

Oral History of: Susie Pappas
Interviewed by: Michael Berke
Date of Interview: February 6, 2018
Location of Interview: Max M. Fisher Federation Building
Subject Matter: Women's Philanthropy Dept. of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit

Michael: 00:00:01 My name is Michael Burke, and today is February 6th, 2018 and I'm interviewing Susie Pappas at the Max M. Fisher Federation Building in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. The interview is being recorded as part of the Women in Leadership Oral History Project. The Women's Philanthropy Department of the Jewish Federation has had many names throughout its history, including Women's Division and Women's Campaign in Education Department. For the purposes of this interview, we will refer to it by its current name, Women's Philanthropy. Susie, do you give permission to the Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives to publish, duplicate, or otherwise use this recording for educational purposes and for use as deemed appropriate by the Archives?

Susie: 00:00:51 Yes, I do.

Michael: 00:00:52 Good. Then we'll start.

Susie: 00:00:54 All right.

Michael: 00:00:55 Let's start at the beginning.

Susie: 00:00:56 Okay.

Michael: 00:00:57 Tell us a little bit about your formative years. Where were you born?

Susie: 00:01:00 I was born in Chicago. At two years of age, my parents and I moved out to Highland Park where I lived basically my life until I went off to college. I was the oldest. After we moved to Highland Park, my mother had two more children, two boys, so I was the oldest of three. Just loved

living in the suburbs of Chicago. I loved my neighborhood, I loved it all. When I was 13, right after 8th grade, my father was transferred to New York City. We packed up and our little family moved out to Westchester. For three years, I went to high school in Scarsdale, New York. He didn't like working in Manhattan, so after 11th grade, we moved back and I walked into Highland Park High School and graduated my senior year with all of my friends that I have grown up with and it was great. I had kind of an adventure for a few years, and then I came back home.

- Michael: 00:02:20 What did your dad do?
- Susie: 00:02:21 My dad was in sales and he worked for a company called Formfit Rogers. They were bought out by Genesco and Genesco moved us to New York.
- Michael: 00:02:30 They moved you back as well?
- Susie: 00:02:32 No, he didn't stay with Genesco very long. He was there with Genesco probably ... The thing that's interesting is that we kids knew nothing. We just lived our lives, we didn't really know the ups and downs, but he really did not enjoy his time in New York and tried a few different companies. Finally, I think he said to my mother, I want to go back to Chicago, so we went back to Chicago.
- Michael: 00:02:59 Tell us about life in Chicago related to your Jewishness.
- Susie: 00:03:02 Okay.
- Michael: 00:03:07 Tell me a little bit about your religious practice, but also about your cultural practice as a Jewish family.
- Susie: 00:03:13 Okay. That's what I was going to go into. I never even knew that anybody wasn't Jewish. I swear. I thought the entire world was Jewish. We were brought up by two very, very reformed parents. They were both products of the old time German Jewish people and they were from the South Side of Chicago. Hyde Park was where they were all brought up. I was raised very culturally Jewish. I knew I was Jewish, but there wasn't anything specifically that differentiated us from the rest of the world. In fact, we always had a Christmas tree which, I have come to find out now, isn't so unusual for the old very reformed German

Jews. We did have Seders, I think. I'm not even sure if we did. We went to Sunday school.

- Susie: 00:04:20 The one thing that I will tell you is, somewhere along the way, my parents with an group of about five other families, decided to start a temple. They've started Temple Jeremiah in Winnetka, Illinois. It was still a very reformed temple, but that was kind of what they did. It wasn't until I met my husband, Norm, and brought him home ... We had a very fast engagement from where I'm ... He came home the first Christmas and saw that Christmas tree, and we never had a Christmas tree again after that. It was gone. Once I married Norm, we moved to Detroit. I guess there are some people that maybe had that tradition, but most people here in Detroit did not, and we just did all the Jewish things that everybody does.
- Michael: 00:05:23 Does that synagogue still exist ... [crosstalk 00:05:25]?
- Susie: 00:05:25 Totally. Yeah.
- Michael: 00:05:27 Yeah?
- Susie: 00:05:28 Yes.
- Michael: 00:05:29 Your parents were responsible for something very important.
- Susie: 00:05:33 Yeah.
- Michael: 00:05:33 What role did Philanthropy play in your life as a growing up young woman?
- Susie: 00:05:40 Truthfully, Philanthropy really had no role in my life. My mother was part of a ... She didn't do Hadassah, but she did maybe ... No. We didn't have a lot of charity. I wasn't brought in a house where charity was such an important thing. That is true. Do you want me to tell you why charity ... ?
- Michael: 00:06:15 Go ahead.
- Susie: 00:06:15 Okay. I will tell you truthfully that charity in itself became a very important part of my husband Norm and I. We did it together. We came very involved in the community together. Early in the years, before we ever went to Israel

and got involved in Federation like we did through the years, I joined Hadassah and Ort as a brand new bride as a way to meet people, because I didn't know anybody. I went to University of Michigan, and then I got married right after I graduated and we moved to Southfield. Ultimately, we moved to Farmington Hills, but I didn't know a lot of people, so joining those women's organizations was a good way to meet people.

- Michael: 00:07:06 Just a question, our curiosity, you said your parents were really not involved in the community in any meaningful way particularly. Once you and Norm got involved in Jewish communal service, did it have impact on your family and in your brothers?
- Susie: 00:07:06 No.
- Michael: 00:07:22 No?
- Susie: 00:07:23 No. It was my thing.
- Michael: 00:07:25 They kept on with their lives just the way ... [crosstalk 00:07:27]?
- Susie: 00:07:28 Yeah. My mother unfortunately died when I was 37. She had MS and then she got lung cancer, so she never really got to see all of the things that Norm and I have done through the years. My dad, I don't know if he really appreciated everything that we did. He himself got very involved with the MS society and he did a lot of charitable work for them. I know that he has always given to Federation, but it wasn't a big thing for him.
- Michael: 00:08:24 He is very involved with the veterans as you said earlier.
- Susie: 00:08:27 Right.
- Michael: 00:08:29 We'll get into the Women's Philanthropy in a moment. Why don't you share with us some of the other things that have been meaningful and important to you in terms of Jewish communal service and volunteerism over the years?
- Susie: 00:08:52 I think I have to back up a little bit, if you don't mind?
- Michael: 00:08:55 Go ahead. I don't.

Susie: 00:08:55 Okay. I'm going to kind of tell you a little bit about how we got so involved in the community.

Michael: 00:08:55 Okay. That's good.

Susie: 00:09:03 Okay. I'm just going to go to there, and then there's outshoots from there.

Michael: 00:09:03 Okay.

Susie: 00:09:07 Okay. In 1977, I had two children, we had two children. We had a year-old and a three-year-old. We were asked to go on a national insurance mission from our friend Mark Solomon in Philadelphia. Mark said to Norm ... I was 28 and he was 29 when he said to Norm, I want you to go on this mission to Israel. I want you to give me 10 days of your life and it will change your life. Neither one of us had ever been out of the country, we hadn't really done much travelling, and we decided to take a chance and do it. That really did change our lives. We went on that trip in November.

Susie: 00:09:59 Before that, I took part in something called leadership, women's leadership, where they took women and took them around in the community to see all of the different agencies and educated you. It was like perfect that I did that in the Detroit community and then went to Israel. While we were there, of course, the first time you go to Israel, there's nothing like that first trip and you just can't believe all that's going on there. Norm said, we're not doing our part. He made this very significant pledge and I made, which at the time, seem like a significant pledge. When we got back to the community, we were known. You probably remember those years, Michael.

Michael: 00:10:54 I remember Norm coming to the first [Honigman meeting 00:10:56].

Susie: 00:10:56 Exactly.

Michael: 00:10:57 I was there.

Susie: 00:10:58 That was a very important thing that he would be at the Honigman meeting. That's right. From there, I became very involved in Women's Department. In those days, being asked to be on the women's board was a big deal. You

didn't just get asked to be on the board, you had to sort of prove yourself. Anyways, I got involved in campaign in the lower divisions and one of the things that I seem to be attracted to or that they pulled me into was briefing or training. Do you remember how we used to do that?

Michael: 00:11:36

Sure.

Susie: 00:11:37

Which, between you and me, I think they're missing the boat a little bit now by not doing it, but that's okay. We would have this big, big training things like all day at David Hermelin's or wherever, we would learn how to do, hopefully, face-to-face solicitation. In the Women's Department, we had a briefing chair and we had briefing days, and I got very involved in that part of campaign. I also, at the time, got ... I'm trying to remember. I joined the Lion of Judah when it first came. I just got more and more involved. I worked closely with a lot of the Women's Department presidents. I remember my first president that I can remember was Carolyn Greenberg. Then I think Jane Sherman was there for a brief time, I remember, and then she left.

Susie: 00:12:40

Then Shelby Tauber and it goes on and on, and I always had a part in Federation. I also briefly, at that time, was on the Hebrew Free Loan board and I was also briefly on the JCC board. Truthfully, I couldn't somehow juggle raising my kids, doing my women stuff, and then being on these boards, because my husband worked 24/7. I really was running things at home, so it was hard for me to go out for a meeting at night or whatever. I was on those boards, but not a lot. Fast forward to about the end of like 1999, I had kind of gone through a lot of different positions and I kind of took a break from Women's Department. In those years, I became a member of the JFS board. I was very involved with JFS. I was on the executive committee and I did a lot for JFS.

Susie: 00:14:02

Then in 2002, I got a call from Nancy Jacobson, asking me be the associate women's campaign chair. Now, I have to be honest. I had thought that maybe I would have been asked sooner, but I wasn't. I think that's one of the reasons that I kind of went off into some other directions. I did a lot for general campaign and I kind of just didn't do a lot with Women's. When Nancy called me, I was really taken aback. I really was shocked. The funny thing is she called

just, na, na, na. I said, I'll get back to you. I never said yes, but I started getting calls from all the past presidents. Congratulations. We're so glad you're going to do it, so I kind of ... I did it. Of course, I loved it and it was great and it was a really wonderful experience for me.

- Michael: 00:15:08 Who were the women who were mostly influential to you as you've moved through the ranks?
- Susie: 00:15:15 Okay. I really enjoyed working with all of the presidents that I worked with, but I think I started getting more seriously involved ... First of all, I have to give credit to my big sister, my family, my love Diane Klein. She really is like family to me and she has always been my mentor. I bounce things off her still to this day. Diane was a friend as well as somebody I worked with. I worked with Linda Klein. I loved working with Penny [Blumenstein], I thought she was absolutely wonderful. Nancy Grosfeld. You know, Beverly is also a very close friend of mine, Beverly Liss. You know, I've kind of done a lot with her, behind her, all the way through. Like when she did borrow a loan, I was involved with that with her. Anything that she's done, I've kind of been involved with, Beverly. I guess that's ...
- Michael: 00:16:26 Okay. This is just a template. What are some of the things that you're most proud of in terms of your involvement ... [crosstalk 00:16:36]?
- Susie: 00:16:35 I want to go back a little bit.
- Michael: 00:16:37 You can go wherever you want to go.
- Susie: 00:16:40 Okay. I want to go back to when I became associate campaign chair. Nancy Jacobson was the campaign chair, I was the associate. Everyone says to you when you've become the associate, that year, it is your year to just kind of observe. You know, keep a little notebook into your mind of things you want to make sure you do when you're the campaign chair. Funny thing is I've been keeping a little notebook in my head for years. I mean, I know kind of how I want things done and I kind of knew.
- Michael: 00:17:19 Probably since you were born.
- Susie: 00:17:20 No, but at least since I started in Federation. I watched Nancy and we had a good year, and then something

happened at the end of her year. She decided not to go on to be the president. Now, that's pretty much ... It's expected. It's not always, but it's expected that you're going to be campaign chair and then you're going to be the president. She did not want to go on to be president. Here, I'm going to be campaign chair, we needed a new president, and then another thing happened. Helen Katz, who had been the women executive, decided that she was going to go full-time, part-time, I don't know, over to the Jewish Women's Foundation.

- Susie: 00:18:06 Women's Department, because that's what it was called in those days, needed a new director, a new president, and here I was coming on as campaign chair. The fates were definitely in my favor in all of our favors. We got Marion Freedman and then Sandy Schwartz. The three of us were just a fabulous team. I'm going to tell you about the first day. It was like in June 6th or 7th of whatever year it was, 2003, 2004, maybe it was 2004, Marion Freedman comes in for her first day. I'm not going to tell you all the specifics, but I was a little nervous. I didn't know Marion. She really had done nothing in Women's Department so she was coming in really, really cold, but you know Marion.
- Michael: 00:19:04 I know her very, very well.
- Susie: 00:19:05 I know Marion. Now, I do. I had nothing to worry about. I go in the first day, she sat in her chair, I sat at the table, and we just schmoozed and got to know each other. The best thing that happened was, that was in July, she went with me on the campaign chair's mission. She was the exec and I ... she was the professional and I was the lay. That really solidified our trip.
- Susie: 00:19:38 We just giggled and laughed and had the best time, and we both really developed a very close fondness for each other that continues to this day. It was Marion, me and Sandy, and we had an absolute ball. I came in with this mantra in my head, everything old is new again. Things that had kind of been like not done for a while, I wanted to bring back, which I did more. Like we did more phonathons and just things that I thought really worked. I think it was a pretty successful run.

Michael: 00:20:20 Tell me what you feel as you've raised, and I think it's an important thing, the relationship between volunteers and professionals are in your mind.

Susie: 00:20:37 I personally have only had excellent experience as working with the professionals. When I was at JFS, it was Norm Keane and then Perry who I thought was great. I didn't tell you that they have been doing Hebrew Free Loans, so I got to ... You know that, because we worked together. I mean, I loved David Contorer, he's great. Marion is like ... I mean, I just loved all of my time working with professionals. I think we have outstanding professionals. I mean, I loved the years when Bob and Mark were doing general campaign.

Susie: 00:21:24 I've known Scott [Kaufman] forever. Since he was a young boy, I mean. I've seen him and I think he's brought a very electric kind of a feeling. I don't know. If the cameras weren't rolling, it might be interesting for us to discuss it, because you've certainly seen a lot of professionals. It's a different feel in Federation. I'm not saying it's good or bad. It's just different and maybe probably very needed. Did you ask me what I thought one of my biggest accomplishments where or you've ... ?

Michael: 00:21:56 What you thought were some of the things that you remember with fondness of things that you accomplished?

Susie: 00:22:04 I will tell you that one of the things that was very important to me, and I do feel that we did accomplish it, was making Women's Department young again. We had a wonderful group of women that had been involved with Federation probably as long as me. I mean, I started off as the youngster, so by the time I became campaign chair and president, I had been around a long time. We needed young blood. I felt very strongly that we need to reach out, which we did, and I do believe that a lot of what's going on with Federation and the people that are involved now were because of the things that I laid out.

Michael: 00:22:52 Such as?

Susie: 00:22:52 I'm going to tell you? One of the things ... In fact, I was in Marion just a few days ago and I said to her, I'm going to be having this oral interview, and we both agreed that one of the best things that happened out of our combination was

the Mosaic Mission, the Women's Mosaic Mission, which was not a new thing. Because in the day, when I was younger, we had something called [Hadracha 00:23:20] where women would go to Israel, and then they'd come back and they'd have an obligation to do certain solicitations and whatever. We brought this mission back and we've named it Mosaic. My chairs were Leah Trosch, who is now our president, and Lori Garon. We targeted women, we made ... you had to give a campaign gift of \$1,800 for three years, that was your commitment.

- Susie: 00:23:53 They did pre and post meetings. That first trip ... all the trips have been good, but that first trip was really a fabulous trip. Unfortunately, I was not able to go on that trip, because my oldest daughter became engaged and she got married very quickly. She had a very short engagement and I think she got married while they were on the trip. I knew that it was going to be fine. Marion went, Susie Citrin, and then the two leaders. When those women came back, they really took campaign positions and other positions. To this day, we have had a much younger group of women, new women who've kind of infused a new blood into Women's Philanthropy.
- Michael: 00:24:46 More than perhaps the rest of the Federation, Women's Philanthropy not only raises money, but there's a real strong educational component associated with it. I want you to sort of talk about that and kind of your role and involvement and participating, but maybe even more importantly, helping to develop those things to provide the community with what I believe is important leadership not only in the Women's Department, but in the Federation in general.
- Susie: 00:25:21 That's interesting, Michael. Because when I became campaign chair, there was unfortunately a little bit of this thing like, Federation, all they ask you for is money. We felt very strongly that, yes, of course, you have to raise some money, but we had to kind of sugarcoat it, in some ways enhance a lot of these educational things. Sandy was the president and the education component of Women's Department fell under her purview, and I really took care of the campaign. In those days, I think she had 14 different programs that were educationally based. 14.

Susie: 00:26:13 Today, I think they have four. It's pretty much that feeling of doing more educational things has really changed. When I was campaign chair and then president, we had something called coffee talk, and we had food for thought, and we had a Passover program, and we had like a spring forum program, and we had a lot of ... we brought speakers in and we did a lot of friend raising. I'm not saying they don't do that as much now. They're not doing it as much now, so I guess I can say it, but it's just a different feeling now than in the day. Do you feel it at all what I'm saying?

Michael: 00:26:57 I think that the educational component has shifted a little bit. I think the young adult division has changed sort of next gen and maybe there's been some merging and melding of those kinds of things.

Susie: 00:27:09 Yeah. Maybe that's true.

Michael: 00:27:12 You know, I come from your school so I'm a believer in the things that Women's Department did with educational performance.

Susie: 00:27:20 Right.

Michael: 00:27:20 Because I think what it ultimately did, this is not my interview, but ultimately what it did is it increased our ability to raise funds, because our Women's Department are particular, Women's Philanthropy knew more about this organization and what it serve than many of the others that ... [crosstalk 00:27:43]

Susie: 00:27:43 Yeah. I think you're probably right. They still do a leadership type program where they take people around to the different ... I mean, they do some. They do a TOV program where they're doing a tzedakah, tikkun olam kind of ... so there are things that they still do.

Michael: 00:28:03 Absolutely.

Susie: 00:28:05 Yeah.

Michael: 00:28:06 Yeah. Anything else related to the programs that you participated in? Speak a little bit, because you sort of alluded to that Sandy sort of had the educational component, you had the fundraising component, but there was a merger and a meeting of mind related to that. I want

you to maybe speak about that, too. Because I think what that did is it enhanced Women's Philanthropy not only for that present, but for the future to come.

- Susie: 00:28:36 We would have like once a week meetings. You know, we would tell each other exactly what we were doing in our different areas. The other thing that I remember so strongly, because she had so many committees and I had so many different divisions, we had a lot of fundraising divisions and you'd have to get leadership, so we would talk together about which women she was going to ask and which women I was going to ask because we didn't overlap. We had to have a lot of people in leadership roles, and then she had to find the right people for her committees and then I had to find the right people for my divisions. I was very much aware of what she was doing and she was aware of the things that I was doing.
- Michael: 00:29:25 How about the women, were they aware that they were part of a totality?
- Susie: 00:29:30 Yes.
- Michael: 00:29:31 Do you feel that that benefited not only the Women's Philanthropy program, but the Federation in general? Speak to that a little bit.
- Susie: 00:29:38 I always have thought that Women's Department was the heart and soul of Federation anyway, so I always felt that because of the education ... General campaign was a campaign. Young adult, that was like just a beginning like just wading into the pool. Women's did, like you said, we had a very, very robust campaign and we had a lot of other activities that women could get into. Even if they didn't feel comfortable soliciting, they could be a part of Women's Department and, ultimately, Federation.
- Michael: 00:30:17 In terms of fundraising itself, and there was the Federation and the annual campaign and the Women's Department, was there a difference in the way Women's solicited for gifts as opposed to the way that general campaign solicited?
- Susie: 00:30:32 You know the answer to that.
- Michael: 00:30:32 [crosstalk 00:30:34]

Susie: 00:30:35 Okay. Of course, there was. We had a much softer way of doing it. You know, it's a funny thing because now I think that the professionals do a lot of the fundraising. I've discussed this with Norm, my husband, that through the years, there were so many giants in our community that we looked up to. That's another thing. Those giants of the community, the Bill Bermans and the Max Fishers and the Larry Jackiers and the Bob Naftalys, Erwin Green. I don't know, there are just so many names, and they all took part in these campaigns. They didn't just have their professionals do it. They actually did the fundraising. We revered them and wanted to be like them. I guess it sort of makes me a little sad because I don't think there's the same kind of reverence to the pillars of our community that there was when I was going through it.

Michael: 00:31:53 You know, it's interesting that you mentioned the pillars of our community and we're obviously, we're talking about the general campaign, but there were also pillars of the Women's Department.

Susie: 00:32:04 Absolutely.

Michael: 00:32:04 I'd like you to say a word about those people, the Dulcie Rosenfelds, and I won't put words into your mouth.

Susie: 00:32:11 Right. Dulcie and Carolyn Greenberg and Melba Winer and ...

Michael: 00:32:22 Tillie [crosstalk 00:32:22]

Susie: 00:32:22 Thank you. Tillie [Brandwine 00:32:23]. Yeah. I have to really say, a lot of those women were sort of before my time. My pillars, I mean, Carolyn is still a one and there was Jane Sherman and there was ... Penny was just somebody that was a solicitor, but she just kind of ... and she's just become such a pillar in our community. Nancy, too. Nancy was brought in kicking and screaming, but she's just ... Doreen, too. When Doreen came, I'll never forget when she was named campaign chair, everybody talked about ... You know, she was married to David Hermelin, so they're happy that Doreen was involved. She was very nervous to talk in front of people and wasn't self-confident. Of course, we all know that she's become such a pillar of our community. I feel very fortunate that I've gotten to know these women and call them all my friends.

Michael: 00:33:25 Okay. You obviously rose to be the president of Women's Philanthropy.

Susie: 00:33:25 Yes, I did.

Michael: 00:33:33 Tell us what the decision making that made you decide that you wanted to move from campaign chair to Women's president, and what do you hoped to accomplish when you became president?

Susie: 00:33:47 Okay. I watched so many women that I worked within the campaign take on these leadership roles. I remember, this is in the 80s, Diane and Emory were over at our house and she was going to become the Women's campaign chair or president. I remember thinking, wow, that's really amazing that she has the ability to do this and would I ever feel comfortable enough to be able to take on such a responsibility? Then they asked Beverly, farther down the line, they asked Beverly to become ... Beverly and I had really been going on a track. Even when they asked her, I thought, wow, I don't know if I could ever do it, but I wanted to do it. You know, I was disappointed a few times, but my time came at the right time so I'm not ...

Susie: 00:34:51 At that time, I felt like, it's not going to happen, but I guess I wanted to do it because I felt so passionate about Federation and the community. I was thinking something today that I just have to say. I don't even know if it was in preparation for this interview. When I finished my presidency, I still was sort of a little involved. I was on the executive committee because I was a past president or I was on the executive committee because I had taken a job. This is for Women's Department. I was still involved. I got involved with the Hebrew Free Loan and that was something I felt very deeply about. Now, I'm on the ... I want to say the [PIFC 00:35:43], but I don't think ...

Michael: 00:34:51 PIFC.

Susie: 00:35:44 Is that still what it's called? Yeah.

Michael: 00:35:44 That's what it's called.

Susie: 00:35:46 I'm really enjoying that. I'm also chairing a big luncheon for the Friends of the IDF and I'm involved with the Soul Center, so I'm involved with a lot of different things. I love

my work with the Archives which really have made this happen, so I'm excited. I was thinking there were a lot of women, and I'm not judging, I'm just saying there are a lot of women that are very happy to get up in the morning, exercise or not, go play cards or not, but a lot of card playing goes on in this community. I play cards so I'm not saying. If I didn't have my foot working in the community, I would feel lost. It really feels my soul. I really mean that. We forgot one thing that we need to talk about here.

- Michael: 00:36:46 Go ahead.
- Susie: 00:36:46 That is the fact that I do it with somebody else.
- Michael: 00:36:48 That was my next question.
- Susie: 00:36:53 I don't know. I couldn't do what I do if I hadn't done it while Norm was doing it, too.
- Michael: 00:37:02 Talk about Norm a little bit. [crosstalk 00:37:02]
- Susie: 00:37:02 Okay. After we came back from Israel, Norm just did a lot in this community. He did a lot.
- Michael: 00:37:13 He's still doing it.
- Susie: 00:37:15 Yeah. Not quite in the same way, but yeah. Okay. I mean, he became involved with Bar Ilan, he brought the Friends of the IDF to this community because of a good friend of ours from Israel, Jaja, or our general friend asked him to do it. I mean, I don't think there is very much that Norm's been asked to do that he hasn't said he would do. I have had his support and his encouragement and he's been a role model for me. As much time as I put into it, he puts into it, and we did it together.
- Susie: 00:37:56 The interesting thing is it sort of culminated with when he became president of the Foundation and I was president of the Women's Department. You know, we had kind of both gotten there at the same time, and it was really important. The thing of it is, I think it showed our kids that we had a lot of commitment to helping others, and I think that that's been a really good thing for them to see. They, in turn, also in their own ways give that to their communities.
- Michael: 00:38:34 I'll stop there for a moment.

Susie: 00:38:36 Okay.

Michael: 00:38:38 The fact is that you and Norm were very involved and probably more involved than most, not than everyone, but ...

Susie: 00:38:46 Certainly as a couple.

Michael: 00:38:47 Yeah. How did that impact your family in terms of family life, but also in terms of their own involvement in the community?

Susie: 00:39:00 I'm going to start with my youngest daughter, Amy. Amy was a participant in the first teen mission back in 1990 something. I'll tell you when it is. It was when she was a freshman, so it's some time in '95, 1995. We signed her up for this trip. She didn't want to go. She was a very scared kind of a ... Okay. We signed her up. The great thing about the mission is like for six months before the mission left, they had weekly or biweekly meetings. Her bus would meet together, so by the time she was ready to go on the trip, she was ready except she was still scared when she got on. Thankfully Mike Moskowitz and his wife, Leslie were the rabbi leaders on her bus. I have to say this trip changed her life.

Susie: 00:40:03 She came back and she got very involved in Nifty and she was at Temple Beth El, very involved. Her best friends, the friends she made on the trip, even though they might not have been at Beth El, they were her very, very good friends. To this day, she's friends with a lot of the people from that trip. She has always been involved in the community in some way. When she went off to Michigan State, she was on the Hillel board. When she moved to Chicago and she got involved with their federation and she has always been involved in the community. That's her and she is still to this day. Our son, a little different. He did half a junior year in high school with the [Ramla 00:40:59] program, but then he got kind of into some different kind of spiritual reality.

Susie: 00:41:07 He's a very spiritual person, but I wouldn't say that it's Jewishly motivated. I mean, he of all of our kids is wanting to give money here, there, everywhere. He really feels charitable and really wants to help where he can. Then our older daughter, okay, she didn't really do a whole lot of

stuff in the community. After she graduated college, she went to Chicago, but she didn't really like Chicago. After about six months, she came home. Then she was going to go to law school in New York the following September, so she needed something to do so she came to the Federation and met with the community's [shaliach 00:42:07]. At that time, it was Jeff, what was his name? Jeff ... ?

- Michael: 00:42:13 I forgot.
- Susie: 00:42:13 You know who I'm talking about.
- Michael: 00:42:13 Exactly.
- Susie: 00:42:15 Okay. She wanted to go to Israel. He laid out a bunch of different trips for her that she could go and she chose a trip called [Livnot U'Lehibanot 00:42:23], which was built as a trip to Israel for a college student who has had little or no Jewish education. Leslie considered that. That she went to Temple Beth El, she was bat mitzvah'd, but after that, she didn't really do anything. She went on this trip and that changed her life. It is a program that exposes young people to the beauty of Judaism I guess we'd have to say in an orthodox way. Not everybody has to go that way. Anyway, she moves to New York and she goes to work for Livnot U'Lehibanot as a part-time job. She started law school at Cardozo Law School which is part of the Yeshiva University.
- Susie: 00:43:16 She started going to Aish up on 83rd Street. Long story short, she became an orthodox girl, she spent a lot of time in Israel, she did go to law school. They saved her job, she came back to New York, but then she left law and she went to work for the New York Federation. She worked for New York Federation for several years and she did a really cool program called Do a Mitzvah, Give a Mitzvah. What that program is, she worked with bar and bat mitzvah kids who are having their bar and bat mitzvah in New York, these are all very wealthy families, and the kids didn't need gifts.
- Susie: 00:44:06 They would come to Leslie and talk about whatever it is that they were interested in and they would develop a mitzvah project that people could ask their friends, instead of giving gifts, to donate to this programs. For instance, one girl loved soccer, so Leslie found a girls' soccer team in Israel that she could benefit and they would put that on the

invitation. She did this Do a Mitzvah, Give a Mitzvah and it was a great program. Then she was fixed up with her husband. He was in Cincinnati, getting a PhD. He had grown up in New Jersey, a conservative family that maybe were kind of dabbling on orthodoxy. He wasn't really interested, but when he went to the University of Massachusetts, for some reason, he became interested in orthodoxy.

- Susie: 00:45:10 Now, I have to tell you a funny story. I hope this is okay that we're kind ... Okay. This is a funny story, though. She ends up marrying Nat. Great. They're both orthodox. They go to Israel for a little while. Blah, blah, blah. They moved back here. Leslie and Nat go to a program at Hillel Day School when Dan Senor came and spoke. They really wanted to come and hear Dan Senor, because in the day, when he was in New York and Leslie was in New York, I'm not going to say they dated, but they were very good friends, Leslie wanted to see Dan. She and her new husband go to Hillel Day School. Julie Zuckerman Tepperman comes over to me and she says, is that Nat Ungar? Is your daughter married to Nat Ungar? I went, yes, why? When Nat was at University of Massachusetts, Julie was like a Hillel intern there and she knew Nat. It's just such a small world.
- Michael: 00:46:18 The world is small.
- Susie: 00:46:19 Yeah.
- Michael: 00:46:21 It sounds like your involvement in community, in its own way, were off on your kids in a good way, and their involvement is at their level, but it's a serious and important involvement.
- Susie: 00:46:36 Absolutely.
- Michael: 00:46:37 I mean, what could be better?
- Susie: 00:46:41 I know. They can't ask for more than that.
- Michael: 00:46:42 Let's just take step back because this is about Women's Philanthropy.
- Susie: 00:46:44 Okay.

Michael: 00:46:44 Anything else you want to talk about in terms of your presidency, Women's Philanthropy, are there other things that you did that you're particularly proud of? The second part of the question is, are there some things that we should be paying attention to in Women's Philanthropy as we move forward and down the road?

Susie: 00:47:07 Okay. I want to tell you, Women's Philanthropy is in very good hands and I want to tell you why I can say that. Because almost every woman that is in the leadership roles today would tell you that they're there because of their experiences when I was president. I mean, Leah Trosch, Betsy Heuer. These girls were all girls that I mentored and brought up. I mean, Leah, I asked her to chair that mission. Before that, she had been ... maybe she was a vice president. I don't know. A lot of the women today were women that I could see that they were going to be great leaders and I feel very, very fortunate that I was able to work with them and help them get to the place that they're at now and I think Women's Department is doing really, really well.

Michael: 00:48:05 How do they interact with the general campaign and are there things that they're doing well and are there things that they should be ... [crosstalk 00:48:14]?

Susie: 00:48:13 I don't know if I can really answer that. I don't really know, but I do know that they're doing some really exciting programs. I mean, they are doing this program they called The Signature Event that's kind of a take-off almost on the EPIC event that NEXTGen does. They get a big group of women and they bring in a great speaker, and they're doing a lot of things that bode well for the fundraising and for Women's Philanthropy.

Michael: 00:48:49 I believe, this is just my belief and it was always that way, but even more so, that women play a more important role in determining family philanthropy than they used to. It's just my own personal belief.

Susie: 00:49:01 Than they used to? That's interesting.

Michael: 00:49:02 Yeah. I think that they were driven at least overtly by men and the woman sort of ... but I think it's a little bit different, but that's off the ...

Susie: 00:49:12 Yeah.

Michael: 00:49:13 Do you think that Federation values Women's Philanthropy and do they understand and realize the importance it plays ... [crosstalk 00:49:19]?

Susie: 00:49:13 I don't know if they always did, but I definitely think they do now.

Michael: 00:49:23 What made it change?

Susie: 00:49:24 I mean, I think that there are some women that the general campaign look to that have stronger profiles, and I think that they do.

Michael: 00:49:58 Okay. Federation in general. Yeah.

Susie: 00:49:59 Yeah. I think so. I mean, now we have our third woman president. That's pretty amazing. Michael, I just want to ask you if you want to ask me anything about the Foundation.

Michael: 00:50:12 Yeah. That's my next ...

Susie: 00:50:14 How long have we been doing this?

Michael: 00:50:14 We got as much time as we need.

Susie: 00:50:16 Okay.

Michael: 00:50:21 Let's talk about that. Tell me what ...

Susie: 00:50:22 I'm going to tell you.

Michael: 00:50:26 You're one step ahead of me. Tell me in your opinion the difference between Women's Philanthropy and the Jewish Women's Foundation and why there's a need ... ? Let me rephrase it. Is there a need for both?

Susie: 00:50:42 Okay. I'm going to go back a little bit and tell you because I was remembering this. I was a vice president under Beverly Liss when she was president. I remember this so clearly, that is when the Jewish Women's Foundation was being developed. Beverly brought this idea to Helen Katz and she brought in her good friend Margot Halperin. Together, they kind of brought this idea forth. Now, it isn't

a unique idea to Detroit, because Chicago had one, New York had one, and we in Women's Department knew about this. I think that Beverly, in talking to Helen and to Margot, felt that it was a thing that Detroit could and should do. Now, the interesting thing is I was an original trustee along with Sandy Schwartz and about 10 other women.

- Michael: 00:51:51 How were the original trustees selected?
- Susie: 00:51:53 No, it's self selection.
- Michael: 00:51:54 It was self selected?
- Susie: 00:51:55 Self selection. Just whoever wants it. You know, the idea floated out there, you had to make a financial commitment beyond your regular campaign commitment.
- Michael: 00:52:07 You were right there at ground floor?
- Susie: 00:52:10 Yes, I was. Yes, I was right there. At the time, there were women that felt very strongly that there shouldn't be a Jewish Women's Foundation because they felt that it took away from the women's campaign. I might have felt that way somewhat, but I've been involved for such a long time that I realized that Women's Foundation appeals to women. The majority of the women that have been in the Women's Foundation are women that were never really involved in women's campaign and education department. These were women that found their place that the mission of the Foundation, helping Jewish women and girls, and being able to self select where the money was going to go was a idea that appealed to women and that's why it became successful.
- Michael: 00:53:23 Talk about the grant making process.
- Susie: 00:53:25 This is how it works.
- Michael: 00:53:27 How does it work?
- Susie: 00:53:27 I'm going to tell you. Everybody that becomes a trustee commits to giving \$10,000, \$2,000 for five years. Then at the end of the five years, you can re-up or not. Some did, some didn't. There was also different ways that you could do it. You could also become a lifetime trustee or you could

... There were different ways, but originally it was \$2,000 for five years.

- Susie: 00:53:56 Then they sent out letters to organizations telling them that we were going to do this grant making, and they sent in letters of intent, and then we as trustees pulled our money together, whatever was in and out there. Federation gave us some seed money, too. The Foundation did. We had a little bit of money to work with. Then we would sit around, we would read all the letters, we would discuss it, we did site visits to see, and then we came back and we allocated the money, and it was very empowering. Very empowering.
- Michael: 00:54:37 Why do you think it's important for the Women's Foundation that provides special opportunity for women's initiatives particularly?
- Susie: 00:54:48 First of all, I feel like it was a leading question. I'm going to tell you that I'm not sure that it is important.
- Michael: 00:54:48 Absolutely.
- Susie: 00:54:56 I'm going to also tell you that it has been very successful. If we didn't have it, there would be women that aren't involved in the community. Because we have it, I've been to these meetings year after year, there's women that come to this meeting that you have never seen before. There are a lot of women that are very passionate about the Foundation just for the reason that they can decide where the money goes, how much money is going to go, and that they feel that it is actually helping Jewish women and girls.
- Michael: 00:55:31 You're making a pretty good case.
- Susie: 00:55:34 Right.
- Michael: 00:55:34 I mean, it sounds to me, I don't want to put words into your mouth, God knows nobody that, but that there is a real need for a Women's Philanthropy program and a Jewish Women's Foundation program as well. I want to ask you a question related to that. Have you found that these women who were involved in Foundation activity who were never involved in anything else, have they come around to other maybe even in terms of their giving?

Susie: 00:56:01 Okay. Interesting. I have not seen a lot of spillover. I haven't seen the women that are involved ... I have seen women that are involved in Women's Philanthropy go over to the Foundation. I haven't really seen it the other way. That's okay, because there's a place for everybody. What's interesting is there are women that are in the Foundation that when they hear about this different ... they become involved and interested in helping the agencies or the organizations that they maybe wouldn't have known about if they weren't in the Foundation.

Michael: 00:56:40 You're making a great case and that's important.

Susie: 00:56:41 Right.

Michael: 00:56:41 What are the things that you're most passionate about related to Foundation activity, are there things that really have resonated with you particularly, Susie?

Susie: 00:56:56 I have to give kudos to our Foundation execs. I mean, I thought Helen Katz did a great job of weeding out projects like if we got 25, she'd find 18 good ones. I kind of think that we do a good job with picking the things that we're all passionate in. Okay. I have a little bit of a bent towards helping things that are in the orthodox community, but not all of them. Some of them I might feel really strongly about and I don't always know if the greater group feels the same way I do. You know, we had this one project where ... there's something called the Detroit Baby Drive where you can go there if you need car seats or high chairs or anything. They have a whole like kind of store room. One of the things that they wanted to do is they wanted to get car seats. The thing about car seats is they expire. You know, after six years, five years, that car seat is no good anymore. They wanted to make sure that they have up-to-the-minute car seats and they asked the Foundation for a grant, and it didn't go. The women just didn't see ... they didn't see that that was something that they ... I felt badly about it because I knew that it was something that they definitely could use the money for. Conversely, when I talked to them about giving money to the Archives, I was so happy that they could see that that was important. You just never know how it's going to go.

Michael: 00:58:55 You feel there's a democratic process people would get their voices heard?

Susie: 00:58:58 Yes, I do.

Michael: 00:58:59 It doesn't mean that they're always going to be listened to, but [crosstalk 00:59:02] their voices. [crosstalk 00:59:02]. Because that's an important thing.

Susie: 00:59:06 Yes. I absolutely do. I agree.

Michael: 00:59:07 What will be your message to our young women in this community about participation in community life and, in particular, Women's Philanthropy and or the Jewish Women's Foundation.

Susie: 00:59:22 I really have to say that besides my family and my husband and my friends, but my friends and my communal work definitely overlap. I just think that it's a great way to feel good and have a good time doing it.

Michael: 00:59:45 Be better. Anything else you wanted to say before we ...

Susie: 00:59:48 I don't know. Did we cover all these topics?

Michael: 00:59:50 We covered them and not exactly in this order, but we covered them.

Susie: 00:59:52 No. It's okay. Is there anything else we need?

Michael: 00:59:56 I think we did pretty good.

Susie: 00:59:57 Okay. I really have enjoyed talking with you. I have to say, I love the Detroit community. It's been my home for close to 50 years. I kind of always thought I was going to get back to Chicago, but I wouldn't trade my life in Detroit for anything.

Michael: 01:00:17 I was going to ask, I don't remember, but it's at the end. How did you get to Detroit?

Susie: 01:00:23 I met Norm.

Michael: 01:00:25 Norm is originally from?

Susie: 01:00:26 No, Norm is not from Detroit.

Michael: 01:00:28 He's from up?

Susie: 01:00:29 Yeah. He was born in Midland, he lived in Marquette, but he went to University of Michigan and he came to the Detroit area. When I met him and we got engaged, I guess there was never any doubt that we were going to be in Detroit. It's been a wonderful place to raise a family and it's a wonderful community on so many levels. I would encourage women to definitely get involved. If it's not Federation, find something that speaks to you, because the communal work and working in the community really is such an important part of me and I just believe in it so strongly.

Michael: 01:01:18 Great. Thank you, Susie.

Susie: 01:01:20 Okay. Thank you, Michael.