

# In Memoriam: A Tribute to Dear Friends and Honorary Fellows of IDC Herzliya



## Babs Asper z"l

### Founding donor, Asper Institute for New Media Studies at The Sammy Ofer School of Communications

➤ IDC mourns the loss of one of its staunchest benefactors, **Ruth "Babs" Asper**, who passed away on July 30, 2011, at the age of 78. Born Ruth Miriam Bernstein and married for nearly 50 years to the late **Izzy Asper**, founder of CanWest Global Communications, Babs Asper and her husband were stalwart supporters of Israel, the Jewish People and IDC Herzliya. Babs's great concern for and activity on behalf of the Jewish world was nourished by her family's deep commitment to Zionism; her grandmother worked alongside Golda Meir to raise funds in North America for the establishment of the State of Israel. As befitted one raised on Zionism and a love of humanity, Babs realized these values in the countless projects she initiated and supported. Born and raised in Winnipeg, the capital of the Canadian province of Manitoba, Babs earned an undergraduate degree in arts at the University of Manitoba.

During her student days, she was active in both Jewish and general student organizations. Over the years, she served as a director on boards of various organizations in Winnipeg including the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Board of Jewish Education, the Winnipeg Jewish Theatre, and the Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Babs and Izzy Asper established the Asper Foundation in 1983, to initiate and support numerous projects in Canada and Israel, including the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, a project spearheaded by Babs. The museum, scheduled to open in 2013 as Canada's fifth National Museum, will be the largest and the only one of its kind in the world today. Of Babs and Izzy's many contributions to IDC Herzliya, perhaps the most well known is the Asper Institute for New Media Diplomacy, which operates within the Sammy Ofer School of Communications and focuses on utilizing new media channels for diplomatic ends. Babs is survived by her children, David, Gail and Leonard Asper.

**Prof. Uriel Reichman, founder and president, IDC Herzliya:** "A number of years ago in Palm Beach, I had the pleasure of spending an enchanting evening with the late Babs and Izzie at their exquisite home. It was obvious that their Zionist zeal and ideology was at one with my own beliefs. We hit it off instantly. Watching Babs receive the honorary fellowship this year at IDC gave all of us great satisfaction, since she so deserved the honor, and it was a true privilege for us to welcome her. Every time we pass by the Asper Institute for New Media Diplomacy, we think of the Aspers and how their legacy is continued through a young generation making the case for Israel in the way the Aspers would have yearned for."

**Jonathan Davis:** "Babs was a Zionist woman of valor, a touch of class, and a caring, loving, *heimish* and sensitive individual. She constantly worried about the future and the survival of the State of Israel and the Jewish People. She was a modest and friendly person. She was like family, and the family of IDC, as well as I, will sorely miss her. Thank goodness that Babs and Izzie educated the next Asper generation according to their values, and may the ideology and legacy of the late Babs and Izzie continue to be handed down."

**Dr. Noam Lemelshtrich Latar, dean, Sammy Ofer School of Communications:** "I was blessed as the founding dean of a new school of Communications to have the support of Babs, Gail and Leonard Asper and the entire Asper team, for the creation of the Asper Institute for New Media Diplomacy - what has become an important tool in Israel's fight for international legitimacy. It was a great privilege to become a friend of this Zionist family and take part in the very moving event of Babs becoming an honorary fellow of IDC. Babs' love and enthusiasm for Israel and the Jewish people was inspiring and energizing. We shall all miss her and cherish her memory."