

Tribute to ISAIAH 'SHY' ZELDIN

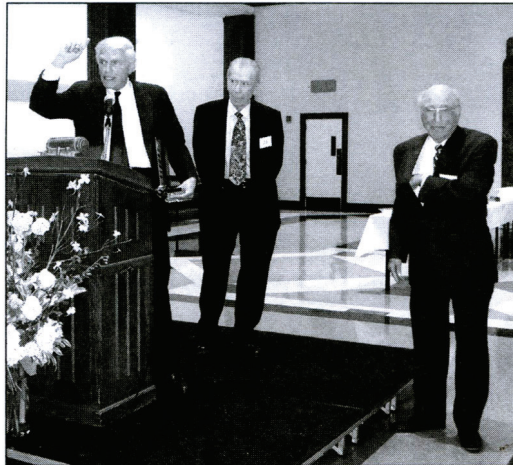
Under the sponsorship of the Association for Progressive Judaism a large and enthusiastic group of colleagues, former HUC classmates and family members assembled at Congregation Emanu-El in Manhattan on Sunday, May 18th in a well deserved tribute to the Honorary President of our Association, Shy Zeldin. For over 60 years Shy has been a creative leader and articulate spokesperson for our movement. During his long and illustrious career he has served as the Western



Shy Zeldin

Regional Director of the UAHC (now URJ) and the Founding Dean of the Los Angeles branch of the HUC. Some 45 years ago he founded the Stephen S. Wise Temple in Los Angeles which became under his leadership the largest Jewish congregation in the world and he continues to serve the synagogue to this day.

Among those honoring Shy at this elegant luncheon were the distinguished historian, Dr. Howard Sachar, who worked with Shy during his early years as HUC Dean and our colleague, Eli Herscher, who is the Senior Rabbi of the Stephen S. Wise Temple. Shy responded to the heartfelt encomiums with an inspiring message laced with



Ronnie Sobel, Louis Stein & Shy Zeldin

humor. The program concluded on a high note with a standing ovation and the presentation of a suitably inscribed plaque to the guest of honor by the President of our Association, Ronald Sobel, Senior Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Emanu-El. All those in attendance received copies of one of Shy's books, *What This Modern Jew Believes*, as a gift from our Association. □

In the words of Eli Herscher . . .

Shy—Rabbi Zeldin—invited me to join him and work at his side in 1975. Over the 33 years we have shared, I always found him to be forward-thinking and perennially optimistic. He always saw the Jewish future as positive, with no challenge that was insurmountable.

Shy's roots run deep in the subsoil of Jewish life. His father, a committed and devoted Zionist, would speak Hebrew at home and would also address groups, in Hebrew and Yiddish, in support of the State of Israel; and his great mentor, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, was an inspiration to him and a positive influence in support of Jewish causes everywhere. He first heard Stephen Wise, when he was thirteen years old in 1933, protest Hitler's rise to power.

Even when Shy was in high school, he lobbied for Hebrew to be taught, as he did at Brooklyn College.

In 1946 he was ordained rabbi at the Jewish Institute of Religion, became its Assistant Dean, supervised the School of Education and the School of Sacred Music. He was invited to take a post in California as the Founding Dean of the College of Jewish Studies, and then was instrumental in helping to create the rabbinical school that serves our movement in California.

After serving Temple Emanuel in Beverly Hills for five years, he left in 1964, and together with 35 families, he established a new congregation which he called Stephen S. Wise Temple. They set their limit at no more than 250 members. When I came in 1975, the 35 members had grown to 1,300 families, and it didn't stop there.

How did Shy do all of this? People find in him a deeply knowledgeable and innovative person whose warmth engages them and whose humor is infectious. He was born to lead the Jewish people with a vision and drive that have never been less than intensely passionate.

Shy's priorities have always been clear. Jewish education has always been at the center of his vision. Before building a sanctuary, Shy built classrooms. Parents with little ones sought him out. Shy never hesitated to meet their needs. First he built a Nursery School; then he built a parenting center; then he went on to build a day school, and at age 70, he accepted a mammoth challenge which I would say is the pinnacle of his achievement, and that was the creation of a high school that now educates over 800 students. Thirty-six tenth graders are

now in Israel for a semester of study, and in the coming year, that number will exceed 50.

This Temple's 30 acre compound was all part Shy's vision to create centers of learning, which would influence countless Jewish lives every day.

When Shy speaks, the sanctuary is packed, and he receives a standing ovation after his address on the Holy Days.

We are grateful for his ongoing passion and energy, and celebrate this day, here with colleagues and friends, his enormous achievements over the years. May his strength increase. □



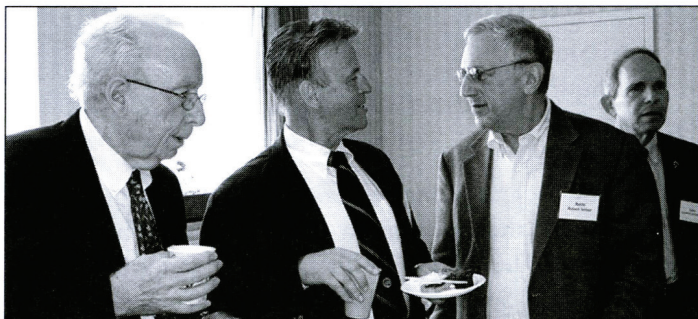
Eli Herscher



Stanley Dreyfus & Shy Zeldin



Bob Seltzer, Larry Schlesinger, Martin Cohen & Ronnie Sobel



Bob Raab, Steve Franklin, Bob Seltzer & Larry Schlesinger