

1 ORAL HISTORY OF: Herbert Kaufman  
2 INTERVIEWED BY: Sharon Alterman  
3 DATE OF INTERVIEW: Wednesday, September 22, 2004  
4 LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Jewish Federation  
5 SUBJECT MATTER: Jewish community involvement,  
6 family business, Jewish funeral  
7 director

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9 MS. ALTERMAN: Today is Wednesday, September 22nd.  
10 My name is Sharon Alterman, and I'm here at the Jewish  
11 Federation, interviewing Herbert Kaufman for the Leonard M.  
12 Simons oral history project.

13 Mr. Kaufman, do we have your permission to use the  
14 contents of this interview in any kind of historic  
15 documentation?

16 MR. KAUFMAN: You certainly do.

17 MS. ALTERMAN: Thank you. Well, I have to start off  
18 saying I'm delighted to interview you. You are one of the  
19 people in this community who has made such an impact on this  
20 community, and I know that this is going to be a very  
21 interesting interview.

22 MR. KAUFMAN: Thank you, dear.

23 MS. ALTERMAN: Let's start at the very beginning.  
24 Where were you born and when?

25 MR. KAUFMAN: I was born here in Detroit April 1924.

1 I just celebrated my 80th birthday in April, and I'm thrilled  
2 and pleased to still be enjoying and doing everything I'm  
3 doing.

4 **MS. ALTERMAN:** Mazel tov to you.

5 **MR. KAUFMAN:** Thank you.

6 **MS. ALTERMAN:** Who were your parents and where did  
7 they come from?

8 **MR. KAUFMAN:** My father was Ira Kaufman. He was  
9 born in Europe, in Austria Poland, actually in Galacia. He  
10 was born there in 1896. He came to America in 1907. He was a  
11 young person, age 11 at the time. Came over here and started  
12 working early in life. He sold matches, he delivered milk.  
13 Then later in life he opened a hardware store. After that he  
14 opened the funeral home in 1940. This is how I gravitated  
15 into the business that I'm in.

16 My mother was born in Michigan, just outside the  
17 Thumb area. She was born the same year, 1896. Interestingly  
18 enough, when my mother and father got married, it was almost  
19 like an intermarriage. My father from Galacia, my mother's  
20 family from Lithuania. It was like the intermarriage that  
21 they're talking about today.

22 My mother and dad lived in Detroit, in this area,  
23 all of their lives. My mother died in 1955. My father died  
24 in 1986.

25 **MS. ALTERMAN:** In what area did you live in when you

1 were a small child?

2           **MR. KAUFMAN:** I lived on the east side of Detroit on  
3 Gratiot and Iroquois. My father had a hardware store there.  
4 And we lived there until 1936, at which time we moved to the  
5 west side. We lived on Virginia Park between Byron and  
6 Woodrow Wilson. I think the primary reason my mother and dad  
7 moved was they wanted to bring myself and my two siblings more  
8 into a Jewish community.

9           I attended Hutchins Intermediate School and  
10 graduated from Northern High School.

11           **MS. ALTERMAN:** And can you tell us about your family  
12 life in those early formative years. What are your  
13 recollections?

14           **MR. KAUFMAN:** My earlier years I don't remember a  
15 great deal. When we moved to the west side, we had a very,  
16 very close-knit family, and I had a loving aunt and uncle that  
17 lived upstairs from us that we were very, very close to  
18 through the years.

19           I have two sisters. My older sister, Jean, is two  
20 years older than I am, but interestingly when she passed the  
21 age of 70, she automatically became my younger sister. She  
22 presently lives in Arizona and is married to Jerry Sucher and  
23 has been married now 62 years.

24           My younger sister, Charlotte Feldman, married to  
25 Nate Feldman, lived here all of their lives and about two

1 months ago moved to Washington, D.C. area because they have  
2 two daughters living there.

3 I think our family is most unique. As I mentioned,  
4 my older sister has been married 62 years, Babs and myself 56  
5 years, and my kid sister 52 years.

6 **MS. ALTERMAN:** That's real longevity.

7 **MR. KAUFMAN:** Yes. Maybe we were too chicken  
8 earlier to get a divorce.

9 **MS. ALTERMAN:** Or smart.

10 **MR. KAUFMAN:** Or smart. If divorce had been  
11 socially acceptable, through the adjustment of the first  
12 couple years, and I think this is one thing that's wrong in  
13 the world today. Young people, when they have a disagreement,  
14 just dissolve their marriage. And thank goodness we didn't.

15 **MS. ALTERMAN:** You talked about going to Hutchins  
16 Junior High and Northern. Were you active as a young person  
17 in sports?

18 **MR. KAUFMAN:** I was in the Boy Scouts, I recall, and  
19 I also ran track. That was the extent of my activities. I  
20 ran track at Northern and did reasonably well at it. I ran a  
21 half mile.

22 **MS. ALTERMAN:** Did you go to the Jewish Community  
23 Center in your area?

24 **MR. KAUFMAN:** Absolutely. On Woodward and Holbrook,  
25 that then became the John Kronk Community Center. Yes, I did

1 go there. And I played, if I recall correctly, some racket  
2 sports.

3 **MS. ALTERMAN:** Do you have any recollections of what  
4 the activities were at the Jewish Community Center in those  
5 days? Were there clubs and social groups?

6 **MR. KAUFMAN:** There were clubs and social groups. I  
7 was not involved in them. From the present Jewish Community  
8 Center I see all of the activity there, and there's much more  
9 activity at the Jewish Centers now than there was then. But  
10 at that time the Jewish community was centered much more so in  
11 the area of the Jewish Center there, and it brought a lot more  
12 people there.

13 **MS. ALTERMAN:** Was Northern High School primarily  
14 Jewish?

15 **MR. KAUFMAN:** No. It was at that time probably 50  
16 percent white students, of which a big percentage were Jewish,  
17 and there was a very, very heavy black population at that  
18 time. And I think it taught me a great deal. It taught me  
19 that people are people, and I had a lot of friends, both  
20 Christian and black, that taught me a lot more tolerance in  
21 this world.

22 **MS. ALTERMAN:** So it was an integrated school?

23 **MR. KAUFMAN:** Very much so. Very much so.

24 **MS. ALTERMAN:** What about your religious education  
25 at that time?

1           **MR. KAUFMAN:** My dad had been very, very active at  
2 Shaarey Zedek for many, many years, and I used to go to  
3 Shaarey Zedek. I went through the Hebrew Day School. It was  
4 at Philadelphia and Byron. I attended there for a while. I  
5 had my bar mitzvah at Shaarey Zedek. I had a second bar  
6 mitzvah on my 73rd birthday, and the Lord willing, I'm going  
7 to have a third one on my 83rd birthday.

8           **MS. ALTERMAN:** Oh, wonderful. So the religious  
9 practice in your home was pretty conservative?

10           **MR. KAUFMAN:** Yes. We used to have Friday night  
11 dinners regularly. I didn't attend services a great deal as a  
12 youngster, but my father went every sabbath.

13           **MS. ALTERMAN:** What was your mother's level of  
14 religious practice?

15           **MR. KAUFMAN:** Following with my dad. Didn't attend  
16 services a great deal. My dad came from a much more  
17 traditional family than my mother did.

18           **MS. ALTERMAN:** And at this point in time how many  
19 synagogues do you belong to?

20           **MR. KAUFMAN:** I belong to a number, but for a  
21 different reason for each one. My primary affiliation is  
22 Temple Beth El. I'm a past president of Temple Beth El. I  
23 also belong to Shaarey Zedek. As I mentioned my father was  
24 very, very active there, and when he died, I felt it important  
25 for a Kaufman to be a member of Shaarey Zedek at all times.

1 And I have joined several other congregations, but each for  
2 specific reasons and purposes.

3 **MS. ALTERMAN:** Let's go back and talk a little bit  
4 more about your father. You talked about the various  
5 businesses that he was in. How did he eventually get into  
6 mortuary science?

7 **MR. KAUFMAN:** Dad had a hardware store on Gratiot  
8 and Iroquois, and two blocks down the street was a Christian  
9 funeral home, Deloss Gitrey. My father has related this to me  
10 several times. Upon two different occasions Dad and Deloss  
11 attended Jewish funerals at Lewis Brothers Funeral Home, which  
12 was the primary funeral home at the time. My father, with his  
13 wonderful way with people and wonderful way of putting people  
14 at ease, Deloss said to him, Ira, this community needs  
15 somebody of your background, of your compassion, of your  
16 upbringing, to open a Jewish funeral home. Dad gave great  
17 thought to it. He went to night school, got his license as a  
18 funeral director, and served an apprenticeship with Deloss.  
19 In 1939 he went to work for Hebrew Memorial Chesed Shel Emeth,  
20 and he was their licensed funeral director there for I believe  
21 about two years, and opened his own funeral home in 1940 or  
22 '41.

23 The funeral home was in Detroit at Dexter and Edison  
24 and it remained there until I came back into the business in  
25 1956. I had been with Dad after I graduated from college, and

1 feeling that there was a perfect job somewhere, I left Dad  
2 seeking that job, and grew up, matured, came back in the  
3 business walking in my own footsteps rather than his, and  
4 realizing that I was perfectly suited for funeral service.  
5 And yes, there were some difficulties. No business is  
6 perfect, which I learned, having left him for a while. And  
7 I'll forever be thankful that I did leave, but I'll be more  
8 thankful that I came back, because it's been a wonderful,  
9 wonderful life for me.

10 **MS. ALTERMAN:** So is the community thankful for your  
11 decision.

12 **MR. KAUFMAN:** I think the business that I'm in has  
13 taught me to value life, and I think this is the reason that I  
14 enjoy life as much as I do. Everybody has problems, everybody  
15 has bumps in the road, and Lord only knows I've had my share.  
16 But it's a wonderful world to live in and a wonderful life,  
17 and I defy anybody to have a better life and working  
18 relationship than I do with my wife.

19 **MS. ALTERMAN:** Let's go back to some of the other  
20 things that happened to you before you came into the funeral  
21 business. You talked about going to the university. Where  
22 was that?

23 **MR. KAUFMAN:** I graduated Northern High School in  
24 1942, went to the University of Michigan. Uncle Sam drafted  
25 me in February of 1943. I spent three years in the Army.



1 Went through basic training in Florida and while waiting to be  
2 shipped out somewhere, who knows where, I was doing KP duty so  
3 much that I volunteered to do workout with the different  
4 soldiers there, and I ended up taking the young soldiers to  
5 the beach for swimming and for exercising, spent time there.

6 I was then transferred to the University of Chicago  
7 in the meteorology program, and I was there for six or eight  
8 months when the program was disbanded. I then, if I recall  
9 correctly, went to Aberdeen, Maryland, for electronic school  
10 and I was being trained in electronics for ground control of  
11 bombing. Spent some time there. And at a later date I was  
12 prepared to go to Europe for overseas duty when the E Day was  
13 declared. At a later time I was on my way to Seattle to go to  
14 the Pacific when VJ Day was declared. The only service I had  
15 out of the country was at a RAF base in Ontario, which was  
16 two, two and a half hours away from Detroit, which gave me an  
17 opportunity to sneak home once a month. I also got overseas  
18 pay.

19 At the time, I have to be honest, I was disappointed  
20 I didn't see overseas service. As I've grown up in this world  
21 and I see what's going on today in Iraq, I have to be thankful  
22 that I didn't because who knows what might have happened.

23 I got out of the Army, separated in '46, went back  
24 to the University of Michigan, and through summer sessions and  
25 all, I graduated in the fall of '47.

1 I started working with my dad in the business and  
2 because I was young, and as I mentioned earlier, thinking  
3 there was a perfect business, I left the business for a period  
4 of time and moved to Ohio. I was a traveling salesman and I  
5 covered the state of Ohio. I sold ladies' lingerie, hosiery  
6 and gloves. After a while I got tired of the traveling, and  
7 after my mother died, my father approached me. He said, son,  
8 if you'll come back into the business, and I certainly have  
9 room for you and I'd love to have you here, we'll build a new  
10 chapel in Southfield, and this is actually what happened. I  
11 came back in 1956, and the rest has been good history.

12 **MS. ALTERMAN:** What were some of your fond memories  
13 of the University of Michigan?

14 **MR. KAUFMAN:** Friends that I made there, and I made  
15 a lot of friends, many of them local here. I had a roommate,  
16 who I have to look up again shortly, from Buffalo, whose  
17 father ran the Buffalo *Jewish News*. At that time it was a  
18 very fine paper. And I maintained quite a relationship with  
19 Jake over a period of years. Plus I have many, many friends  
20 here in Detroit that I see from time to time that I went to  
21 school with in Ann Arbor.

22 **MS. ALTERMAN:** Were you also involved with people  
23 that were Jews and non-Jews, or did that change?

24 **MR. KAUFMAN:** Probably more Jewish than non-Jewish.  
25 I was a member of a fraternity, Phi Sigma Delta, which the way

1 the world goes today, it's been bought out and it's now ZBT.  
2 I had a lot of friends there and I spent a lot of time with  
3 them.

4 **MS. ALTERMAN:** Were you in leadership roles there?

5 **MR. KAUFMAN:** No.

6 **MS. ALTERMAN:** And where did you meet Babs?

7 **MR. KAUFMAN:** On a street corner, which I don't  
8 think you can do today. Babs was going with somebody who her  
9 father didn't like, and insisted that she would have to go out  
10 with somebody else alternately with the young man she was  
11 going with. We had a mutual friend and she and this friend  
12 were standing on the street corner, and I drove up one day and  
13 we started talking, and she said, do you play bridge? I said  
14 yes. She said let's play it. We've been playing ever since.

15 **MS. ALTERMAN:** What a nice story.

16 **MR. KAUFMAN:** Yes. And it's actually a true story  
17 and we got married in 1948.

18 **MS. ALTERMAN:** Tell me about your family.

19 **MR. KAUFMAN:** We had three children. Our son is the  
20 oldest. Bud is 54. He's married. He's a dermatologist,  
21 lives here close to us, has three children: Josh, who we  
22 visited just this weekend in New York. He lives there. He  
23 manages a hedge fund and is doing well. Their next child is  
24 daughter Karlie, who is 23, who just started at Stanford Law  
25 School two weeks ago. And Jenna who lives here and is 16.

1           My daughter Ilene, who is 52, married to Dave  
2           Techner. They have three children: Ari, who is 26, lives in  
3           Eugene, Oregon, and manufactures golf clubs and is engaged,  
4           will be getting married next year. Their son Chad, who is in  
5           between positions. He managed an office in Indiana that he  
6           just gave up recently and he is going out to Oregon to work  
7           with his brother Ari in the business and see how that works  
8           out. And then their youngest child is Stephanie who is 18,  
9           going on 19, and she's at college in Washington state.

10           Our daughter Patty, unfortunately Patty died a year  
11           and a half ago. She had not been well through the years.  
12           They have one child, Annie, who was adopted. Patty was never  
13           able to get pregnant. And Annie has her bas mitzvah in three  
14           weeks. My wonderful son-in-law, Otto Dube, is doing a superb  
15           job of raising our granddaughter Annie.

16           **MS. ALTERMAN:** You are known as a true family man.  
17           I know you quite well and I know your background and how you  
18           love those grandchildren. Any messages to people about family  
19           life?

20           **MR. KAUFMAN:** Well, fortunately through the years we  
21           have wanted to and have been able to spend a lot of time with  
22           our grandchildren. For many, many years Babs and I skied, and  
23           we used to take our grandchildren out to Colorado skiing with  
24           us. Practically never with their parents because that ruined  
25           it. When they were alone with us, it was very seldom we said

1 no, but when we said no, they knew we meant it. And we had  
2 wonderful, wonderful experiences.

3 We have taken our grandkids on many, many other  
4 trips and have enjoyed them tremendously. As I mentioned a  
5 few minutes ago, we just got back from New York visiting our  
6 grandson Josh, and looking forward to visiting all of the  
7 kids. We go out to California in the wintertime now. We gave  
8 up skiing about three years ago. Babs had open heart surgery  
9 and we tried skiing thereafter, and it was too difficult for  
10 her, so we gave up that sport. We play golf here in the  
11 summer and we're now playing golf in the winter in the Palm  
12 Springs area. We don't spend the whole winter there. So far  
13 we're just going back and forth. We go out for three, four  
14 weeks, and come home for a couple weeks. And for sure we will  
15 do this until Annie is 16 and is more out of the house and  
16 more on her own, but we want to spend as much time with her as  
17 we can.

18 We've been very, very fortunate to be able to enjoy  
19 our grandkids as we have.

20 **MS. ALTERMAN:** You really enjoy life and you give a  
21 lot back to this community. I know how busy you are with your  
22 business, but you've also found time to do a lot of other  
23 things. Do you want to talk about your leadership in Temple  
24 Beth El?

25 **MR. KAUFMAN:** I've been very, very active in Temple

1 Beth El. I was president there about eight years ago, and it  
2 was about a ten-year process of being on the board and going  
3 through the different chairs. And hopefully I left my mark at  
4 Temple, which I still feel is a very, very fine religious  
5 institution. I do spend a lot of time there. I'm not as  
6 active as I used to be but on the phone and talk with people.  
7 I hope that I give a little background and direction to them.

8 It's the oldest Jewish congregation in the state of  
9 Michigan, founded in 1850, and with lots of history and  
10 tradition.

11 **MS. ALTERMAN:** What were some of the major things  
12 that you did during your term of office, if you could talk  
13 about something that you think really had an impact. Is there  
14 anything that comes to mind?

15 **MR. KAUFMAN:** Well, we were going through certain  
16 turmoil at the time. The rabbi that we had at the time that  
17 myself and a few others felt belonged more on academics than  
18 in a pulpit position. We attempted through a period of time  
19 to gain enough support in the congregation to replace him.  
20 During my tenure, which was a two-year tenure, it didn't  
21 result in his leaving.

22 The young man who took over from me at the time when  
23 he assumed the position, he said, Herb, I'm going to make it  
24 work, and I said I wish you luck. At the High Holiday  
25 services he said -- the president always speaks to the

1 congregation at Rosh Hashanah -- he said great things are  
2 happening at Beth El. But then about six weeks later he came  
3 up to me and he said, Herb, you were right, I was wrong. And  
4 this young man who replaced me, John Kamin, has done a superb  
5 job in a very, very professional way in arranging for the  
6 rabbi to be replaced, and I take my hat off to John for the  
7 heat that he took and the professional way that he handled it.

8           Unfortunately, while I was president, there was a  
9 great deal of turmoil at Temple, and it sort of stood in the  
10 way of accomplishing other things. But when the rabbi was  
11 replaced, Rabbi Danny Syme was brought in, and thank goodness  
12 is still with us, and is doing a superb job.

13           **MS. ALTERMAN:** So you were in a leadership position  
14 at a very difficult time.

15           **MR. KAUFMAN:** Yes. Yes.

16           **MS. ALTERMAN:** And what other organizations have you  
17 left your mark on?

18           **MR. KAUFMAN:** I'm smiling when you say that. I'm  
19 founding co-chairman because of the young lady who is sitting  
20 opposite me, Sharon Alterman, in the Quarter Century Club of  
21 Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit. I co-chaired it  
22 with Jesse Stern. I spoke to Jesse yesterday. You know,  
23 human memory at times slips you. Jesse and I are wonderful,  
24 wonderful friends today, and I think that this is what brought  
25 Jesse and myself and Sharon together, working together.

1           Quarter Century Club was and basically still is an  
2 organization to thank people in the community for having  
3 supported Federation at any level for 25 years or more. We  
4 put on programs. There was no fund-raising, no soliciting at  
5 these programs, but it was just a way of thanking people in  
6 the community for the support of Federation.

7           I've been very active in State of Israel Bonds, and  
8 I presently am on the executive committee for State of Israel  
9 Bonds for State of Michigan. Previously I had been active in  
10 Jewish National Fund. Unfortunately JNF has moved out of  
11 Detroit. There is no office here anymore.

12           Within my profession I was very, very active. I'm a  
13 past president of the Jewish Funeral Directors of America. It  
14 represents all of the Jewish funeral homes in the United  
15 States. There are about 130 Jewish funeral homes in the  
16 United States.

17           Unfortunately, major conglomerates have bought out a  
18 great many of them. Thank goodness we are still family owned  
19 and family directed here in Detroit. There aren't a lot of  
20 the major Jewish funeral homes that are still family owned.  
21 But fortunately I have two sons-in-law working with me, and  
22 it's worked out extremely well. And as far as I'm concerned,  
23 we will stay private and family owned forever. The  
24 community's been too good to us not to be here for them. And  
25 I have found when the conglomerates have bought the businesses



1 out, they're more interested in the bottom line than in  
2 serving people, and it's hurt our industry greatly.

3 **MS. ALTERMAN:** You talked about Israel and your  
4 connection through Israel bonds. Have you spent a lot of time  
5 in Israel?

6 **MR. KAUFMAN:** I've been to Israel seven or eight  
7 times, and each trip is more inspiring and more exciting.  
8 Babs has gone with me on every trip except the last one. The  
9 last trip was a five-day trip. It was a year ago, I think, in  
10 January or February, something of that sort. We were leaving  
11 on a Sunday, coming back on a Friday, and I was going alone.  
12 I heard that the young new rabbi at Shaarey Zedek, Rabbi Joey  
13 Krakoff, was going without his wife, and I knew him. It gave  
14 me a great opportunity. I called him and I said why don't we  
15 share a room together, which we did. It created a wonderful,  
16 wonderful relationship between Joey and myself that we retain  
17 today.

18 **MS. ALTERMAN:** That was one of the things that I  
19 wanted to speak to you about, your perspective on this Jewish  
20 community. You just talked about Rabbi Krakoff and how you  
21 bonded with him. But I think that you among anybody in this  
22 community has the perspective and the ability to see what's  
23 going on, at least in the Reform and Conservative communities.

24 **MR. KAUFMAN:** This is the greatest Jewish community  
25 in the entire United States. As I mentioned, I was active in

1 our national association. I saw what goes on in every other  
2 community. None of them can hold a candle to Detroit. Not  
3 just the amount of money that we raise, and we raise in excess  
4 of \$30 million for a population of about 90,000 Jewish people.  
5 If other major communities came anywhere near this level, so  
6 much more could be done.

7 But in addition to the money, our community has  
8 raised so many national and international leaders. I used to  
9 think that our generation was active in doing things. What's  
10 going to happen with succeeding generations? I think every  
11 generation following us has stepped up to the plate and is  
12 very, very active in supporting Federation and everything else  
13 in our community. I stand proud and I constantly tell people  
14 what our community accomplishes.

15 **MS. ALTERMAN:** In the years that you've been with  
16 Kaufman's, have you seen changes in the way the community  
17 relates to each other, the various factions? Is there more  
18 cohesiveness?

19 **MR. KAUFMAN:** I think that there is a closer  
20 relationship between each of the different denominations of  
21 Judaism. I can personally speak, I think it's very, very  
22 important for us to have an Orthodox community. I'm not  
23 active in the Orthodox community, but I think that the  
24 Orthodox community is important for us to keep us going in the  
25 proper direction that we're going.

1 I think the relationship between Conservative and  
2 Reform has become much, much closer. Reform congregations are  
3 becoming more traditional and Conservative are becoming more  
4 Reform. And other than a few major issues between the two, if  
5 it weren't for those issues, such as patrilineal and  
6 matrilineal heritage of people being Jewish, and certain other  
7 things, I would imagine that the two different groups could  
8 get together, but it will never happen because of those  
9 problems and because of political reasons between them.

10 The congregations we have here in Detroit, the  
11 Reform, the Conservative, the smaller Orthodox groups, gives  
12 us the strength that I don't think other communities have as  
13 much as we do. We have attracted so many young clergy people  
14 to our community. That is very, very attractive to young  
15 families. Each time we turn around, there are more young  
16 clergy people, rabbis and cantors coming to Detroit, which  
17 thrills me.

18 **MS. ALTERMAN:** We can be very proud of who we are  
19 and what we've done.

20 **MR. KAUFMAN:** Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

21 You know, it's interesting, Shaarey Zedek  
22 congregation of 1500 to 1800 families has three rabbis. Rabbi  
23 Groner became emeritus just recently. But the three rabbis  
24 they have, Rabbi Joe Krakoff is 34, Jonathan Berkin is 32, and  
25 the young rabbi that just came in is age 30. Imagine, an

1 average of 32 for the three rabbis of a major, major  
2 congregation.

3           Each of our Conservative congregations has wonderful  
4 leadership, as does all of our Reform.

5           **MS. ALTERMAN:** That's very telling, that we're  
6 willing to take the young rabbis.

7           **MR. KAUFMAN:** Yes. And I think that we have a  
8 higher percentage of membership of our Jewish community, still  
9 a disappointing number, probably only 50 percent of our  
10 community is affiliated. But I think that's a bigger  
11 percentage than many other major, major communities have.

12           **MS. ALTERMAN:** You talked about your involvement,  
13 but I know that Babs also is a very dedicated member of her  
14 community. What are some of the things that she's done?

15           **MR. KAUFMAN:** Babs in particular was very, very  
16 active in the Meals on Wheels program of the National Council  
17 of Jewish Women. For many, many years she was Friday day  
18 chairman and then she became overall chairman. She started  
19 with Meals on Wheels when I think they had 30 some odd clients  
20 that they sent meals to, two meals a day, five days a week.  
21 They got up to over 200. She hasn't been involved in that for  
22 some time. But she put in probably 20, 25 years.

23           She's been very, very active through the years with  
24 our grandchildren, spending a lot of time there, and more  
25 importantly giving her husband a wonderful, wonderful life.

1                   **MS. ALTERMAN:** That's a fine tribute.

2                   Are there some things that you'd like to say to  
3 young people if they are to hear this tape? Some of your life  
4 philosophy?

5                   **MR. KAUFMAN:** Yes. The glass is half full, always;  
6 it's not half empty. This is a saying I've said for years.

7                   Also, I might have said this earlier in the  
8 interview. With all the bumps in the road, life here is still  
9 wonderful. Take everything with you that you can and enjoy it  
10 and be part of it, and realize that not everything is perfect  
11 and there will be bumps in the road.

12                   I can't help but feel that this is the best world  
13 that I'll ever live in, and I'm going to hang onto it as long  
14 as I can. The Lord willing, I'll live the proverbial 120  
15 years, and that's what I'm shooting for.

16                   **MS. ALTERMAN:** Let's hope so.

17                   **MR. KAUFMAN:** I live and I enjoy and I'm busy all  
18 the time.

19                   **MS. ALTERMAN:** Is there anything that I didn't ask  
20 you that we didn't talk about?

21                   **MR. KAUFMAN:** Let me say a few things about my  
22 father, my father-in-law and my wife. My father was a very  
23 soft, gentle person, made friends easily, had a very  
24 compassionate way about him, and I think that this is part of  
25 the reason that he became -- and his love of Judaism -- I

1 think this was an important part of his getting into the  
2 profession that he did and being successful at it. And I know  
3 my father left for me what really matters: a name and a  
4 reputation. And this is something that we've strived hard to  
5 hang onto, and thank goodness with my two sons-in-law, we're  
6 able to do it.

7 My father-in-law gave me something else that's  
8 different. By his own example he always sought out younger  
9 friends, which Babs and I have done, and let me tell you, it's  
10 kept us younger and younger and younger. We live, we enjoy,  
11 we do a lot of things.

12 Now for the best part of my life, my relationship  
13 with my wife. I don't think there's anybody that has a better  
14 relationship than the two of us do. I don't think anybody  
15 enjoys life or each other. Yes, in any mature relationship  
16 there are disagreements, and this is part of living in a world  
17 together. But you know that when you make a contract with  
18 somebody and it's the right contract, you work at it, you  
19 enjoy it, and this is exactly what we do. We both work hard,  
20 but we play hard. As I mentioned, we used to do a lot of  
21 skiing. Now we do a lot of golf. When I'm here in Detroit, I  
22 will work full time, but I will continue to take time off  
23 through the winter and go back and forth to California.

24 **MS. ALTERMAN:** Is that your message, keep working?

25 **MR. KAUFMAN:** Absolutely. I'm amazed that I can go

1 out to California and relax as I do, and be happy and be  
2 comfortable. I spend a lot of time on the computer out there,  
3 which I enjoy. I call my office every day when I'm out there.  
4 I know so many people in the community, and my office faxes to  
5 me information on each of the funerals that we have, and I  
6 attempt to call every family while I'm there, let them know  
7 that I'm thinking of them, make sure everything went smoothly.  
8 And it keeps me involved and keeps me busy and keeps me  
9 active.

10 We have friends out there that we spend time with,  
11 and we do play a lot of golf. But what I really enjoy out  
12 there is the fact that Babs and I are able to relax and be  
13 with each other. Here in Detroit I am busy so much of the  
14 time during the day in business, during the nights with  
15 involvements and social activities, and meetings and things of  
16 that sort. It's so refreshing being out in California and  
17 just the two of us, and totally relaxing and enjoying.

18 **MS. ALTERMAN:** Thank you. This has been a wonderful  
19 discussion.

20 **MR. KAUFMAN:** I enjoyed it.