

1 **ORAL HISTORY OF:** Marvin Goldman
2 **INTERVIEWED BY:** Stanley Meretsky
3 **DATE OF INTERVIEW:** Sunday, December 12, 2003
4 **LOCATION OF INTERVIEW:** Jewish Federation
5 **SUBJECT MATTER:** Jewish life, family history

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7 **MR. MERETSKY:** Good morning. This is Stan Meretsky,
8 and I'm conducting an oral history interview with Marvin
9 Goldman and today is December 12, 2003. The interview is
10 taking place in the offices of the Jewish Federation of
11 Detroit over on Telegraph Road.

12 To get started I'd like to just do a little bit of
13 background talk with Marvin. He was born in 1920, correct?

14 **MR. GOLDMAN:** That's right.

15 **MR. MERETSKY:** May 11, 1920.

16 **MR. GOLDMAN:** That's true.

17 **MR. MERETSKY:** And you were born where?

18 **MR. GOLDMAN:** In Detroit.

19 **MR. MERETSKY:** Why don't you tell me a little bit
20 about your folks. What they did, where you lived as a child.
21 Let's just talk a little bit about your childhood.

22 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Well, as far as I remember, I was born
23 at that date and we lived on West Grand Boulevard. One of
24 those upstairs flats where they had the up and down houses.

25 My father was also born in Detroit, as well as my

1 mother was born in this country in Utica, New York. My father
2 was in the scrap iron business. At that time he had a brother
3 and brother-in-law in with him. Then we moved various places.

4 I ended up I think on Boston Boulevard so I went to
5 the group of schools, Durfee, Central, that group, which at
6 that time was primarily Jewish.

7 **MR. MERETSKY:** My alma mater. I went to Durfee and
8 Central also.

9 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Well, then you know the history of
10 that area. Linwood. It was a Jewish neighborhood. No
11 thoughts of terrorism in those days. It was a very nice
12 growing-up experience.

13 After attending the University of Pennsylvania where
14 I graduated with a business degree, I went home and went to
15 work with my dad. We had a little scrap yard on West
16 Jefferson, about one acre. At that time my dad was all alone.
17 His partners had gone elsewhere. One in the machinery
18 business. Another brother had passed away. So I went to work
19 with him when I was about 20 to 21 years old, after graduating
20 from Penn.

21 When the war broke out in 1941, I guess it was, I
22 enlisted in a midshipman course in the Navy and I went to
23 midshipman school. At that time it was in Chicago at
24 Northwestern University. It was a six-week course. After six
25 weeks if you passed the course, you became an ensign in the

1 United States Naval Reserve. About the fourth week I
2 developed cerebral meningitis. I really didn't even know that
3 I had anything like that. I just had a bad headache. When I
4 went into the infirmary, they diagnosed it as that. So they
5 sent me home on inactive leave. I was home for about six
6 months, still in the Naval Reserve.

7 Then I got orders to resume my midshipman work, but
8 this time I went to Notre Dame. I don't think there's many
9 Jewish boys at Notre Dame, but at that time there were. But
10 anyway, I was in the midshipman school there and graduated. I
11 was assigned to the small boat operations. Those are the
12 small landing craft that hit the beach in the invasions.

13 From there they sent me to Little Creek, Virginia,
14 where I went through that training as an ensign at that time.
15 And then was sent to the European theater, where I was a boat
16 officer. Those days, the boat officers led the different
17 waves into the boats. I was on a big transport ship, the AK
18 98, the U.S.S. Roulette. We made two invasions. Sicily and
19 Solerno. Then the ship went back to New York for repairs.

20 Trying to remember now. You know, you're taking me
21 back a long way.

22 The ship then went to Pearl Harbor and from then on
23 we operated against Japan. I was in four more invasions. I
24 think Solerno. Lingayen Gulf. The last one was Iwo Jima.
25 After Iwo Jima I was sent home on leave and missed the last

1 invasion. I think that was Okinawa.

2 Then I was discharged I think in 1945. Went back to
3 work with my dad on West Jefferson. My brother, who had been
4 in the army, was subsequently released. We began our scrap
5 iron business. We enlarged it considerably. Finally moved
6 from the one-acre site to an 18-acre site on a street called
7 John Kronk, which is near Wyoming and Michigan, if you know
8 that area. And there I stayed and worked for years. We
9 became a very, I'm glad to say, successful scrap operation and
10 probably the largest in the Michigan area. I stayed there
11 until we sold the business when I was about 67, 68 years old.
12 That's my business history.

13 So since then, not wanting to stay home, my brother
14 and I opened a little office and I do charitable work and take
15 care of investments, and pass the time in my old age.

16 **MR. MERETSKY:** Let's go back a little bit and talk
17 about when you were growing up as a kid and you were going to
18 elementary school. You had one brother?

19 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Yeah. One brother and one sister.

20 **MR. MERETSKY:** And you lived over in the Boston/
21 Linwood area which is a great area and you went to Roosevelt
22 Elementary School, also?

23 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Which was the elementary school there?

24 **MR. MERETSKY:** Over there by Durfee and Central is
25 Roosevelt.

1 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Yeah. I went there.

2 **MR. MERETSKY:** Were your folks active in the Jewish
3 community?

4 **MR. GOLDMAN:** My folks weren't too active. They
5 were active to the extent that my uncle was Sidney Allen, who
6 was at that time the Max Fisher of Detroit. And of course my
7 dad, being the brother-in-law, whenever he was asked for
8 something, he was always there. But as far as I remember, he
9 wasn't too active in community work.

10 **MR. MERETSKY:** And your mother?

11 **MR. GOLDMAN:** My mother was more or less a housewife
12 in those days. We had a lovely relationship. I remember in
13 those days we were friendly with Hank Greenberg, who was a
14 very good friend of both of my uncles. Every Friday night,
15 Hank Greenberg would come over for dinner for our regular
16 Friday night dinners with the whole family. My mother, my
17 father, her two brothers, Sidney and Harold Allen, my
18 grandmother, who eventually lived with us for a few years
19 before her demise. And Hank used to be there all the time.

20 I remember at the University of Pennsylvania. When
21 they came in those days, Philadelphia had an American League
22 team and Hank Greenberg came and called me at the fraternity
23 house. Got me two box seats right by where the players kneel
24 down.

25 **MR. MERETSKY:** That's great. Do you have any of his

1 autographed baseballs?

2 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Oh, yes, I had all that stuff.

3 **MR. MERETSKY:** Very interesting. Did you go to a
4 lot of Tigers games then when you were a kid?

5 **MR. GOLDMAN:** When I was young I did. We always had
6 seats at football and baseball games. But we gave them up. I
7 haven't been to a ball game since they won the World Series.
8 How many years ago was that? I remember the seventh game and
9 that's it. Maybe if they start running again I'll go again.

10 **MR. MERETSKY:** I'm with you on that one.

11 Did you belong to a synagogue back in those years?

12 **MR. GOLDMAN:** I was bar mitzvah'd at Shaarey Zedek
13 where my grandfather was a member. My parents were members of
14 Temple Beth El forever. Of course, I grew up at Temple Beth
15 El, except in those days, Temple Beth El didn't have bar
16 mitzvahs. So my grandfather arranged to have it at Shaarey
17 Zedek.

18 **MR. MERETSKY:** And you became very active at Temple
19 Beth El.

20 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Yeah, I became active. The reason I
21 became active -- I never was too active to the extent I wasn't
22 in any brotherhood or executive committee or on the board, but
23 I had been active at that time with the Federation, and I was
24 pretty active in fund-raising. That was really my job. Fund-
25 raising and collecting money from people who were way behind.

1 Well, anyway, I guess the story of that got to
2 Temple Beth El, because one night I get a call: Marvin, how
3 would you like to be President of Temple Beth El. I didn't
4 understand why they would want me, but I went down there.
5 Irving Katz was the director. At that time Irving Katz really
6 ran the temple. They really wanted me, I guess, because I had
7 experience in fund-raising. They had a mortgage which was
8 down to about \$2 million. \$2 million in those days was a lot
9 more money than it goes today.

10 **MR. MERETSKY:** When were you president?

11 **MR. GOLDMAN:** I don't know. You'll have to look it
12 up. I can't remember today, to tell you the -- I was
13 president for two years. Anyway, I immediately took over the
14 mortgage burning operation. I mean, they didn't hire me for
15 my good looks. I know that. And they didn't hire me for my
16 experience at temple. Although, you know, I always went on
17 Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur and whenever there was a Yortzeit
18 that I went to. But I wasn't active.

19 So I led that mortgage burning ceremony and it was
20 -- we paid off the \$2 million, and I had joyful and fun times
21 doing it. I really used my experience that I had at the
22 Federation to solicit money for this mortgage.

23 **MR. MERETSKY:** You and David Mondry were --

24 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Yeah. David Mondry was really my best
25 friend. It only happened -- in those days there was a

1 committee. The committee would sit around and they would pass
2 out names. You take this name, you take this name and maybe
3 10, 15 people are there and they would call people. Well,
4 that's where I met Dave Mondry. And one way or another we
5 became friendly.

6 The way it evolved, I would say Dave became my best
7 friend. I mean, I really loved that man, and Dave was not
8 easy to get along with. If Dave liked you, Dave would do
9 anything for you. If Dave didn't like you, you could forget
10 it. I mean, he pulled no punches. If Dave, when he wanted
11 the Ethiopian Jews -- remember that time -- there would be a
12 meeting. If he called a meeting, people came. And if he
13 asked for money, he got money. Because Dave would always do
14 it himself, and that's where I really learned a lot from him
15 and being with him.

16 In fact, we were co-chairmen of the campaign. You
17 probably know what year it was. I don't even remember.
18 Anyway, when we were co-chairmen, in those days we raised \$17
19 million. Today when you're talking about \$35 million, it
20 doesn't seem like much. But at that time it was a great
21 campaign and a fun campaign.

22 **MR. MERETSKY:** 1981 or so?

23 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Oh, I don't know. Whatever it is.
24 You know, when you're 84 years old like I am, I don't remember
25 like I used to.

1 Well, anyway, that was my experience with Dave. And
2 it grew from there and we worked together on a lot of things.
3 We worked together, he and I, and I forget the name of the
4 other fella. We really were the first ones that helped start
5 the Holocaust Memorial Center. We raised the money. And it
6 was Dave and myself, and I forget his name.

7 **MR. MERETSKY:** From the meat packing business?

8 **MR. GOLDMAN:** That's it.

9 **MR. MERETSKY:** Dorfman?

10 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Dorfman. And that was the beginning
11 of that Holocaust Memorial Center.

12 **MR. MERETSKY:** What do you think today of the new
13 Holocaust Center on Orchard Lake?

14 **MR. GOLDMAN:** I don't like its location. I think it
15 should have been on some place with more room, not on a busy
16 street. Of course, there are different opinions on that.
17 I've read articles where people think it's great. As austere
18 and cold looking as it is, that's really what it was meant to
19 be. But I think for the money that they spent and the expanse
20 of that place, it could have been located in a different spot.
21 But apparently it seems to be successful.

22 **MR. MERETSKY:** Well, it hasn't opened quite yet.

23 **MR. GOLDMAN:** No, no. But from their meeting they
24 had the other night, I think they had the biggest attendance
25 they ever had. I don't know where they got their money.

1 There hasn't seemed to have been any big push for money for
2 that. But you know, some of these survivors are very wealthy
3 people in Detroit here. And for some of these guys that are
4 worth millions of dollars, and that Holocaust thing is their
5 whole life, that's all they think of, that's all they dream
6 of, and to give big money, I can see where he probably got it.

7 **MR. MERETSKY:** I noticed there was a lot of
8 controversy about this new building.

9 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Yeah. Federation wasn't happy when he
10 moved out, but he's a tough guy, this Rosensweig. I mean,
11 there's no question about it, he is dedicated. You can say
12 what you want about him and sometimes he can get on your
13 nerves because I worked with him for a long time, but I will
14 say that is his life's dedication and he is sincere in what
15 he's doing. And this is what he wanted and by god, he got it.

16 **MR. MERETSKY:** You and maybe David Mondry also had
17 some complaints about the way Federation operated or did some
18 things. What were some of your feelings on that?

19 **MR. GOLDMAN:** You know, I don't remember having any
20 -- I was always in the fund-raising part of it. And then I
21 became the cash collection chairman. Of course, I didn't make
22 too many friends. I'd go into a party and everybody walked to
23 the other side of the room. But we did pretty well and I had
24 good committees. Everybody worked well. Then they gave me
25 that job at Franklin Hills Country Club, to get some of those

1 people that weren't giving pledges or weren't giving to
2 charity, to go after them. And I did that for a few years.

3 **MR. MERETSKY:** You must carry the title of bill
4 collector in this city?

5 **MR. GOLDMAN:** That's about it.

6 **MR. MERETSKY:** It's a interesting role to play,
7 though.

8 You were also involved with the Jewish Home for the
9 Aged, Sinai Hospital.

10 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Yeah. I was on the board of Sinai
11 Hospital for quite a few years. The home for the aged, I was
12 on that board. I think at one time I was vice-president. And
13 I was there when they built the Fleishman Center. I was there
14 for quite a while.

15 **MR. MERETSKY:** Was your wife active in a lot of
16 these charities?

17 **MR. GOLDMAN:** No, no. Nola was always there behind
18 me and with me, but she sort of stayed in the background.

19 **MR. MERETSKY:** And your children.

20 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Well, I have three sons. One of
21 them's a psychiatrist. He lives in Sarasota. The other one's
22 a urologist and he lives in Sacramento. There have nothing to
23 do with Detroit. And my third boy is Robert, who was with me
24 in business. When we sold the business, and he went into the
25 real estate business, which he's doing in Detroit here.

1 **MR. MERETSKY:** Did you get them active in the Jewish
2 community also?

3 **MR. GOLDMAN:** The one in Sacramento is quite active.
4 It's funny with him. He has a group of four or five friends,
5 doctors, all married gentile girls. And each one converted
6 and each one is more religious and they're conservative. Each
7 one is more religious than I would say 90 percent of the
8 Jewish women today. They help each other at all the
9 festivals. They're together cooking and baking. All belong
10 to conservative synagogues and my daughter-in-law is active in
11 the Federation there.

12 **MR. MERETSKY:** Interesting. You've been so heavily
13 involved with this community all your life. It's really a
14 marvelous --

15 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Well, lately the last few years I'm
16 primarily in or working at Temple Beth El. Like all
17 congregations and churches today, they're always in the red,
18 so I'm in various fund-raising activities there. I led the
19 auction one year. We raised a lot of money. I've chaired
20 parties for outgoing rabbis. For Tickton we had a birthday
21 party. He was the music director for years there. Had a
22 great party.

23 I've had interesting experiences, too. I'll never
24 forget once when we were paying off the mortgage. You know,
25 we -- like they do in this building and other building and the

1 Community Center, they sell the rooms or they sell the dining
2 area and that sort. So we sold a lot of things at Temple.

3 But I remember once I was raising money to burn the
4 ~~morgue~~^{MORTGAGE}. I had a meeting Ed Levy. He was active in the slag
5 business. Levy. So I had a meeting with Ed Levy. And I
6 said, Ed, you know, this has always been what you -- this road
7 building. And his wife had just passed away. I says, why
8 don't we name this whole road from Fourteen Mile Road all the
9 way around the temple to the Ed Levy Drive. Because, you
10 know, you put in driveways -- so he thought about it. He
11 says, well, we'll call it -- and he named it after his wife.
12 That sign is up there today.

13 **MR. MERETSKY:** Pauline Levy.

14 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Yeah. And I think he gave us \$75,000
15 for that, just for naming it. In a way it was good for the
16 Temple, but it was fun, I enjoyed doing it.

17 **MR. MERETSKY:** Well, you must have because a few
18 years ago back in 2000, they gave you a Federation lifetime
19 achievement award.

20 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Yeah. But I had plenty of help all
21 this time. I'm not inferring any way that it was all me. But
22 I had the right people working with me. I remember one year
23 our group got an award or distinction or a letter from the
24 national federation, that we had collected more money from
25 people that owed money than any of the other federations. It

1 wasn't me so much. I always had help. I never had anybody
2 refuse to help.

3 **MR. MERETSKY:** Who were some of the people who
4 helped you?

5 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Well, there was Mondry, there was --
6 oh, you know, it's hard to go back. Larry Jackier always
7 helped. All the Federation presidents always helped. I had
8 various committees. It's hard to remember the names. But I
9 always had plenty of help.

10 **MR. MERETSKY:** As Penny Blumenstein mentioned in her
11 speech, first of all she said, no one raises money better than
12 Marvin Goldman. Chairman of the Federation successful 1981
13 campaign, David Mondry.

14 **MR. GOLDMAN:** There you go. What was it?

15 **MR. MERETSKY:** 1981.

16 **MR. GOLDMAN:** God, time goes.

17 **MR. MERETSKY:** 1985 was the cash collection. In
18 that speech she says, that year he was credited with leading
19 the finest peacetime cash program in any American Jewish
20 community.

21 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Oh, that's what I was referring to.

22 **MR. MERETSKY:** What got you first involved with the
23 Jewish Community? You were always there --

24 **MR. GOLDMAN:** I don't know. I used to go to
25 meetings. These Wednesday morning meetings where we used to

1 sit around the table. In those days they weren't bashful
2 about collecting money. I mean they would have meetings for
3 various things. Like for example, Ethiopian Jews. And they'd
4 have it and maybe 50, 75, 100 people would come and they'd
5 call names. They don't do that any more. Anyway, your name
6 was called, the guy before you would give 20,000, 50,000,
7 100,000. You know, we had some big time guys there. It was
8 very difficult to not do something.

9 **MR. MERETSKY:** Detroit has always risen to the
10 occasion.

11 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Yeah, they have. It seems like they
12 always have. I think when I first got started was after the
13 war. During one of the Israeli wars. They would have
14 meetings and raise money for that.

15 **MR. MERETSKY:** Like back in '48 --

16 **MR. GOLDMAN:** I remember Sam Frankel when I was just
17 a kid and I'd given a little talk or something. He says,
18 well, you are one of the younger group now that's going to
19 have to start taking over. And one way or the other, you
20 know, listening to some of these old timers who really knew
21 what they were doing, I learned enough that if you would give
22 something, you know, you didn't have to be a tremendous giver,
23 but at least before you ask anybody for money you have to do
24 something yourself. That was always my philosophy.

25 **MR. MERETSKY:** Well, who would you say were some of

1 your mentors when you were getting started? You mentioned Sam
2 Frankel. Who were some of the other people, like the older
3 generation, your father's generation, who mentored you and got
4 you going on this?

5 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Well, my Uncle Sidney Allen --

6 **MR. MERETSKY:** The jeweler?

7 **MR. GOLDMAN:** No, no. He was in Allen Industries.
8 He was a real example of what it was to take care of
9 everybody. Even my grandfather. The Allen family on my
10 mother's side was always a caring, giving family. I mean,
11 during the Depression my grandfather used to have apartments.
12 Those days they heated them with coal. Truck would back up to
13 the apartment, open the chute, and the coal would go down.
14 I'm talking about the poor houses. Then they shoveled it in.
15 When they couldn't pay their rent, he used to send me just to
16 make sure they had coal. I grew up with sort of a background
17 and I guess it kicked off on me.

18 **MR. MERETSKY:** Certainly seems to. Very much so.

19 What would you say was your greatest
20 accomplishments, whether it's the Jewish community or whether
21 it's in business or whatever, what do you consider your
22 greatest accomplishments?

23 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Well, to be honest with you, I don't
24 think that I, myself, did anything. I think the best thing I
25 had going for me, I had the right people with me. I never had

1 trouble getting the right people that felt like I did and
2 didn't take the job to help if it was collecting money or
3 whatever in that field. They had a feeling for it. Because
4 if you have that, nobody can do any cash collection or fund-
5 raising by themselves. I found that it's always better to get
6 people -- I don't like to say -- well, I will say it, more or
7 less influential people, who knew people who could call
8 someone and say, listen you son of a gun, I need so much money
9 for this thing and I know you've given to this, but I expect
10 this much from you. And they could get it. And they could
11 insult someone and call them and the guy could laugh it off.
12 So if you had the right group, you could get the big money. I
13 found that was the way to do it.

14 **MR. MERETSKY:** I find that so interesting.

15 Just kind of a different side here, what might you
16 have ever changed in your life to make things different?
17 Something you did that you rather wish you had done something
18 else? Anything you would like to have changed as you gone
19 along?

20 **MR. GOLDMAN:** I don't know. That's hard to say.
21 You know, when you reach 84 years old, you're more or less
22 content with the way things are. The only excitement I have
23 these days is when from about October of one year to November
24 of the following yea, my brother and I don't talk. He is a
25 staunch Democrat, I am a staunch Republican. I really can't

1 keep up with him because he reads the New York Times from top
2 to bottom. And whenever I have something to say, he has the
3 answer. And we end up -- we decided this year we are not
4 going to talk to each other about politics at all.

5 **MR. MERETSKY:** Is your brother active in the
6 community also?

7 **MR. GOLDMAN:** He's always there, let me put that.
8 He was very active at his temple. Sherwin Wine's temple.
9 Very, very active, money-wise and program-wise. His daughter,
10 Carol, is active in a lot of things, primarily both of them in
11 the Orchards. That's the big thing for both of them.

12 **MR. MERETSKY:** So your whole family really has been
13 deeply involved with the community.

14 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Yes, I'd say so. Maybe on different
15 levels. He's got his and I've got mine.

16 **MR. MERETSKY:** What advice would you like to pass on
17 to your grandchildren, your great grandchildren and their
18 grandchildren? If you could along the way offer advice --

19 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Oh, I want to interrupt you. Now it
20 comes to me. You asked me about someone who was someone I
21 looked up to. That was Leonard Simons. Leonard Simons used
22 to say he was the King Schnoor of the community and that I was
23 his protege, he used to say. In fact, he had an endowment
24 that he was in charge of at Temple Beth El, and in his will I
25 had to be one of the directors of it. So I'm one of the

1 trustees of that trust. In fact at Temple Beth El we -- of
2 which I chaired -- was an honor for him. Must have had 600,
3 700 people come. I talked about him and he talked. It was a
4 very nice evening.

5 **MR. MERETSKY:** Leonard was a mentor to me also when
6 I was president of the Jewish Historical Society. And I know
7 exactly what you're talking about. He was just one of the
8 most fabulous people.

9 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Unbelievable. Now there was a guy,
10 you talk about the type people you have. If Leonard called
11 someone for money, even if they were strapped, whatever it
12 was, they could not turn Leonard down. And I had hoped in my
13 day to be something like him. Of course, I never remotely
14 approached anything like Leonard. But he was phenomenal. And
15 if you ask for one person to emulate, that's the man.

16 **MR. MERETSKY:** I agree with you so much because of
17 my experiences with him in the Jewish Historical Society. And
18 you know, we named an award in his honor that we give each
19 year. The archives here are the Leonard Simons and this oral
20 history project is an outgrowth of those archives that are
21 named after him. So there are a lot of people who agree with
22 you and whose arms have been twisted by him.

23 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Yeah. And it didn't take too much
24 twisting if it were Leonard.

25 **MR. MERETSKY:** Your advice to your grandchildren,

1 great grandchildren. This video will be around for a long
2 time and your generations from now will be able to look at it
3 and say, there was one of the leaders of our family. What
4 advice would you like to give to those future generations of
5 yours?

6 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Well, the only thing I would tell them
7 is take time to be active. And if there's some way you can
8 help, it's in your ability to help, you should take the time
9 to do it.

10 My feeling is, again goes back to congregations,
11 that unless we can get this youth interested in temples and
12 synagogues, we're going to be in a lot of trouble. I believe
13 in assimilation. I don't think that's hurting, I think it's
14 helping. Because when a Jewish man marries a gentile woman,
15 even if all the children aren't raised, some of them, half of
16 them, maybe more, will be raised Jewish. Don't give that up.
17 We always had that trouble at the temple. We had a rabbi that
18 wouldn't believe in mixed marriages. He was a great rabbi,
19 but we had to get rid of him.

20 **MR. MERETSKY:** Who was that?

21 **MR. GOLDMAN:** That was -- it was quite a few years
22 ago. But since then -- oh, in talking to Leonard Simons, when
23 Richard Hertz was rabbi, he didn't believe in bar mitzvahs.
24 And Leonard Simons went to him and said, look, you're either
25 going to change and do bar and bat mitzvahs or we're going to

1 get another rabbi. Now, that was Leonard Simon. So Richard
2 Hertz changed his mind and he became one of our leading
3 rabbis.

4 The rabbi I'm talking about was Rabbi Polish. Rabbi
5 Polish would not do mixed marriages. I had several meetings
6 with him because I liked him. I still like him. And I told
7 him that he has to change his mind. He thought about it and
8 thought about it, and would not do it. Now, I can't argue
9 with a man that has those deep convictions. If that's how he
10 feels, that's how he feels. But it was no good for Temple.
11 We were losing too many members. So we had to terminate him.
12 We hated to do it, but we had to do it. And then of course
13 from then on, the rabbis do mixed marriages. So I believe in
14 that.

15 And to get back to my kids, you know, my kids aren't
16 kids anymore. My oldest son is 56 years old. My youngest is
17 52, 53. They're their own men now. I can give them thoughts
18 and they can try to follow what I do and have done, but
19 they're on their own.

20 **MR. MERETSKY:** What about your grandchildren --

21 **MR. GOLDMAN:** My son in California has two
22 daughters, and their mother, as I told you, was always active.
23 Those kids are somewhat active. Although they're going to
24 school, they're going to college now.

25 Howard, my son in Florida, he has three boys.

1 They're all in college. There isn't much they do there except
2 study and play around plenty. But when they get out, you
3 know, what they do, I won't be around for too many years. But
4 I'm hoping from what I have done -- when they come to Detroit
5 I take them to the temple, I show them around the different
6 things. There's so much you can do. You can do more for your
7 own children, but for your grandchildren, especially today
8 when they live out of town, they're on their own.

9 **MR. MERETSKY:** I'd like to go back a little bit to
10 when you were in high school. Now, you lived in the Boston/
11 Linwood area and you went to Central, which was a great
12 school. Who were some of your friends then? Were you
13 involved with the Jewish Community in doing things then?

14 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Well, you know, I'm 15, 16 years old.
15 There isn't much that you do with the Jewish Community at that
16 age, except go to services with your folks.

17 **MR. MERETSKY:** Who were some of your friends then?

18 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Oh, there was Mort Harris, Mort
19 Liebermann. You know, a lot of them have passed away. We had
20 quite a group. A lot of them have moved out of town. The
21 Coppels, Kaufmans. I had a lot of friends. They're gone. A
22 lot of them have passed away, most of them. Others have moved
23 away. But today I still see Mort Harris who has been very
24 successful. I think he's a partner of Bill Berman's in a lot
25 of deals. Mort was never too Jewish-minded. He was Jewish,

1 but he wasn't. But I think Bill Berman has pulled him into a
2 lot of things. I see Mort quite often.

3 **MR. MERETSKY:** Tell us a little bit about your
4 business history, being in the scrap metal business. It's
5 kind of a Jewish industry in some ways, or it used to be,
6 anyway.

7 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Well, it was, but it isn't like people
8 have the perception you go out with little trucks and you pick
9 up junk. Ours was 99 percent industrial scrap. In other
10 words, we would put containers in plants like Chrysler or Ford
11 or independent companies, and as they made their product, the
12 offal like stamping out of steel sheets, they'd throw the
13 offal into boxes, and then they would have trucks that would
14 come and drop an empty box and pick up a loaded box. When I
15 say a box, it's like you see these garbage collection boxes
16 set around behind different stores and so forth. Then they
17 take it to our place.

18 And our business was a big business. You would have
19 bailers, cost in those days a million dollars. You would have
20 automobile shredders. We had two of them. You'd throw a
21 whole car in and it would shred it into pieces. We employed
22 about 100 people. We had about 18 acres. It was a big, big
23 business and it was trying and it was aggravating. But we
24 lived through it.

25 And when the time came to sell and my father was

1 about 86 years old -- he was always there and he was always
2 the boss. In other words, he was and he wasn't. My brother
3 and I made all the decisions and did everything. But dad had
4 his own office, and if we did something, he'd come in and
5 raise hell because why wasn't he told about this. But at his
6 age, it was time -- a new piece of equipment came out, it was
7 a million dollar piece of equipment, 85, 86 years old, he'd
8 say, well, buy that. This thing is getting too old. This is
9 four years old. That's how he was.

10 He was active, played golf till he was 87 years old
11 then one day he had a stroke to his intestine and died about
12 three weeks later. But thank God he never had any mental
13 problems. He was active. He would play golf at Franklin
14 Hills Country Club. And he didn't just touch the ball. He
15 would take a full swing and knock that ball 180 yards and
16 walk.

17 **MR. MERETSKY:** Are you a golfer also?

18 **MR. GOLDMAN:** I played golf for quite a while and
19 then four years ago I bought a boat. So I'm more interested
20 in that. I gave up the golf, primarily because the four guys
21 I played with have passed on.

22 **MR. MERETSKY:** What kind of a boat did you get?

23 **MR. GOLDMAN:** I bought a Sea Ray boat. In fact,
24 I've had boats all my life, usually with partners, but this
25 time I bought my own. And I keep it at a place called

1 Michigan Harbor near Jefferson Beach Marina. I go out there
2 every weekend. That's my relaxation.

3 **MR. MERETSKY:** Very nice. Are you still involved
4 with any particular charities now besides Temple Beth El?

5 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Basically it's Temple. Oh, I keep a
6 book with A to Z, and like everybody else, I get 100 requests
7 for money. I'm talking about Blue Cross or a fun thing or if
8 it's the Veterans of Foreign Wars or if it's the Seeing Eye
9 Dogs, anyway, every day I get -- so I used to send them \$50,
10 \$100, \$200, and six weeks later I'd get another thing and I
11 wouldn't remember so I started a system where I put each name
12 down and I put the date that I give it. And I have a little
13 card printed -- maybe it isn't nice -- but after the second
14 request after I've given, I send -- if I get any more requests
15 this year you will be permanently removed from my charitable
16 giving. And it helps. The requests have dwindled a little
17 bit.

18 But you talk about charities. There's always 100
19 things that you're interested in giving. I'm very interested
20 in the Seeing Eye Dog Program that they have, mainly because I
21 have a Labrador, which I think is the greatest dog there ever
22 was. Ninety percent of the seeing eye dogs today are
23 Labradors. They even have one in Israel that I send money to.
24 A Seeing Eye Program. And there's two or three in this state,
25 and I think it's a great thing.

1 But you know, that's not big money, but it's just
2 you asked what I'm interested in. And everything else, every
3 charity they ask for, they're all important and they all need
4 money. So I do a little bit there. One way or the other I
5 fill up a book. But primarily today, I am working for Temple
6 Beth El.

7 I'm just starting a new program now that I think is
8 going to be very good, but I don't want to talk about it
9 because it isn't ready. But I've got an idea where we can
10 raise quite a bit of money without any cost. I've talked
11 about it with a few of the leaders and they're very strong
12 behind it and have verbally committed to it. So if that works
13 we're going to do very well.

14 Because a lot of these programs -- oh, you asked me
15 what I might have been aggravated about with the Federation.
16 I always thought they spent too much money for speakers. When
17 they spent 25,000 or 35,000 to give to Kissinger one day to
18 speak for 10 minutes, I thought that was outrageous. First of
19 all, Kissinger, in my opinion, should have come for nothing.
20 I don't say we don't pay his expenses but to pay that kind of
21 money to me was sickening. But, you know, they're smarter
22 heads than I am if they thought that was the drawing card and
23 that drew them a lot of money, they probably were right.
24 But that didn't make me like it.

25 **MR. MERETSKY:** It's going to be interesting

1 interviewing you a year from now seeing what this new idea at
2 Temple Beth El is. Put that on your tape.

3 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Yeah. We'll see how it works.

4 **MR. MERETSKY:** Any other comments that you would
5 like to make?

6 **MR. GOLDMAN:** No. I think you've exhausted
7 everything I have. You know, I don't remember quite
8 everything like I used to. That is about it. I know they
9 have great leadership here. They've always had. That I will
10 say, this Federation. From Jackier, David Page, all of them.

11 **MR. MERETSKY:** And I know you're still active with
12 the organization.

13 **MR. GOLDMAN:** No, not too much. I don't do too much
14 now here at all. In fact, I haven't even been in this
15 building for over a year. I used to come all the time and
16 work with Kelly when I was collecting money.

17 **MR. MERETSKY:** Any last comments that you would like
18 to make?

19 **MR. GOLDMAN:** No. I just hope I hang around long
20 enough to see this Israel thing worked out. That's a concern
21 of mine. I've probably been there seven or eight times.

22 **MR. MERETSKY:** Okay. You were talking about Israel.
23 You started to say that you've been there --

24 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Yes. I've been to Israel quite a few
25 times. I was in one of those big deals, what do you call them

1 when they have hundreds of people from Michigan --

2 **MR. MERETSKY:** The missions.

3 **MR. GOLDMAN:** The mission, yeah. I think it was the
4 first mission. I remember Hermelin bringing hundreds of
5 salamis and passing them out.

6 Oh, Dave and I used to go to one where we handled
7 the bus. Man, we would get everybody on that bus to give
8 money. That's what you did at some of those missions. You
9 know how you work that. We always did very well on those.

10 I remember the President's Mission or something. It
11 was pretty big givers in those days. I gave them pretty good
12 money. But anyway, Menachem Begin was still around. So I
13 went into -- maybe this shouldn't be on your tape. I went
14 into the men's room. I was standing in front of the urinal
15 and there was a little guy standing next to me. So when I'm
16 all through, I walk over and wash my hands and he's walking
17 his. And he says, I'm Menachem Begin; how do you do? The
18 little things you think about.

19 But we had great times in those missions and on
20 those buses. Those were the days. But I've been there
21 probably seven or eight times.

22 **MR. MERETSKY:** Have you been active in any of the
23 organizations over in Israel?

24 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Nothing special. I send money to
25 three or four of them, but nothing that I worked on.

1 **MR. MERETSKY:** Your focus has been right here in
2 Michigan --

3 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Yeah. And that really is about all I
4 can tell you, young fellow.

5 **MR. MERETSKY:** Okay.

6 **MR. GOLDMAN:** So it's been very nice and I
7 appreciate you asking me what you did and bringing me here.

8 **MR. MERETSKY:** Well, our pleasure. As I said, the
9 collective group in this community is so good and so strong,
10 and it's so important to hear the feelings and thoughts and
11 memories.

12 **MR. GOLDMAN:** But the only thing I would say, get
13 them when they're a little younger when they can remember
14 more.

15 **MR. MERETSKY:** That's part of the plan. We've got a
16 program over the course of the next many years we will do more
17 and more of these. With the new equipment and capabilities of
18 keeping the history of people, it will become a very important
19 part of our community.

20 **MR. GOLDMAN:** Okay. Thank you very much.

21 **MR. MERETSKY:** Thank you.