

1 ORAL HISTORY OF: Manny Charach
2 INTERVIEWED BY: Sharon Alterman
3 DATE OF INTERVIEW: Wednesday, October 2, 2013
4 LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Home of Manny and Natalie Charach
5 SUBJECT MATTER: Jewish Community Leadership Oral
6 History Project
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8 SHARON ALTERMAN: Today is October 2nd. I'm sitting
9 in the lovely home of Manny and Natalie Charach, continuing
10 our interview with Manny that we started last month. And Mr.
11 Panasonic, you told us a lot about your life, your early life
12 and how you got to the position that you did so that you were
13 able to be one of our foremost philanthropists. But we really
14 stopped talking about your business life about the time that
15 you became involved with Panasonic. So tell us more, because
16 there's a whole period of 30 years that we didn't cover.

17 MANNY CHARACH: Well, I'll try to be short and
18 sweet, if I may. Panasonic was a new company. It had just
19 come to the United States. The competition in those days was
20 very strong, because if you recall, RCA, General Electric, big
21 name companies, even Philco. The Ford Company at one time
22 bought out the Philco Company, which many people didn't
23 realize, because it was an ongoing business. Television and
24 radio were brand new. And in the beginning it all started
25 with transistor radios. Before transistor radios, they were

1 all large boom boxes with tubes. Now you had a little radio
2 that sounded even ten times better.

3 Well, we had at that time a large chain here in
4 Detroit, founded in Detroit, called the S.S. Kresge Company.
5 They were a 5 and 10 cent organization, and their offices were
6 down on Second Avenue, just across the street from the Masonic
7 Temple.

8 One day I got a sample from Japan of a new radio.
9 It was a very unique looking radio. It wasn't in the shape of
10 a radio per se, but it was in the shape of a console with so
11 forth. And it was a little AM radio, if you understand AM/FM.
12 And it would retail for \$14.95. I thought, gee, this is cute.
13 So I made an appointment with a buyer who I had never met
14 before, who had been with Kresge and was about to retire; he
15 was already in his mid-sixties. I went there to meet the man
16 on my first interview. I walked in, I put that little
17 Panasonic radio on his desk, and his secretary said, Oh,
18 that's beautiful. Just like that. He picked it up. He said,
19 You like it? She said, Oh, that's going to be a good item.
20 But what I didn't realize, Kresge didn't sell radios in those
21 days. They had nothing but the 5 and 10 cent stuff.

22 So his concern was, what are we going to do with
23 just one radio? And I said, Well, why don't you take it and
24 try it and see what happens? So for 900 stores I think he
25 bought three gross, which would be like 500 radios. So it

1 didn't go to all 900 stores. We took the order graciously and
2 we shipped the merchandise, and within a month after they got
3 the radios they were sold out. So now he called me and he
4 said, We need more radios.

5 Well, that was the beginning of my doing business
6 with the S.S. Kresge Company. In two years, three years
7 perhaps, I have to think of the dates, the S.S. Kresge decided
8 to make their stores Kmart, and that's where the Kmart came
9 from, Kresge. The first store was opened up in Garden City on
10 Ford Road. I was there at the opening. You know what the
11 Kmart store is. We called them on those days big boxes.

12 When I retired, which is 20 years ago this year, in
13 July, they had 2000 stores. Can you imagine? You don't have
14 to be the greatest sales person in the world, but if you are
15 selling them, and you get an order, you're certainly going to
16 get at least 2000 of whatever it is you sell.

17 Well, that propelled my going into the manufacturers
18 agents business. And then in no time I got a reputation for
19 being a salesman who could sell almost anything to the Kmart
20 Company. I'm laughing because it's true. So when they wanted
21 to get into some new event or new product that at least
22 blended with electronics, because that was the buyers I worked
23 with, they'd call me, and I would go to Hong Kong or to Japan,
24 and we would look out and search items for them. Eventually,
25 besides people saying, There goes Mr. Panasonic, There goes

1 Mr. Kmart, because of the entrance I had.

2 Now, the truth of the matter is, it was a good
3 thing, but you still had a couple other hundred people that
4 had to be sold, and as they grew, I had to grow with them. So
5 I had to hire more sales people. And then we had to have our
6 own building. And we built a building on Ten Mile Road. And
7 then we had to have women in the building. Before you know
8 it, I had something I had never planned on. I had figured,
9 well, I'm a shlepper, I'm going to go out and I'm going to
10 take a few orders, and I'm going to go home at night and sleep
11 well. It did develop, and it developed until finally I
12 retired, as I say, 20 years ago.

13 We walked out of the building and donated it to the
14 Jewish National Fund, which by the way, if you go by there, I
15 saw some people last week who visited us from Los Angeles,
16 it's now a synagogue.

17 But these things happened, and one thing led to
18 another and another and another. Eventually before you know
19 it, almost everything if you walked into a Kmart store, in
20 their electronics department, was something that they bought
21 from Manny Charach Associates. So I do say I owe them a vote
22 of thanks.

23 But then you know what happened. Because in truth,
24 and I don't mean to talk business, but in truth at that point
25 Kmart was the largest company in the United States. Walmart,

1 which is now the largest, was only half the volume, because
2 when we're talking billions and billions of dollars, I recall
3 that the year I left, Kmart's business was like \$48 billion
4 and Walmart's business was 22. Today I can't even tell you
5 what Walmart is.

6 But where's Hudson's? Or Sanders?

7 SHARON: There are cycles.

8 MANNY: I tried to find a Sanders store for a visit.
9 What was, was. There's no question about it. But that was
10 the history of my doing business.

11 When I retired, I only retired because Kmart was now
12 in its down scope, and I said, There's no sense in having this
13 organization, this office, these people. I might just as well
14 take whatever I have and do other things with it. That was in
15 1983. And prior to that we could see the end was coming.
16 Sooner or later. Nothing lasts forever, as you may imagine.

17 So we decided because of our desire to be
18 charitable, we went on our first trip to Israel, I think I
19 told you in 1965, with the Pioneer Women. While we were in
20 Israel, and we were really being hosted by the Pioneer Woman,
21 Natalie made it her business. We had to go to the main
22 offices of the JNF because she wanted to give them a check.
23 And that was the beginning of it.

24 Then we came back, and our accountant said, What are
25 you doing? She said, Well, we'd like to be a little bit more

1 charitable now that we're doing well. So he said, Well, the
2 best thing I would suggest is that you set up a foundation, a
3 family foundation. So after a little thought and a little
4 discussion with he and our attorney, we came up with the Manat
5 [Manny and Natalie Charach] Foundation, and in the last 20
6 years that's all we have done. The fact that we go to work
7 every day is not because I'm still a peddler, but we are
8 working on various charities for the giving purpose. I'm sure
9 you know people at Federation who will tell you we have a few
10 things right now that are in the fire.

11 As I said last time we talked, honestly, you come in
12 here with nothing, and you see what's going on. How can you
13 take it with you? So what is philanthropy? What is
14 philanthropy when you ask me? It's giving of your time or
15 giving of your money. If you don't do that, why are you here?
16 Serious.

17 **SHARON:** Well, you're a remarkable couple in all
18 that you've done through the years, that you've done together.
19 And from what you're telling me, it sounds like you've done
20 this pretty much on your own.

21 **MANNY:** We have done all of it on our own. We have
22 had no one who has told us where to go, who to see, what to
23 do. Everything is strictly based on our own feeling.

24 Now, let's talk about philanthropy, because we're
25 discussing philanthropy per se. At one time we gave to

1 charities. Here a check, there a check, whatever it was.
2 Nothing like some of these people who sell their businesses
3 for hundreds of millions of dollars, which thank God we
4 didn't. But the point is, we've kind of drawn it in now.

5 I mean we were poor, I mean very poor. We had two
6 children. We really were out of money entirely, just prior to
7 my going into my own business. We had to give Natalie's
8 engagement ring to the Hebrew Free Loan, and they loaned us
9 \$500. Well, \$500 was like \$10,000 today. We've reciprocated.
10 We've reciprocated because we see how many people in this city
11 do need it. I mean you talk about JVS, JFS, they have vans
12 that take people to doctors, to shop. We've provided, I
13 forget how many vans we've bought for JVS. I don't go around
14 with a banner saying we gave that to JVS. If they want to put
15 your name on it, so good. Maybe all it can possibly do is say
16 to someone, Oh, maybe I ought to do the same thing.

17 That's what you're looking for. You want people to
18 understand. You cannot take it with you. I've tried.

19 **SHARON:** It doesn't work.

20 **MANNY:** It doesn't work. Which is why in my next
21 life I'm coming back as a poodle in a Jewish family. That's
22 another old joke. But we had one for 20 years, and believe
23 me, she lived quite well.

24 The Manat Foundation in its own sense of doing
25 things has done rather well, and we are now making plans,

1 because as we get older, we know darn well we're getting
2 closer to that particular time where we become our own
3 poodles. So what are you going to do? Are you going to put
4 it in a box and take it with you? No. No. That's for sure.
5 I don't mean to be philosophical, but let's be pragmatic.
6 Most people haven't reached that point yet.

7 SHARON: So tell me about your experience with
8 Hebrew Free Loan. Was that the first recognized --

9 MANNY: No, that wasn't the first. When we were in
10 ^{ISRAEL} Ergel that first year, we were told about the fact that the
11 Mogen David Adom was in the process of building a new blood
12 center in Ramat Gan. There was a gentleman by the name of
13 Handelman who came from this area, who was then the big force
14 behind getting it done. We were with Mr. and Mrs. ^{MAMES} Manes at
15 that time, and we said, well, we'd like to be part of that.
16 So they did have a wing which we had bought in our name, and
17 that was the beginning of it.

18 And then from that point on, Janice passed away in
19 1989, and it was rather a shock to everybody. She was young.
20 I contacted the people at ^{JARC} JRT and I said, We'd like to do
21 something in Janice's name. So we bought a home for ^{JARC} ~~JRT~~,
22 where it's still operating, in her name. No sooner that that
23 happened, and we said, Well, one for our daughter, why not one
24 for our son? So then we had two homes. It wasn't that
25 difficult.

1 And then of course Kadima came knocking at the door,
2 and I said, If you could do it for ^{JARC}~~JRT~~, what about us? So we
3 bought two Kadima homes. And it just -- people hear about
4 you, and that doesn't mean that everybody that comes to you is
5 going to be received in the best way, but we felt now we're
6 trying to bring it all into a local situation, because there
7 are like 20,000 elderly Jewish people in the city right now,
8 if the numbers are right, who are living below the poverty
9 level. Why should that be? There's no reason for it.

10 Our Federation has done a fantastic job. Believe
11 me, I know it. But you still have to help Federation. Last
12 experience. The last thing we have been involved in was this
13 year when we did the village at Tamarack. I think that's
14 wonderful. When they see those children, and then you find
15 out that most of them are there as a result of Federation
16 backing them. You say, Well, why not help more children do
17 that? It isn't going to break anybody, at least anybody that
18 has the funds and ability to do it.

19 Boy, I'm starting to sound like a Rockefeller. I'm
20 getting off the track. But the truth is, that's our feeling.
21 And I'm honest about it. They say truth is better than
22 fiction. There you are. What we do we do, and we're quite
23 pleased to do it.

24 **SHARON:** But back to Hebrew Free Loan. What was your
25 experience with them as a recipient?

1 **MANNY:** My experience? Okay. We borrowed \$500. To
2 tell the truth we repaid the \$500. And when we started up
3 with the Manat Foundation, which was many years later, we put
4 them on our list. I have a list of people that we give to,
5 and I would say proportionately most of them are Jewish.

6 I mention my friend Mr. McInerney, I give to his
7 church every so often, which is a reciprocal type of thing.
8 But let's be honest. We would send him \$1,000 one year, and
9 then every year, once they got on the list, they were there
10 forever.

11 About six months ago Natalie got a book. Hebrew
12 Free Loan puts out a book. They've never bothered us, they
13 never said we want more. She looks and she says, Oh, you're
14 listed here as a donor under the Manat Foundation. And I
15 think at that point they had \$18,000. So says to her, what
16 does that have to do with 18,000; let's make it 25,000. So
17 she called the young lady at Hebrew Free Loan and she said, If
18 we give another \$7,000, we'd like to be in this category. So
19 now we're in the 25. Who knows, we might be in the \$50,000
20 category. As long as we live and as long as we have the
21 income to do it.

22 But the Manat Foundation right now is our only
23 source of income. Oh, yes, we're on Social Security by the
24 way, but we're not living in a 40,000 square foot home with a
25 12 car garage. We live humbly. We do as we wish, and thank

1 God we're able to do so. But it's a machia ^{STH} to write a check.

2 SHARON: You get great pleasure seeing your good
3 works.

4 MANNY: Yes. But Hebrew Free Loan has never
5 bothered us, they've never said how about more? They've been
6 very nice, very gentle.

7 The same with hospice. Look at hospice here. You
8 know, hospice here, we didn't have a Jewish hospice, and when
9 Rabbi Friedman came to us many, many years ago, they were
10 building one on Middlebelt Road. That was the Detroit or the
11 Michigan Hospice. We bought a room. ~~Unfortunately~~ that
12 ~~pavered ??~~. Now we do that with hospice.

13 Federation of course is still a recipient of a good
14 amount of our income because of the fact that we have an
15 endowment which runs the gallery because the gallery is a non-
16 profit gallery. And by the way, we've had our biggest show
17 just this year. We had the biggest show we ever had and
18 probably the nicest show of all. So it took 23 years to get
19 to this point. But we're thrilled, we're thrilled.

20 SHARON: You and Natalie have a very special
21 interest in the gallery.

22 MANNY: We do.

23 SHARON: And your involvement is something I think
24 has motivated them to continue.

25 MANNY: Well, we have to, because you see, people

1 are people, and when you work in an organization like any of
2 the Federation organizations, because of what it is, a non-
3 profit organization within itself. Who do you have for the
4 most part? You have part-time people. So we have noticed in
5 23 years there's a big turnover of people. So you have a
6 person who comes into the gallery and does a job and does a
7 good job, and six months later they're gone. Why? Because
8 economically they have to help themselves. So if we don't
9 take more interest in it, who's going to do it? Thank God
10 we're there.

11 And I keep thinking, as long as we're here, we want
12 it to be successful. And as it grows, it is getting
13 successful. I'll give you a good example as a matter of fact.
14 Just about a month ago there was an affair at the Berman --
15 I'm going to name names -- at the theater, at the JCC, and
16 they had a gentleman by the name of Charles Straud. He's the
17 man who did the play Annie and a few other things. It was a
18 very unique thing because they invited 110 of these sponsors
19 for their program there. We sat on a stage. Were you there?

20 **SHARON:** No, but I have seen it.

21 **MANNY:** Okay. And it was just amazing. Well, then
22 Mark ^{it} Wood got up and said when the show is over, we've kept
23 the gallery open. We'd like people to come and see the
24 gallery. Amazing. Natalie and I walked in just to be like
25 more or less of a host, and in a matter of ten minutes three

1 of our paintings hanging on the wall were sold. Our director
2 wasn't there because we don't want her to be working late at
3 night. So we went in just to say, Hello, how are you. And we
4 knew most of the folks there. Three of those paintings.
5 We've had our best turnout and our best showing because we
6 were there. And that's why I'm saying, you have to have a
7 hands-on situation.

8 I can't say I can go to Federation and say I want to
9 run your Federation. I can't run JARC. I can't run the Huron
10 Valley Hospital where we have our cancer center. But we do
11 try to work with these people to make sure that everything is
12 going well. And the complements, that's enough. ^{How} Hevid is all
13 I want. Just tell me that you went to the hospital, that you
14 were treated well, bang, bang, bang. Same thing with the
15 other things we do.

16 SHARON: So it's very personal. You develop
17 relationships with people.

18 MANNY: We try, yes.

19 SHARON: In a unique kind of way. A lot times
20 people give money and don't ^{CONNECT}

21 MANNY: I always said anybody can write a check.

22 SHARON: Right.

23 MANNY: I mean if you write a check and think that
24 you've saved the world, that's impossible. You have to be
25 active to the best of your ability. You can't tell them how

1 to do, what to do. If you've given it, good. It's done. But
2 at least try to help them. Our theory is this: If we can
3 talk it up and get other people interested, isn't that great?
4 We went to dinner with some people the other night. We went
5 to their Franklin^{Hills} Country Club. I talked about Tamarack. And
6 the gentleman who invited us, if he can be a member of
7 Franklin, I think he can afford to do something for Tamarack.
8 I think he's mildly interested because I spoke to somebody at
9 Federation today, and he said, I'm going to give that person a
10 call and see if something can develop.

11 Why not? What does it cost?

12 SHARON: So tell me more about the Tamarack
13 experience this summer.

14 MANNY: The Tamarack experience, outstanding.
15 Outstanding. I can tell you in all sincerity, we had the
16 ribbon cutting of the village on the 30th of June, which as it
17 was was the day of our daughter's birthday. So that in
18 itself, we still feel very sadly about that. But as we walked
19 from the main gate where we had parked our car up to where the
20 CHARACH
Charad Village was, we could see a whole bunch of youngsters
21 all wearing t-shirts with the name of the village on it. They
22 were singing. I don't even know what the song was, but it was
23 a very bright song. We stood there and listened. And then of
24 course there was a little talk from Lee Trepik, and he's
25 great. And then of course the ribbon cutting.

1 So after we cut the ribbon, wonderful. And I said
2 to these youngsters, When you go home at the end of the
3 camping, please tell your parents you saw a grown man cry. I
4 had tears in my eyes. It's so wonderful. It really is. And
5 as I say, I'm just happy to be able to do something like that.
6 So is Natalie. And we've already made arrangements that now
7 they're on our list also. What we've done is done. It's paid
8 for. Thank God.

9 The point is this. We've said we want to send ten
10 children every year to camp, as long as we can afford to do
11 it. What's it going to do? Is it going to cost me money?
12 No. I'm still going to live here, I'm still going to drive a
13 nice car. That's the story.

14 **SHARON:** And you really know the fact that there's a
15 great need here, and so you're focusing upon those kinds of
16 needs. And we do have a long list here of all the things you
17 have done. The dining hall for the Ethiopian immigrants.

18 **MANNY:** There again, that was part of the Na'amat,
19 which was once Pioneer Women. Again, we had gotten a call
20 from a woman in New York. Harriet Green as I recall was her
21 name. She's now retired. She said, We have these immigrants
22 from Ethiopia and we're teaching them farming. And she was
23 really very good. And she said, It's amazing how fast they
24 are learning how to speak Hebrew. So Natalie decided to go to
25 Israel. It was time to make another trip.

1 We went there and they took us to Ianat. They were
2 all out there on a farm and a school and living in the housing
3 there. They did a great job in Israel. You've got to give
4 them a lot of credit. So they took us to the dining hall.
5 Oh, my gosh, they had 500 youngsters there and they had
6 nowhere to sit, nowhere to eat. So again, we walked over and
7 said, Why? Well, we don't have the money. You should see the
8 dining hall they have today. It's the most beautiful dining
9 hall. And when they opened it, we were there again for a
10 Friday night dinner. They sang. It was just magnificent. If
11 somebody would only see how these Ethiopians have come in and
12 worked with them.

13 And the same thing with the IDF. The IDF built the
14 building there in Ashkelon. It's called the Michigan
15 Building.

16 **SHARON:** That's ^{like} like for the weekend rest?

17 **MANNY:** Yes, it's like a rest where they take them
18 off the duty for Friday, Saturday and Sunday. They come, and
19 you walk in, and in one room you have a group of young women
20 soldiers. And it's amazing. IF you walk in the room, they
21 stack their rifles. Well, having been in the service, I know
22 about stacked rifles. And then you go across the hall and
23 there's a room where the men are. But it's so nice to see
24 these because you give them three days of rest and recreation.

25 And that's another thing. Again, I don't think

1 anybody really realizes that we do have a Michigan Building
2 for the IDF Ashkelon.

3 **SHARON:** Our Michigan organization is very strong,
4 isn't it?

5 **MANNY:** They are now, yes, because you've got a
6 number of Israelis that have taken a hold. God bless Alan
7 Kaufman, ?? ^{HANNAH LISS} Melissan ?? These are good smart business people,
8 and they're running it now like it should be run. When we
9 were there, we were actually on the national board for the
10 idea, and we've gone over a number of times. Again, they
11 invite you, but we tell them, We'll come, but we'll pay our
12 own way, which we have done.

13 I'm happy to say we've seen some very interesting
14 things because the average tourist doesn't get to see this.
15 When I say Natalie and I have sat in city of Gaza on our last
16 trip, having lunch with Palestinian officers, take my word for
17 it, I'm telling you the truth.

18 **SHARON:** Oh, tell us more about that.

19 **MANNY:** Well, that hasn't happened since. At one
20 time they had a group of Jewish people who they moved out of
21 Gaza. That happened about six months later. But the idea, we
22 had a number of colonels and generals that escorted us, with
23 armed guards of course, but they had a working agreement with
24 the Palestinian military at that time, and they were getting
25 along because back then -- I think that was let's say ten

1 years ago -- they were trying to work out some amicable peace,
2 which never came to be. But it was just the most interesting
3 thing to see.

4 People we met, they didn't show any antagonism. Of
5 course they were military people, but we had a beautiful
6 afternoon with them. I could say it was something that I
7 don't think too many people have ever had the opportunity.

8 Then, from bringing that in, now I'm starting to
9 boast. I was on a tank in World War II. The gentleman who
10 used to run the IDF out of New York was also in the tank
11 division that took the Golan Heights. So they made a special
12 thing for Natalie and I to go up to the Golan Heights, where
13 they're doing some maneuvers and so forth. And you sat up
14 there in a tent, lined up with generals with large telescopes,
15 and they're looking down there.

16 Why did he bring us there? Because in Israel
17 they've developed a tank. It's a 12-man tank. In World War
18 II we were lucky to squeeze five people into a tank. The tank
19 is called the Merkava. It's the most fantastic tank in the
20 world. I'm going to tell you as an old tanker, it's the most
21 fantastic tank in the world.

22 Sitting next to the general, and he's looking
23 through the telescope, and he says, Look, Manny, over there.
24 I look over there and you can see a tank coming across. Look
25 over there. It's an old tank. They're going to use that as a

1 target. He spoke into the microphone to the tank that was
2 coming, in Hebrew naturally, and the next thing, look, pow,
3 over here they didn't even see the tank. It just disappeared.
4 They are fantastic, they really are.

5 And you have to be honored. We're honored to have
6 these things. And why not? Why not give to Israel?

7 **SHARON:** It's really enriched your life, hasn't it?

8 **MANNY:** Yes.

9 **SHARON:** And I know how involved you are with Mogen
10 David Adom.

11 **MANNY:** Mogen David, I will tell you -- and Natalie
12 is going to kick me right in the pants -- our 36th ambulance
13 was here in Detroit a week ago Sunday. Our 37th is now being
14 built. I said when we get to 36, we're going to stop. That's
15 double ?? And on the unit it said double ??. Why? Why
16 should I stop?

17 More and more people are injured in automobile
18 accidents over there than are injured in bombings. If you've
19 been to Israel, you understand what I'm saying.

20 **SHARON:** Yes.

21 **MANNY:** So you have to continue that. And the
22 mobile intensive care unit, is a hospital right there. They
23 can put them in the ambulance on their way to a hospital, but
24 they can do everything that the hospital does. I think that's
25 magnificent. You don't have that in the United States. I

1 don't know that anyone has it like that.

2 SHARON: We can learn a lot from the Israelis.

3 MANNY: And now they're building a new blood center
4 just outside of ^{RAMAT GAN} ~~Armatkahn~~ because they've outgrown their blood
5 center. The blood center ships blood all over the world.
6 When we were there the last time, they were showing us blood
7 going to Oslo, Norway, blood going to South Africa. They ship
8 because they have the greatest facility for taking the blood
9 and whatever they do to it. Any type you want, they have it.
10 There's always the Type O. But it's just fantastic. And now
11 they're building a big building.

12 We're proud of these things.

13 SHARON: The technology in Israel is so fantastic.

14 MANNY: Oh, my God, when you look at the list of the
15 things that they have done. Your cell phone, your video,
16 everything has been done by people in Israel. Invest in
17 Israel.

18 SHARON: And talking about investing in Israel, you
19 invested in the JNF forest; right?

20 MANNY: Well, yeah, we did that. I can't recall the
21 years, but we've had some experiences with JNF. We went twice
22 because my father passed away first, my mother passed away,
23 then Natalie's mother passed away. We bought forests. But
24 the forest was over there.

25 SHARON: So it didn't sit well?

1 **MANNY:** No, it didn't sit well. But we still give
2 to them.

3 Mogen David Adam, let's say you're fortunate enough
4 to buy an ambulance. You see it, you know what it is. Here
5 in this area we have the Michigan chapter. Whatever we got
6 was close to a million dollars a year in donations. When Mrs.
7 Memes was alive, our expenses were \$5,000 a year.

8 **SHARON:** She was the administrator?

9 **MANNY:** She was the administrator. She was a
10 volunteer. People couldn't believe it because we'd announce
11 at our annual dinners. How could you do that? That wasn't
12 true with the JNF. Never was. In fact that's why they closed
13 their offices here. I gave them the office building. They
14 had to close it up. They got some very bad publicity. I'm
15 not here to knock them by the way, but off the record. It was
16 not what it was supposed to be.

17 **SHARON:** And you talked about all your interests in
18 local philanthropy in the helping professions, and I see that
19 you were involved with the Charach Cancer Center.

20 **MANNY:** Yes. That's at the Huron Valley. I'm happy
21 to say we now have a new president, and God bless him, he's
22 from Israel.

23 **SHARON:** Oh.

24 **MANNY:** Yes. And he's going to work very closely
25 with trying to take some of the things that were originally --

1 maybe I shouldn't say this. Sinai Hospital has a lot of
2 things that were donated by Jewish people. Sinai Hospital,
3 which is the Grace Hospital over there in ^{Huron Valley} ~~??ville~~ Doesn't
4 have too many people going in there. So what good is it? You
5 walk in and you see a plaque on the wall. It says given by
6 Mr. and Mrs. Goldberg. Bring those plaques and put them here
7 where you have more of a Jewish association. He's talked
8 about that. I thought that was very nice of him, because
9 whether it happens or not, don't forget, DMC is still DMC.
10 But it's a very fine hospital, I will tell you that. And we
11 work with them.

12 Next Friday will be our twelfth Just for You Day.
13 When we opened up the cancer center, and Natalie and I would
14 go there to see what the treatments were and all that -- thank
15 God we didn't have to have any -- Natalie said, A lot of women
16 with cancer are being treated there. What do we do for them
17 besides giving them treatments and so on? Well, we had
18 nothing going. So Natalie decided we were going to have a day
19 for women who have cancer. It doesn't necessarily have to be
20 people who go to the Huron Valley. So we started up and we
21 built the thing up. It's every year on the first Friday in
22 October, which is this Friday. Natalie is the hostess. We
23 fund that as a side to what we have done for the hospital per
24 se. It's a full day of treating them well.

25 We have five doctors that come in who talk to every

1 patient from the podium about various ways to make themselves
2 a little bit better. We have pampering tables where we
3 actually pamper them. We give them breakfast, we give them
4 lunch, and this year we even put the valet. It's at Edgewater
5 Country Club out here in Commerce. They're so happy we do it.

6 SHARON: What a wonderful thing.

7 MANNY: When you see these women when they leave,
8 and they have a little bag of goodies and they've been
9 pampered all day, don't you think that makes you feel better?

10 SHARON: Absolutely. That's such a wonderful
11 program. Did she initiate it?

12 MANNY: Yes, she initiated it.

13 SHARON: And you also have the pediatric endowment
14 at Children's Hospital.

15 MANNY: Well, there's another story. Our son Jeff
16 was born in 1952. He was a preemie. He had swallowed mucus
17 when he was removed, and he almost didn't make it. He turned
18 green in a hurry. They put him into an Isolette. Well, thank
19 God, he was in the hospital for three weeks after he was born,
20 and we brought him home. Now he has other problems.

21 But the point was, we thought, well, if an Isolette
22 could save our son, it's going to save other people. So I
23 think over the period of years we've donated four Isolettes,
24 and then we set up a pediatric endowment, which is an year
25 running thing again. Even though DMC, which owns Children's

1 Hospital, was just recently and is now a for-profit, they were
2 smart enough to set up a separate endowment program. So thank
3 God we can continue to do that.

4 SHARON: And in conjunction with the hospital of
5 course they have the Ronald McDonald Home.

6 MANNY: Next door.

7 SHARON: Yes.

8 MANNY: And that's another thing. One day we were
9 at the Children's Hospital, and we saw the Ronald McDonald
10 home. And I didn't even know what Ronald McDonald Home was.
11 We walked in, we introduced ourselves, we'd like to see it.
12 And he told us what they do for the parents who come when
13 their children are at Children's. We got to talking, and I
14 think at that point we had the man at the foundation. And
15 Natalie said, We have a foundation that helps the children at
16 Children's Hospital. What can we do for you? They suggested
17 that we name Room Number One. If you go to the Ronald
18 McDonald House, Room Number One is donated by us.

19 And again, they can call you ever year and say, We
20 have to do this, the furniture. Why not? So you do it.

21 The point is that you must feel that you've
22 accomplished something. You're helping people. I wish all my
23 friends could do that.

24 SHARON: And on a daily basis all the people who are
25 able to go forth with your vans from the Jewish Family

1 Services.

2 **MANNY:** Yes. You've seen them. Speaking of which,
3 we've also given -- speaking of Jewish Family Services, we
4 have a Torah that we gave years ago to the Fleischman Home.
5 We have another one that we gave to the synagogue out in
6 California when my parents were out there. I get a call. We
7 need a new Torah. Okay, you've got a new Torah. I've never
8 seen it. I know it's there because my parents were there
9 until they passed way.

10 Why not, you know? What do you lose by doing this?

11 **SHARON:** Well, your brand of philanthropy is really
12 remarkable because you are so involved in everything that you
13 do. And you're really a treasure in our community.

14 **MANNY:** Sharon, I'm 88 years old. If I weren't
15 doing this, God knows, I have friends who are younger that I
16 feel bad for because they're not doing anything but sitting at
17 home with a clicker in their hand. We have met people who are
18 volunteers at the hospital, who are in their 70s, some are in
19 their 80s, but they volunteer. If you volunteer one day a
20 week, two days a week, don't you think that's a quivot? I
21 mean don't you really feel that you've helped somebody? All
22 of them are caring.

23 I know people that have just retired, and they say,
24 what am I going to do with myself? And either Natalie or I
25 will say, Why don't you volunteer at a hospital? It doesn't

1 have to be at the one we have. Beaumont, Ford, they all have
2 volunteers. I don't think I'd like to do that. Come on.

3 SHARON: Just something productive.

4 MANNY: Well, you know, they're going to be buried
5 long before they reach 80 if they don't get up and do
6 something about it. So it's not the money. Understand, it's
7 not the money. And I'm not trying to be some TV announcer,
8 but I'm giving it to you straight from my heart. Honestly.

9 SHARON: And you've also met so many interesting
10 people along the way. You were telling me off camera about
11 your relationship with Hoot McInerney.

12 MANNY: Hoot McInerney, God bless him, I say he's my
13 idol and he says I'm his idol. All right. We both started
14 out at the same time. We did, we really did. I didn't know
15 him, he didn't know me. He ^{had} taken over the Chrysler dealership
16 that used to be on Seven Mile Road. It was called the Leo
17 Adler dealership. I walked in one day. I had a car I had
18 just bought from Leo Adler. But being a peddler -- and I
19 always say peddler, believe me -- I used to put 50,000 miles
20 on a car, and I had to have a new car. Otherwise I couldn't
21 go out and try to earn a living.

22 I walked in and he came over. I was walking through
23 the new car lot, because all the cars in those days used to be
24 on the lot on Seven Mile. So he came out and I knew in five
25 minutes he was an Irish salesman. My name is Hoot McInerney

1 and he went on and on. He said, I just took this place over.
2 I had to borrow \$5,000 from my brother-in-law. I said, I've
3 been in business a couple years now. I had to borrow \$5,000
4 from my brother-in-law.

5 Our careers went parallel, as I swear. They have
6 gone parallel. We have been the best of friends ever since.
7 And God bless him, I say there is a man who has a heart as big
8 of the city of Detroit. I mean this sincerely. So to me he's
9 my idol. And he tells me I'm his idol. So thank God we're
10 both thinking the same way, if you understand what I'm saying.
11 And of course not being Jewish, he gives to his Catholic
12 church, and he's a devout Catholic.

13 **SHARON:** You were also telling me about the
14 relationships you built with the families in Japan, which is
15 unique.

16 **MANNY:** Well, you see the bag over there. Next week
17 Natalie is going to go to Japan for ten days, without me
18 unfortunately because of my health. She will take two of her
19 young nieces to be her guests. We have been invited, as I
20 have said to you, because they have an annual affair every
21 year in October to honor somebody who has been important to
22 the growth and success of Panasonic. All these years it has
23 been somebody in the Japanese organization, who is Japanese.
24 This year they decided to call us to come to be honored.
25 Unfortunately, as I said, I can't go, but she's going to go.

1 And they're going to give her the treat of her life.

2 I have seen the itinerary -- it's changed three
3 times already. I got the third itinerary change today. It's
4 just magnificent how highly they respect us and our
5 relationship. I haven't been with Panasonic since 1989.
6 That's a long time. But our relationships are still there.

7 Natalie has a very fine way of making very good,
8 good friends. I guess I go along with her. She's a
9 forerunner.

10 SHARON: Manny, I think we're coming to the end of
11 the interview. Is there anything that we missed?

12 MANNY: You can ask any question you'd like, my
13 dear. I'll answer anything you want to know.

14 SHARON: On our last tape I asked you about your
15 philosophy of life, and I think you've told us about that and
16 your message to young people.

17 MANNY: Well, I'm going to repeat that. I have to
18 repeat it because we have nieces and we have nephews. I would
19 say for the most part they all have their heads on straight
20 and they're all working at what they want to be. I'm proud.
21 One of them now is up at the Yiddish Book Center in
22 Massachusetts. He's a graduate of U of M. He wants to be a
23 professor in Hebrew. I think that's wonderful. Economically
24 we know he's not going to be wealthy, but if that's what he
25 wants, let him be that way.

1 The rest of them are all involved with education.
2 There's nothing wrong with that. You don't have to be money
3 hungry. You don't have to go out and say I want to be a
4 billionaire or a millionaire. Make sure your family is taken
5 care of and make sure you live a nice decent life and last
6 long. I think that's important.

7 But you see too many children today that don't have
8 desire. I'm not pointing at anybody's children, but I can see
9 it. I don't understand, when I drive by West Bloomfield High
10 School, and I see all these Lexuses sitting on the parking
11 lot, my father never owned a car. Why? Because we had to do
12 it. They don't have to do it.

13 Who's to blame? I don't know. Do you blame the
14 parent? I say it has to start someplace. I do remember, I
15 said to you, my father, a barber, a humble barber, shave and a
16 haircut, two bits. If he had three cents in his pocket when
17 he came home at night, it went into the blue box.

18 Natalie's mother was a widow for so many years. She
19 left a little slip of paper. Five dollars for this charity,
20 five dollars for that. She didn't have it.

21 But I mean where do you learn? You have to learn
22 from the parents. And if the parent doesn't want to give it
23 to you, I don't know how it's going to catch on. Now that's
24 my philosophy.

25 **SHARON:** And that's the legacy that your family left

1 you.

2 **MANNY:** You have to. Maybe we were lucky to have
3 been born back in the 1920s because we've seen the Depression.

4 The other day I got a phone call, a relative of
5 mine. Manny, I know you do this, you do that, because I do
6 investments, naturally. Otherwise we wouldn't have the Manat
7 Foundation. What do you think about what's going to happen to
8 the government when the government closes? As I sit here with
9 my right hand up, I said, It's not going to happen. Well, I
10 was a liar. I didn't know, and it did happen. But it doesn't
11 bother me. Why worry about it? If it happens, we'll live
12 through it. We've lived through so many of these things. It
13 isn't like born yesterday. Why should you have any other
14 philosophy?

15 And I'll end it with a smile. All right?

16 **SHARON:** Thank you, Manny.