Cypress turned out to be a very  
5 important island when it comes to the history of Israel, in a  
6 lot of ways. There were Jews, who after the Holocaust, who  
7 tried to get to Palestine, what was then Palestine, and who  
8 got caught by the British, got interred in Cypress, in prisons  
9 in Cypress.

10           The other interesting thing about Cypress is due to  
11 certain significant religious issues in modern Israel, there  
12 are many couples who would fly to Cypress to get married  
13 because they couldn't get appropriate approval from the rabbi  
14 in Israel to get married there, so they ended up in Cypress.  
15 So Cypress turns out to be much later on in my career a very  
16 interesting historical and current element in something that  
17 is very important to my life today.

18           **MS. CITRIN:** You come back to Detroit and all of a  
19 sudden --

20           **MR. JACKIER:** After I graduated law school I clerked  
21 for a federal judge, Chief Judge of the Federal District Court  
22 in Delaware. Had a fabulous year. Came back in 1968 and  
23 started practicing in my father's law firm, which was still  
24 called Friedman, Myers and Keyes. After a year, one of my  
25 dear friends, Stanley Frankel, came to see me and he said,

1 okay, you've had a year, now it's time to get involved in the  
2 community. Stanley basically took me by the hand and brought  
3 me to what was then called the Junior Division, and that began  
4 my involvement in our Detroit Jewish community.

5 **MS. CITRIN:** What do you remember your first thing  
6 that you did? Did he make you solicit?

7 **MR. JACKIER:** Yes, but before that when he became  
8 the president of the Junior Division, which I think was in  
9 1970, he made me the program chairman. My first task was to  
10 develop programs, about six of them, over the course of the  
11 year for the Junior Division. So that was really my very  
12 first exposure.

13 Then we had a very insightful program called the  
14 liaison program from the Junior Division. I think that  
15 program still exists today to some extent, 40 years later.  
16 Members of the Junior Division would get assigned to various  
17 agencies, and they would go and be invited to go to those  
18 agencies' board meetings even though they had no vote. They  
19 could observe and start to understand what their particular  
20 agency did and what its issues were, and begin to get  
21 integrated into the community. Mine was the Jewish Community  
22 Center.

23 So those were the first couple of things that I did  
24 as a result of Stanley bringing me into the fold.

25 **MS. CITRIN:** It's interesting that that whole



1 liaison program started then, because I know throughout your  
2 career you've been interested in mentoring young people,  
3 making sure they get involved and that they're assigned to  
4 somebody.

5           **MR. JACKIER:** Right. I think that's critical. I  
6 think if you look back and if ask people, there was somebody  
7 in your life who really reached out to you and brought you  
8 into the community. That's just the way it happens. We all  
9 try and do it but we all probably would acknowledge that there  
10 was somebody who was the key to our own involvement at least  
11 at the beginning. For me it was Stanley Frankel.

12           **MS. CITRIN:** Do you want to talk about your travels  
13 with Stanley?

14           **MR. JACKIER:** Oh, I've had many, many travels with  
15 Stanley. Some of them quite remarkable. He took me on my  
16 first trip to Israel in October 1974, one year after the Yom  
17 Kippur War. That was a very sobering and exhilarating  
18 experience. It was a two-week mission. My feet never touched  
19 the ground. I don't believe in all the other trips, and I  
20 just took my 80th trip to Israel this past June, I've ever  
21 been there for two weeks. That was a seminal experience for  
22 myself and my then wife, Shelly, and we talked about how we  
23 were going to change our life. We made a commitment to send  
24 our kids to Jewish Day School on the plane home. We both  
25 started studying Hebrew at the JCC as soon as we got home.

1 That was a very fundamental experience for us.

2 MS. CITRIN: You got very active, not only locally,  
3 but nationally.

4 MR. JACKIER: Right. That experience was part of  
5 becoming a member of something called the National Young  
6 Leadership Cabinet of the United Jewish Appeal, which your  
7 husband was a member of and many others in our community, all  
8 of whom are friends of yours and mine and have remained so  
9 throughout the years.

10 It was a brilliantly conceived program by Rabbi Herb  
11 Friedman, who was a visionary. It was an intensive emersion  
12 in Jewish life at a whole variety of levels. Campaigning,  
13 campaign training, visiting Israel, Judaica, learning more  
14 about our people and our past and Judaic study on a personal  
15 level. It was great.

16 It also required us to transmit everything we  
17 learned back to our community. So I feel very good about the  
18 fact that over the years, we helped provide a great dividend  
19 for the community because many of the things we did at the  
20 cabinet, we brought to the community. A lot of them in the  
21 fund raising area.

22 There was a program called Hadracha, which was an  
23 intensive campaign training program that came from being on  
24 the cabinet. The whole notion of when you solicit somebody  
25 for the campaign, you do it face to face; that came from the

1 cabinet. And there were a number of other things as well.

2 One of the other portfolios that we undertook in  
3 Detroit was leadership development. I have a funny feeling  
4 that you and Bob were in one of those early leadership  
5 programs.

6 MS. CITRIN: Yes.

7 MR. JACKIER: We used to do that regularly, and that  
8 was also a very significant aspect of what cabinet members  
9 were required to do, and again, a great dividend for the  
10 Detroit Jewish community, because there are an awful lot of  
11 people who went through those programs all of whom are in  
12 significant leadership positions throughout our community,  
13 both in the Federation and other organizations.

14 MS. CITRIN: It's your idea of bringing young people  
15 in, mentoring them, showing them the way.

16 MR. JACKIER: It's not just my idea, but it's  
17 something I felt was very important.

18 MS. CITRIN: I know you have at the Technion,  
19 leadership development chair.

20 MR. JACKIER: We do. Later on in my career I was  
21 given the opportunity to chair something called the Zuckerman  
22 Leadership Program, which was funded by Paul and Helen  
23 Zuckerman. Incredibly important family. Paul was a former  
24 chairman of our campaign and entire UJA. Helen has been  
25 involved in all kinds of things. Their family, including

1 their incredible daughter, Linda Klein, determined to see to  
2 it that this program would become an absolute benchmark kind  
3 of program, and a program that other communities would want to  
4 emulate by funding the Zuckerman Leadership Development  
5 Program. I had the privilege of being its first chairman. We  
6 took 15 or 16 people through intensive training.

7           The concept worked so well that one of the other  
8 things I'm involved in was the American Technion Society, and  
9 I decided to see if the concept of the Zuckerman group could  
10 work on a national level because one of the keys to the  
11 success is the bonding of the individuals in the program.  
12 It's hard work. It takes a significant commitment. There's  
13 momentum in a group. To be successful when you put a group  
14 together and you want to achieve its goals is you need to  
15 develop group momentum, and you develop that through the  
16 interaction of the people. When it's all in one community,  
17 it's a lot easier to do because you can meet at someone's home  
18 or some other community venue and it's much easier to obtain  
19 participation. On a national level, somebody's got to get on  
20 an airplane to get to the meeting for that bonding to take  
21 place. So I was curious to see, and a little apprehensive to  
22 see, whether the same concepts would work on a national level.  
23 And they did.

24           So the Technion Society developed The 21st Century  
25 Leadership Program, which is now in its third <sup>generation</sup> iteration. One

1 of the members of the first group is now the current  
2 president. These things actually work.

3 MS. CITRIN: You said 80 times in Israel. I want  
4 you to talk a little bit about missions and trips. You've  
5 taken other people.

6 MR. JACKIER: Almost all of them have been missions  
7 of one type or another.

8 MS. CITRIN: It's not just Israel. It was the  
9 former Soviet Union, Morocco, Ethiopia.

10 MR. JACKIER: Okay. Well, I'll start with Israel  
11 and then we can talk about the other places because they're  
12 all different. You know, you've done it. You've been right  
13 at the top of the pyramid of these missions as well. There is  
14 nothing, in my opinion, that helps people connect with their  
15 own identity as a Jew than to go to Israel. For those of us  
16 that have the privilege of organizing these things, I think  
17 you would agree -- I'm sure you would -- that there's nothing  
18 more fulfilling than to take someone who's never been to  
19 Israel before and see them open up to what you experienced the  
20 first time. I think I was with you on your second trip to  
21 Israel. The first trip you took was on a cruise that stopped  
22 in Israel --

23 MS. CITRIN: No. The first trip was in 1969 with  
24 Ruth Broder.

25 MR. JACKIER: I was there at an early time and you

1 and I helped show the country to some other people for the  
2 first time on that trip, who all have become very  
3 significantly involved. Just the thrill of planning,  
4 executing and seeing how people react is incalculable and  
5 impossible to describe at one level, and also impossible to  
6 duplicate. It's sui generis. It's unique and wonderful.

7           People ask, why do you keep doing this and why do  
8 you keep going back? All they would have had to have done is  
9 been on one of those planes this past April when we took 600  
10 people on the fourth ~~M~~iracle ~~M~~ission to get the answer. I  
11 wouldn't have had to say anything. That mission personifies  
12 and epitomizes everything we're trying to do, and all the  
13 beauty and wonder of a trip to Israel. That's why I do it.

14           It's like anything else, and this is just one aspect  
15 of it, and I've said it, and I'll be saying it again many  
16 times. We all get a lot more out of it than we give to it.  
17 Everybody looks at it and says, you spend so much time.  
18 That's wonderful. It's nice but that's not what it's all  
19 about. None of us are involved for that reason. We're  
20 involved because on a personal level we get so much  
21 fulfillment out of what we see happening. And we grow and  
22 benefit from all the things we're involved in. That's why we  
23 do it. A mission is the epitome of that in many ways. When  
24 you see that happen, there's no better feeling, in my opinion.

25           **MS. CITRIN:** Yes, but you're unique in that over a

1 period of more than 20 years you've schlepped people to Israel  
2 and you haven't lost your enthusiasm or excitement or warmth.

3           **MR. JACKIER:** No, I haven't. But I don't know if  
4 I'm unique. I think I'm lucky to have had the opportunity to  
5 do that. We've made so many friends that we wouldn't have  
6 even encountered in our Jewish community because of these  
7 trips. One of the great things we get out of what we do is  
8 the people we meet. It's not the people we might help, which  
9 is another area which is tremendously important, but the  
10 people we meet and what you derive from all those people is  
11 just one of the wonderful aspects of it.

12           Now you asked about other destinations. The other  
13 places that I have gone with Stanley and with you and others  
14 really has to do with sending a message to members of Klal  
15 Israel, to members of the Jewish people, that there is a  
16 strong Jewish community out there that is thinking about them,  
17 that is concerned about them. Because most of these  
18 communities that we have visited, whether they be in the  
19 former Soviet Union, in the Ukraine, in Hungary, in  
20 Czechoslovakia or in Morocco or in Ethiopia, which I also had  
21 a chance to do when there was still a Jewish community there,  
22 they're isolated. They're not part of mainstream world Jewry.  
23 They have their own community and they try to maintain that  
24 community. But for the most part at the time that I went to  
25 these places, those communities were struggling. Some

1 struggling to survive at all.

2           For example, in Romania, the Jewish community has  
3 essentially disappeared. Others struggling to have some kind  
4 of viable quality of Jewish existence where they are. In many  
5 respects it would be wonderful if all of them would go to  
6 Israel, but that's not happening, that's not realistic. So  
7 they have to have a meaningful Jewish existence where they  
8 are. One of the things that helps contribute to that is when  
9 Jews from other communities come to visit them. So that was  
10 the primary motivation, to see these people, to let them know  
11 that there's world Jewry out there that cares about them, to  
12 do things for them, willing to come and see them.

13           Then on the other side, to be able to come back to  
14 our community and act as spokespeople who can explain to our  
15 members what's going on in world Jewry because people in our  
16 community aren't aware of it. If you can come back and  
17 explain what it was like to be in a shtetl in Romania or a  
18 shtetl in the Ukraine or in the Alkni Shul in Prague or the  
19 Coral Synagogue in Bucharest -- and I could go on and on --  
20 it's very important and powerful to let our people know  
21 there's world Jewry out there and part of what they are doing  
22 helps these people.

23           Now, I haven't had the privilege of going to  
24 Argentina, but there we have a similar issue where you have a  
25 significant Jewish population that is struggling. When people



1 go, and many people have gone from our community, it's a very  
2 important thing to say to them, we're here for you, we're part  
3 of this, we're not abandoning you and we're not going to let  
4 anybody abandon you.

5 MS. CITRIN: But sometimes on these trips you went  
6 with groups. When you went to Ethiopia, for example --

7 MR. JACKIER: That's the only trip I went by myself.

8 MS. CITRIN: Even the Soviet Union when you went  
9 with --

10 MR. JACKIER: There were four of us.

11 MS. CITRIN: Those are trips that you take not for  
12 employment or pleasure, but for being with them.

13 MR. JACKIER: That's true. Well, there's some  
14 enjoyment. If what you're saying is they're tough trips, they  
15 are tough trips.

16 MS. CITRIN: Not many people would choose those.

17 MR. JACKIER: Worth it Susie. I'll tell you about  
18 Ethiopia. Every crazy thing you could imagine went on there.  
19 Meetings in the middle of the night with leaders, under  
20 tremendous pressure. It was all worth it in general.

21 I'll give you a specific example that was mind  
22 boggling to me. Ethiopia is extremely primitive. Was then  
23 and I was there in 1980 when there was still a significant  
24 Jewish population there that Israel was trying to get to come  
25 out. Ultimately we were successful in doing that, but in

1 those days it was still very iffy and up in the air. They're  
2 living in the proto-typical kinds of conditions that you think  
3 about when you think about the African continent and what you  
4 see in all the movies. Shelter that's barely adequate with  
5 thatched huts, no running water. One village is 20 miles from  
6 another and the way you get to them is you hike. Even these  
7 very sturdy road vehicles which we had, we had seven flat  
8 tires in the week we were there. Even these great Land  
9 Rovers, you go over these rocks and jagged things and the  
10 tires would get ripped up. Anyway, you have to walk. There's  
11 a point where the vehicle just can't go any further.

12           In one particular area we walked for about two and a  
13 half hours, and we came to this primitive village. Out of one  
14 of these huts comes an Ethiopian Jew, and he and I begin to  
15 converse in Hebrew. He was the Hebrew teacher of this  
16 village. Now, I have to tell you, the wonder of that  
17 experience was mind blowing and made the whole thing  
18 worthwhile. The danger, the difficult conditions, sleeping in  
19 the open air in the middle of nowhere, wondering what's going  
20 to happen, knowing that we were being watched, and having to  
21 go through all kinds of mechaninations to avoid our watchers  
22 and all that stuff, it was all worth it by that one  
23 experience. There were many other experiences but nothing hit  
24 me as hard as that one. We were able to converse in our  
25 people's language. It was quite remarkable.

1           The trip with the Gershensons was in 1979.  
2 President Carter had determined that as a result of the  
3 Soviets having moved into Afghanistan that we were not going  
4 to participate in the 1980 Olympics in Moscow. A major  
5 political statement and one which obviously did not endear  
6 Americans to Soviets. This was on the cusp of when the Soviet  
7 Jewry removal was starting to gain momentum. Nobody was going  
8 to the Soviet Union because of what had happened.

9           The primary supply line, if you will, to Soviet  
10 Jews, particularly those interested in going to Israel who  
11 were called Refuseniks -- and we don't have time to go into  
12 all of that, but that's what they were called -- they had very  
13 little of a support system. In fact the opposite happened.  
14 When they announced that they were Refusenik, they would  
15 typically be harassed to death, they would lose their job and  
16 have very difficult lives thereafter. Had trouble feeding and  
17 housing themselves.

18           The one thing we could do is we could be a supply  
19 line. So Americans who would go would be like camels. We  
20 would take everything we could conceivably take in our luggage  
21 to give to them, that they could sell on the black market,  
22 because there was a very active black market in the Soviet  
23 Union at that time. I think there probably still is today.  
24 Items like Levis and cameras, all kinds of things. Shirts, t-  
25 shirts, anything that had American stuff on it was worth a

1 lot.

2           So we and the Gershensons decided to go. And we  
3 went, and that was another one of these tough trips. We got  
4 stopped at the airport and searched. It took us two hours to  
5 go through customs. A very significant confrontation which we  
6 don't have time to go into, but we managed to get through.  
7 Then over the course of eight days we were in Moscow, then  
8 Leningrad, went to St. Petersburg, it's now Leningrad again.  
9 We visited eight or ten Refusenik families and gave them all  
10 this stuff. When we left the country, there was nothing in  
11 our suitcases. We had one set of clothes each left. So we  
12 were there to do something, to communicate. We brought some  
13 messages out with us.

14           **MS. CITRIN:** What type of messages?

15           **MR. JACKIER:** Statements of their circumstances and  
16 things they needed. We brought information about some medical  
17 supplies that particularly Refuseniks were lacking and needed.  
18 There was this constant chain of human delivery system because  
19 that's the only way you could do it. You couldn't send  
20 packages. They would get stolen, searched, whatever. You had  
21 to actually go. It was just a time when very few people were  
22 going.

23           **MS. CITRIN:** When you came back from both of those  
24 trips, I read something in your biographical folder that there  
25 was a headline that says Jackier speaks for 40th time on

1 Ethiopia. You were just a meshugge, a crazy person about  
2 that.

3 **MR. JACKIER:** I was. I had taken pictures and I had  
4 a slide presentation. It was so exotic because these are  
5 black Jews. The whole connection to world Jewry was there.

6 **MS. CITRIN:** I remember the one shot you had of a  
7 young man in the village in Gandar, and then you had him in  
8 Israel in front of a computer.

9 **MR. JACKIER:** That was just one of these great  
10 miracles. That actually also happened on a visit to the  
11 Soviet Union. One of the families that we visited had the  
12 same last name as I do. Yvgheny Jackier. Visited him and  
13 then got the great privilege of seeing him in Israel. He got  
14 out about ten years later and we stayed in touch. He came to  
15 have dinner at the hotel on one of the other missions I was on  
16 many years later.

17 **MS. CITRIN:** Even when you came back from your  
18 Soviet tour, I know you started a whole training program that  
19 had not been done before.

20 **MR. JACKIER:** Of course it's typical. All you have  
21 to do is explain to people what's going on and they embrace  
22 it. The minute we talked about that, all the congregations  
23 embraced it. They wanted to be involved. They just didn't  
24 know that this was something that would be so symbolic and  
25 important.

1           That's very typical, Susie, of the way I react when  
2 I hear comments like the current generations don't care. I  
3 don't buy that at all. I will agree that our current  
4 generation, because of history and events and lifestyles, may  
5 not have the intrinsic understanding of where they fit in the  
6 tapestry of the Jewish people. And that those born 40, 50  
7 years ago did because of all the historic events, post-  
8 Holocaust, the creation of the state of Israel and all these  
9 other things, it was more an instinctive thing. Today, I'll  
10 agree, it's not as instinctive. But I have found, and I  
11 fervently believe that if you explain to people what the needs  
12 are, what's going on, they embrace it. The only thing they're  
13 lacking is information. It's not that they don't care. They  
14 do care. They just don't have the information. If you  
15 provide them with the information, they will respond  
16 appropriately.

17           That was the case with the twinning program. It was  
18 easy. All we had to do was be the messengers and say, it's  
19 very important for them to know that someone is being bar  
20 mitzvahed and being twinned with one of them, and you could  
21 make a phone call on the weekend of the bar mitzvah. Arianna,  
22 my daughter, when she was bas mitzvahed, we did that. It made  
23 it meaningful for her, but it was also a connection to the 13  
24 year old girl in Moscow who Arianna was twinned with. It was  
25 a wonderful thing.

1           **MS. CITRIN:** But not everybody would seize the  
2 opportunity and find something unique and unusual to have in  
3 the community.

4           **MR. JACKIER:** I don't know. I'm not sure about  
5 that, Susie. I think people would. First of all, the type of  
6 person who's going to go do that I think is going to seize  
7 that opportunity because they're going to see how it fits. If  
8 you had gone, I have no doubt that you would have  
9 instantaneously seen how this could enhance the whole process,  
10 and you would have come back and done the same thing we did.  
11 Only difference is you didn't go on that one, you went on many  
12 others.

13           **MS. CITRIN:** Well, thank you. That's very nice and  
14 kind of you.

15           But looking at your biography, I see the big things  
16 that you've done. But I also see the little things, like the  
17 twinning and the showing slides to everybody who will sit down  
18 and listen to you. It's not only a passion, it's like an  
19 obsession to make sure that the people understand what's going  
20 on in this world. Not just here locally but in the entire  
21 Jewish world. Excuse me. I'm getting choked up.

22           **MR. JACKIER:** Part of it, particularly more  
23 recently, relates to the fact that I'm married to Eleanor,  
24 whom, as you know, is a survivor. When you hear and  
25 understand that, it also creates a significant motivation to

1 want to be able to do whatever you can. Here's a human being  
2 walking the face of the earth today, who in the blink of an  
3 eye could have been gone. If you heard her story, you would  
4 understand we have all of those sequential coincidences that  
5 were mathematically not possible but actually did happen, that  
6 she survived it, that she's here, and her family for the most  
7 part, all but her brother, survived, then you have to say to  
8 yourself, I have to prioritize what's important in life. I've  
9 just been lucky, I've been given the opportunities.

10 MS. CITRIN: And you've taken the opportunities as  
11 well.

12 MR. JACKIER: Sort of fell into place.

13 MS. CITRIN: I should ask you, you keep saying, if  
14 we had the time. We have as much time as you want to take.  
15 You can tell us anything you want.

16 MR. JACKIER: Fine. I'll tell you anything you ask  
17 me. I go back too far with you.

18 MS. CITRIN: I do want to talk about more current  
19 things like your presidency and taking on the presidency of  
20 this Federation around the September 11th -- what was it like?

21 MR. JACKIER: What it was like was nothing I  
22 imagined. First of all, it's been the greatest three years  
23 that I can remember. I'm almost done. In another six weeks I  
24 will hand the baton to Peter Alter with great pleasure and  
25 with great confidence that he will be an outstanding



1 president. But it's been an awesome three years. Nothing  
2 like I would have expected. I have said this to many people.  
3 If you and I had sat down three years ago in August just  
4 before I became the president of the Federation, and talked  
5 about what do you think the issues are going to be, whatever  
6 we would have talked about we would have been wrong. Nothing  
7 that has occurred is what I would have anticipated.

8           You indicated one thing. The events of 9-11  
9 occurred about a week before I became president. I was in  
10 Israel when that happened, on a solidarity mission. I  
11 actually returned on the very first plane the United States  
12 allowed to return. A week later I became the president of  
13 Federation. Well, that obviously changed many, many things.  
14 It changed things economically. It created tremendous issues  
15 of security here at the Federation and every one of our  
16 agencies that nobody could have anticipated, with huge  
17 financial implications. Very costly, things that we needed to  
18 do and wouldn't have felt the need to do but for the fact that  
19 that happened.

20           It also, unfortunately, changed or accelerated the  
21 problems that Israel was facing. The second Intifada had  
22 already been going for a year, but it was more of a low key.  
23 After that things really ramped up in terms of terror and the  
24 awful results of unfortunately successful acts of terror in  
25 Israel for a very prolonged period of time. Now, in the last

1 six, eight months things have calmed down some and hopefully  
2 that will continue. So it changed the landscape dramatically.

3 One of the other things that it did was it caused a  
4 significant downturn in the world financial markets and in the  
5 American financial markets, that we're still struggling to  
6 emerge from. What it meant for us in the Federation and the  
7 community was we had a cushion that we were actually using  
8 very effectively to support the things that our community  
9 needs to be doing. That cushion went caput. It completely  
10 went away.

11 A year ago this past February we had to face the  
12 music. We instituted dramatic, unfortunate but necessary,  
13 cuts in funding not just for Israel, but for all of our local  
14 agencies. I'm talking about very significant cuts. As you  
15 know, \$6 million. The reality of having to live within  
16 whatever we succeed in achieving in an annual campaign set in,  
17 because that's not what we had been doing. We had been  
18 supplementing our campaign success with money out of our  
19 unrestricted reserves. And those reserves disappeared. So  
20 it's been very painful and very difficult. We're through it.  
21 I think the community is stronger because of it, but it didn't  
22 minimize the impact and the difficulty.

23 Those were the big picture items. There have been a  
24 lot of other issues. We've had some significant issues at a  
25 number of our agencies that are difficult to predict.

1 Candidly, we continue to struggle with the Jewish Community  
2 Center. Those issues have not yet been fully resolved.  
3 There's been a lot of money invested in the Jewish Community  
4 Center, yet we still have need to input more. We're living in  
5 a world where we have kids who want to go to day school who  
6 can't afford it and we can't provide them adequate assistance  
7 to help the scholarship funds at the levels we would like to.  
8 The Hillel Day School enrollment is significantly down because  
9 of that. So Jewish education is struggling.

10 On the other hand there have been some phenomenal  
11 things. We created the Jewish Academy. We have a community  
12 high school. It's thriving, it's growing. There are going to  
13 be 65 to 70 new students coming in the fall, which is  
14 remarkable. We're going to have about 175 kids up from 130.  
15 The ones who graduated, we're still growing by 40, 45  
16 students. But in general, we're struggling. I'm meeting with  
17 the day schools on a regular basis to try and help them.

18 We took 600 people to Israel in April when nobody  
19 was going and made a phenomenal impact. The ripples and  
20 implications of that in our community are still going on in a  
21 positive way. There's more than talking. We're going to take  
22 the first Detroit Jewish community family mission to Israel in  
23 December of 2005.

24 MS. CITRIN: I hear there are 700 --

25 MR. JACKIER: A thousand people have signed. We

1 haven't even recruited. You know what it takes. You've been  
2 a mission chairman. We've got a thousand people signed up and  
3 we haven't even tried yet. So you can imagine what might  
4 happen. That's one of the wonderful things.

5 Our agencies continue to do great things. The Brown  
6 Memory Center has been created at Fleischman. Our services  
7 for the elderly continue to grow and expand. Our Fresh Air  
8 Camp is thriving. There are a lot of wonderful, positive  
9 things going on in the community as well.

10 MS. CITRIN: We do all this in the face of turning  
11 on the news each day, hearing --

12 MR. JACKIER: We're living in a tough world.  
13 Government assistance to our agencies is cut. The United Way  
14 campaign is substantially down. That impacts our agencies  
15 because they all get allocations.

16 So it's tough times, but our community is a tough  
17 community. It pulls together. We have great execs and great  
18 lay leadership. Everybody understands what we have to do.  
19 The wonderful thing, one of the things you might ask me, what  
20 are you proud of. One of the things through all of this, not  
21 one agency went out and said, you know, I don't care about the  
22 others, I only care about ours. We got to do what we got to  
23 do to survive. Not one agency took that attitude, there's one  
24 plum on the tree and six hands reaching for it, ours has got  
25 to be the longest and the quickest. We all work together and

1 everybody understood that we would all be better off if we  
2 work together as a community. Whatever little bit I was able  
3 to contribute to developing that sense of how to deal with  
4 these difficult problems, I'm very proud of.

5 MS. CITRIN: So I'll ask you the question I asked  
6 you before we started taping. What do you think is next for  
7 Larry Jackier?

8 MR. JACKIER: Maybe a little rest.

9 MS. CITRIN: Some golf, perhaps.

10 MR. JACKIER: I know that my wonderful wife Eleanor  
11 would like me to take a little time off. I have 13  
12 grandchildren with the 14th coming in September. Being able  
13 to spend more time with them. The 13 we have so far are all  
14 here in Detroit. The 14th, which will be Seth's first, will  
15 be in Chicago, which isn't that far away.

16 When I'm done as president, I become the chairman  
17 of the executive committee of the Federation, so I'm not going  
18 anywhere.

19 MS. CITRIN: Well, we know that.

20 MR. JACKIER: Then the other thing we didn't talk  
21 about yet, I have had in the last few years sort of a parallel  
22 career because there's another Jewish organization that I have  
23 spent -- we've mentioned it briefly, the Technion.

24 MS. CITRIN: It's the organization where I know you  
25 and your dad both --

1           **MR. JACKIER:** And my mom. It's a phenomenal  
2 organization supporting a great institution of higher learning  
3 in Israel. In my opinion, and I really don't feel I'm  
4 expressing a bias here, without the Technion you don't have a  
5 state of Israel, because all the technology and science, and  
6 all the engineers -- almost 90 percent of the engineers in  
7 Israel graduated from the Technion. If you don't have  
8 engineers, you can't build infrastructure. If you don't have  
9 these techies that graduate, you wouldn't have all these  
10 companies that are doing all these things that are enabling  
11 Israel to prosper in a difficult time. So many high tech  
12 companies are run by Technion graduates.

13           **MS. CITRIN:** I read some place where I think you  
14 said MIT was the Technion of the United States.

15           **MR. JACKIER:** I probably did that in jest, but they  
16 are similar and they have a tremendous amount of faculty and  
17 student exchange. MIT is the model that Technion tries to  
18 pursue. It's been very successful. It educates 13,000  
19 students a year. They have asked me to get even more  
20 involved, and I'm considering it.

21           **MS. CITRIN:** So I'll know where to find you.

22           **MR. JACKIER:** Yeah. What they want me to do is a  
23 very big responsibility, and I haven't decided whether I'm  
24 going to do it or not. I'm thinking about it.

25           **MS. CITRIN:** So you're never sitting quietly and

1 resting.

2           **MR. JACKIER:** I don't think so. I don't think you  
3 are, either. I think there are people, if we start to do  
4 that, our lives will start to go into decline. I don't know  
5 that it's particularly healthy not to be doing things. I have  
6 a funny feeling I'm going to continue to practice law. I'm  
7 going to continue doing these things. I enjoy it.

8           **MS. CITRIN:** Somebody's got to make some money  
9 around here.

10           **MR. JACKIER:** We do.

11           **MS. CITRIN:** I just want to get back a little bit to  
12 your grandchildren and Eleanor. Eleanor is such an exuberant,  
13 exotic, lovely person. I've enjoyed being with her. I don't  
14 know if at the end of this tape you want to comment a little  
15 bit about how she survived --

16           **MR. JACKIER:** And what she's meant. Yes.  
17 Absolutely. She survived through a remarkable series of  
18 coincidences. She got separated from her mother and her  
19 father and brother. Her mother and she, once they realized  
20 they were separated, there was no turning back. They were  
21 four or five hours from their town. They got on the front of  
22 the truck and the father and brother were supposed to get on  
23 the back. There was no room and the truck took off. Four  
24 hours later when they stopped is the first time they realized  
25 that Sam and the brother wasn't there.

1           But Eleanor's mother did what many Jewish people who  
2 were fleeing the Nazis did: they went as far east as they  
3 could go into Russia. Eleanor was thrown off trains that were  
4 in motion because the train was being bombed from the air,  
5 this and that. She somehow survived all that, she and her  
6 mother, and they ended up in Uzbekistan, which is quite a ways  
7 into the Soviet Union in a place called Tashkant (ph. sp.).  
8 That's where Eleanor was raised from about one until about  
9 six. She was raised by gypsies.

10           Her father, who survived, did it by just his street  
11 smarts and wits. He was a tailor. He did work for the German  
12 army. He made uniforms. What was interesting, because he was  
13 a Jew, the army would not allow -- he basically worked for  
14 officers. He would come to their headquarters and they needed  
15 uniforms and they needed repairs or whatever they needed, and  
16 he would do it. But they would not let him touch them.  
17 Imagine, how does a tailor do his work when he can't put a pin  
18 in or make a line or anything. Had to do it all with his  
19 eyes. He acquired this unbelievable talent that he could do  
20 that. Until the day he died he could do that.

21           When I married Eleanor and I needed some of my  
22 clothes altered, that's the way Sam did it. I would say, this  
23 jacket is this or that and he would just look, he would say,  
24 okay. Not a pin, not a white chalk mark, nothing. Two days  
25 later he'd give me the stuff and it was perfect. This is the



1 kind of man he was and this is how he survived.

2           Unfortunately, he tried to protect his son. He  
3 would bring him food. Some neighbors betrayed his son and one  
4 day he came back and some other neighbors said, your son was  
5 taken away to the woods and he was shot and killed.

6           Sam was befriended by a German officer who one day  
7 said to him, don't come back to the camp. He didn't. He went  
8 into the woods and he became a partisan and he eventually  
9 found his way to the Russian Army and he enlisted in the  
10 Russian Army and got shot in the foot. That's probably how he  
11 survived, because he ended up spending the last year of the  
12 war in a field hospital.

13           Meanwhile, Eleanor and her mother are 2,000 or 3,000  
14 miles away in Tashkant, living with gypsies, having no idea  
15 about where he is or anything. After the war was over, they  
16 did what many people did, they put advertisements in whatever  
17 they could. So and so from so and so is looking for so and  
18 so. The wife of the guy who shared the same little room where  
19 Sam was got hold of one of these ads. She said, Sam, I think  
20 this is your wife and your daughter. He looked at it and I  
21 guess he agreed. It took him a month to go from where he was  
22 to Tashkant.

23           Now in that month, the war is over. It's the fall  
24 of 1945. They could have gone somewhere, Sonya and Eleanor,  
25 but they had no place to go. They stayed in Tashkant, living

1 among the gypsies, and one day Sam shows up. He's asking  
2 around, does anybody know so and so. And Sonya hears his  
3 voice and she can't comprehend it. They turn and look at one  
4 another. They both faint.

5 MS. CITRIN: I'm sitting here with tears in my eyes.

6 MR. JACKIER: That's quite a story, but it's not  
7 over yet. That's how they were reunited.

8 Then they get into a DP camp in Austria. And  
9 they're going to go to Israel. And you know the history as  
10 well. The Ali Abet from then Palestine were in all those DP  
11 camps organizing groups to go to Israel. They were going. At  
12 the last minute they said to them, you cannot go with her,  
13 Eleanor. She's too young. She will endanger the rest of the  
14 group. She was six. Either leave her and come or you can't  
15 go. Of course, they weren't leaving her; they said, we can't  
16 go. Sonya was devastated by this. She had sort of an  
17 emotional breakdown.

18 A Jewish soldier happened to see her and came over  
19 and talked to her, said, what's the matter? They explained.  
20 He says, I'm going back to the States. Do you have any  
21 family? She said, I have one brother somewhere in the  
22 midwest, Chicago or Detroit or whatever. He said, when I go  
23 back, I live in Texas, but I'll put some ads in the newspapers  
24 in Chicago and Detroit. He did. Her brother saw the ad. He  
25 was living in Windsor. Uncle Arky.

1 MS. CITRIN: Just by happenstance.

2 MR. JACKIER: So many of these happenstances. He  
3 saw the ad and three weeks later they were on a boat. Eleanor  
4 celebrated her seventh birthday at Ellis Island. This was  
5 July of 1947.

6 MS. CITRIN: This is tough stuff.

7 MR. JACKIER: That's her story.

8 MS. CITRIN: It still continues because you met her.

9 MR. JACKIER: The great thing about it is her  
10 response. You've talked to survivors and many wouldn't talk  
11 about it. They didn't want to remember, they suppressed it.  
12 Eleanor's response was to have kids. She had six. One  
13 unfortunately died. There are five and they all embraced a  
14 lot of values from their mother, but that one is an obvious  
15 one they all embraced. Because the 13 grandkids come from  
16 three. Four, four and five.

17 MS. CITRIN: There's something very joyous about  
18 her. She's really so exuberant.

19 MR. JACKIER: Have you ever been to a party of  
20 survivors?

21 MS. CITRIN: No.

22 MR. JACKIER: One of the neat things was one time  
23 when her dad was still alive -- her mom still is -- down in  
24 Florida, we were there for the holidays. We went to a New  
25 Year's Eve party. All the people there were survivors.

1 Knowing you as I do, you would have loved this party because  
2 these people party like there's no tomorrow, because that's  
3 how they live. They live like there's no tomorrow. Every day  
4 that they've been given is a gift that they didn't expect to  
5 have. When you talk about that exuberance and excitement,  
6 you're right on. There are survivors who believe that,  
7 definitely, and Eleanor's one of them.

8 MS. CITRIN: It must be so wonderful to be with her.

9 MR. JACKIER: She's a little hard to keep up with.  
10 She's got a very positive attitude and she's full of energy.  
11 I believe that a lot of that comes from that whole thing.

12 MS. CITRIN: I remember a long while ago you and I  
13 being in Mauthausen together. You visited some concentration  
14 camps.

15 MR. JACKIER: Been there a couple times.

16 MS. CITRIN: I know this must be an interesting  
17 twist --

18 MR. JACKIER: Well, it is. It's been particularly  
19 interesting lately, because when she and I have gone together  
20 to Israel and gone to the valley of the destroyed communities  
21 and her community, Beronavich (ph. sp.), is there. That's  
22 always been a difficult thing.

23 MS. CITRIN: I know that some of your children have  
24 been to Israel. Have all of them been?

25 MR. JACKIER: All seven kids. Seth and Arianna have

1 been there multiple times. So has Susan. Jack. They've all  
2 been there. The last one was Adam. He went a couple years  
3 ago.

4 MS. CITRIN: You could take your own family mission.

5 MR. JACKIER: I could. When I was in Haifa this  
6 past June, I got this little recognition when I was there.  
7 There were 14 of us who wanted to come. Everything we do is  
8 big numbers. You go out to dinner, it's big numbers.

9 MS. CITRIN: Passover, right?

10 MR. JACKIER: It's Passover every night, right. We  
11 always have Shabbat dinner. We don't go out on Friday night.  
12 Every Friday at somebody's house. We usually have all the  
13 grandchildren and all of us, so it's a large number of people  
14 whenever we're together.

15 MS. CITRIN: Must be a lot of fun.

16 MR. JACKIER: It is a lot of fun. It's great. I  
17 grew up in a small family. You asked me the story of how'd we  
18 get here. We have no family here at all. Zero. Our family  
19 became the community. But when we had these kinds of family  
20 gatherings, we would be invited to somebody's house. Our  
21 family was us, the five of us. That was it. Now I'm in a  
22 family that has 30 people at any given moment. It took a  
23 little getting used to. It's fabulous. The grandkids are  
24 just phenomenal. The kids are phenomenal.

25 MS. CITRIN: Any last thoughts before we end the

1 tape?

2           **MR. JACKIER:** No. As I said an hour ago, I wouldn't  
3 have changed my decision not to come back here, for anything.  
4 I don't know what my life would have been somewhere else, but  
5 I do know that it's been rich and wonderful, and very  
6 fulfilling. I can only be thankful for all the opportunities  
7 and privileges that I've gotten over the years.

8           **MS. CITRIN:** We're kind of glad to have you around.

9           **MR. JACKIER:** Thanks.

10          **MS. CITRIN:** Thank you. I was wiping my eyes a few  
11 times.

12          **MR. JACKIER:** You and I go back so far.