

Milken High Is Dedicated by Founders

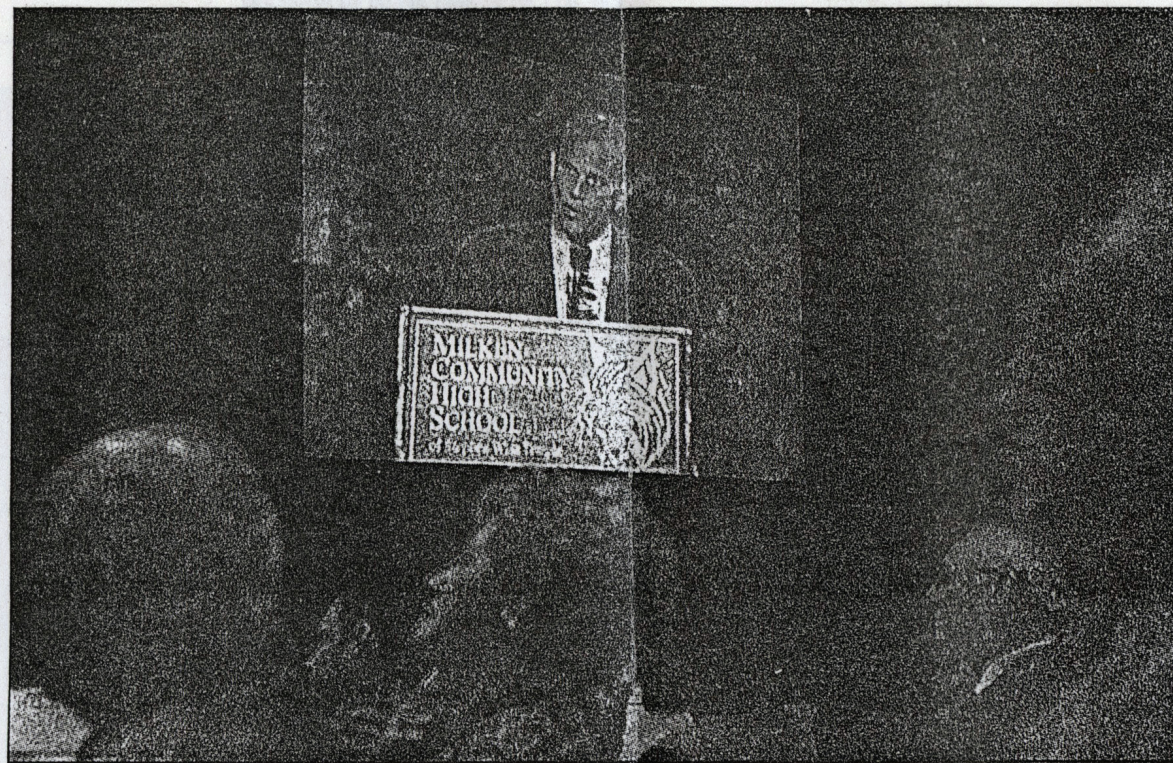
■ **Religion:** The \$30-million campus is largest non-Orthodox Jewish high school in U.S.

By DUKE HELFAND
TIMES STAFF WRITER

SEPULVEDA PASS—Saying they hope to produce students with strong minds and kind souls, founders of the Milken Community High School of Stephen Wise Temple dedicated their new campus Sunday in a celebration that honored Jewish history and religion.

Rabbis and financial backers officially opened the \$30-million campus, the nation's largest non-Orthodox Jewish high school, where ancient Jewish traditions share classrooms with modern disciplines like robotics and biotechnology.

A ceremony in the school's new gym attracted more than 700 students, their families and dignitaries, including Rep. Howard Berman (D-Mission Hills) and Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky.



RICARDO DeARATANHA / Los Angeles Times

Michael Milken, shown on the big screen, addresses crowd at school dedication ceremony Sunday.

The biggest ovation was reserved for Michael Milken, whose Milken Family Foundation paid a third of the school's cost.

"History is replete with stories of beautiful buildings being built, of civilizations being created that no longer have life," said Michael Milken, the former junk-bond king, whose brother Lowell also represented the foundation.

"No civilization exists without

people, without children, without educators," Milken said. "A building can give you inspiration but . . . it is children that bring us life."

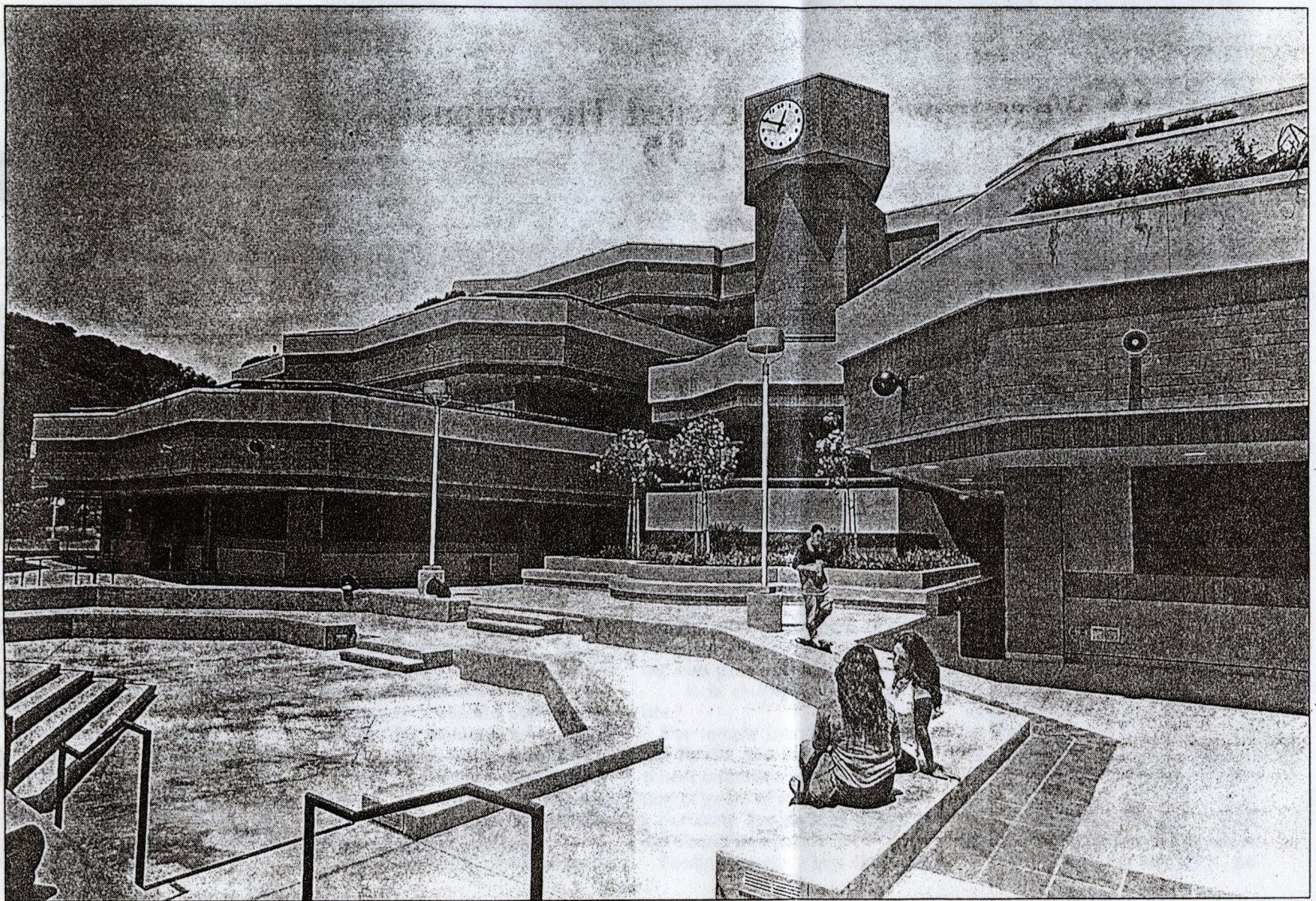
For temple founder Rabbi Isaiah Zeldin, the dedication of the school represented the culmination of years of effort to establish a first-rate Jewish high school in the liberal tradition.

Zeldin quoted a tale from the

Talmud—the ancient collection of Jewish laws and commentaries—about an elderly man who plants a tree knowing its fruit will ripen long after he is gone. Zeldin said he was blessed to see the fruits of his own endeavors blossoming.

"I am even more privileged than Moses," Zeldin said during the two-hour ceremony. "And Moses, you know, is the greatest

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Photos by BORIS YARO / Los Angeles Times

Students visit outside at Milken Community High School of Stephen Wise Temple. The school has grown from 160 students to more than 640.

MILKEN: High School Is Dedicated

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of Jewish characters. He wasn't allowed to enter the promised land. He had to see it from afar. And I'm able to see it with my own eyes."

Milken high school actually opened eight years ago in a handful of dorm rooms on the campus of the nearby University of Judaism. The school moved to temporary

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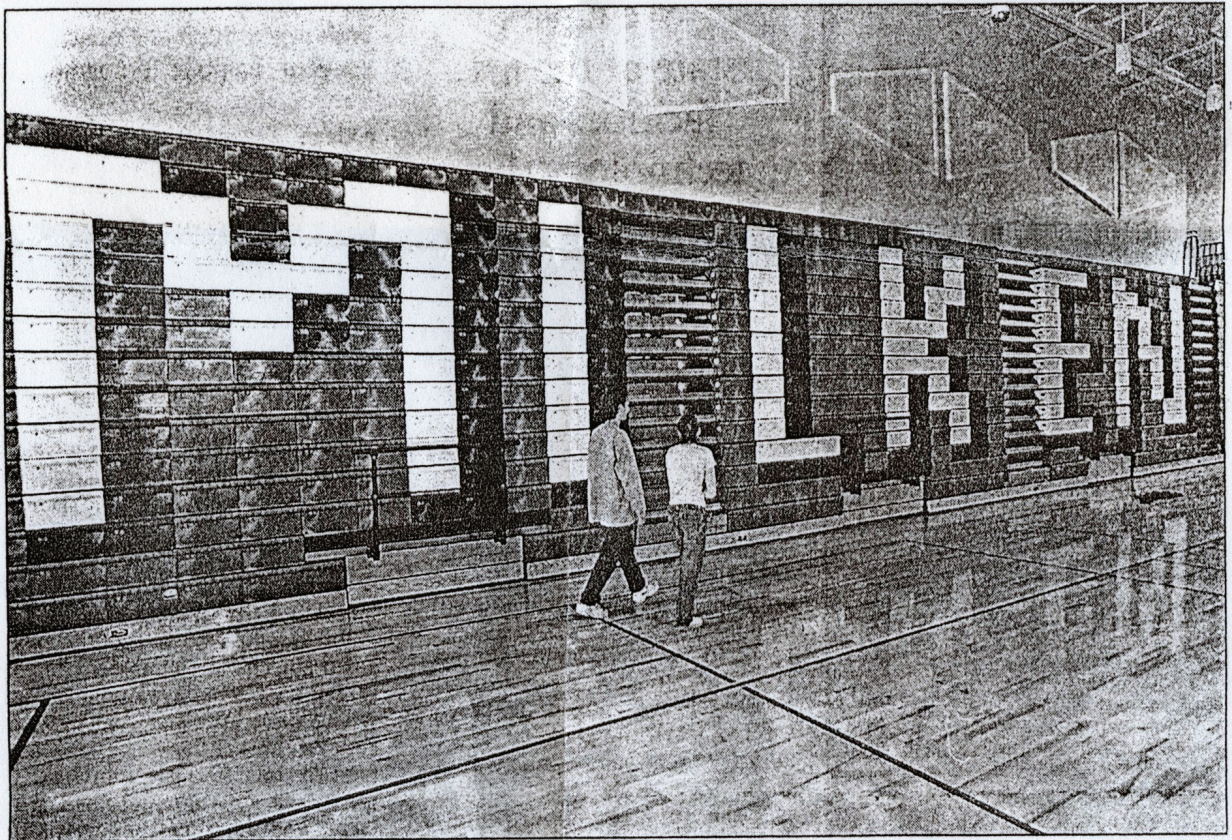
quarters four years later, just yards west of its permanent home on Mulholland Drive next to the San Diego Freeway.

The school has grown from 160 students to more than 640, who began classes Sept. 8.

As high schools go, the Milken campus is an educator's dream. Every classroom is wired for the Internet. Small video cameras allow each classroom to "videoconference" with virtually any place in the world. Every seat in the four science labs has fiber-optic hook-ups so students can plug in laptop computers.

There are art and broadcast studios. Teachers and students both have lounges.

With its amphitheater, clock tower and sweeping view of the Santa Monica Mountains, the school has the look of a small



The bleachers in the new gym where the ceremony was held spell out the school's name.

college campus.

The amenities don't come cheap. Tuition is \$14,000 a year, more than many colleges. But parents said the education—and the fact that students are exposed to secular and Jewish subjects—is worth every penny.

"We have the benefit of both worlds," said Rod Blau of West Hills, whose son, Yoni, 14, is a freshman.

"It's very impressive, almost a little overwhelming," said Blau's wife, Sharlene, as the family toured a biology lab that includes two 108-gallon fish tanks for cold-water and tropical fish.

Yoni Blau said he was drawn by the eclectic offerings, "The mixture of technology with a great opportunity to expand my Judaism."

Milken, located in the brushy hills of the Sepulveda Pass, is a melting pot of Jewish teenagers. It includes students from Iran, Israel and Argentina, as well as those from the various Jewish movements, from Reconstructionist to Conservative.

Students said the campus thrives precisely because of variety.

"There is a sense of community,"



Student David Kroh reads Torah explanation notes during break from his Judaic studies class.

said Oren Tepper, a senior from Tarzana.

As the visitors celebrated the opening of the school, Zeldin broke ground for a new school building that will house more science labs and classrooms when it opens in about a year. School administrators said they also plan to replace the nearby temporary campus with a soccer field and an Olympic-sized swimming pool.