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## 2024 Kavod Evening a Celebration of the Volunteers that Underwrite our Community's Success



By Myron Love

It has been a few years since I last attended a Kavod evening – and I was greatly impressed by the caliber of volunteers in our community who are responsible for the ongoing success of our communal institutions.



**Shaarey Zedek Remodeled Sanctuary**

I was equally impressed by the new-look Shaarey Zedek Synagogue, the host for the evening – and the first community event to be held at the synagogue since it re-opened in mid-September. The shul had been shut down for the past year and a half for its first major renovation and expansion in over 50 years. The result is a brightly lit, expansive space which, one synagogue president noted, will undoubtedly appeal to community members who have in recent years gravitated to venues – other than the Shaarey Zedek – locations such as the Convention Centre and the Gates on Roblin – for their family simchas.

The Jewish Federation of Winnipeg has been presenting the Kavod Awards yearly (except for during the Covid lockdowns) for decades. The original awards – The Harry Silverberg Young Leader of Distinction and Max Nathanson Young leadership Awards were first presented back in 1974. The Sol Kanee Distinguished Community Service Award and the Max and Mollie Shore Memorial Award were introduced in 1995. The

Shem Tov Awards date back to 1996 and recognize one dedicated volunteer a year from each of the Federation's beneficiary agencies and organizations. The Larry Hurtig Communal Professional Award was introduced by the Larry Hurtig family in 2012 – shortly after the Federation past president and community leader passed away. The Duboff Family Youth Award is of more recent vintage – having been given out for just the past four years.

This year, two new community awards were presented: The Gerry Koffman Combined Jewish Appeal Award honours the memory of the much revered former Combined Jewish Appeal campaign director who left us – far too young – in 2004. The award will be presented annually to an individual who has contributed significantly to the campaign as a volunteer over many years.

The second new award, the Magen David Award, celebrates an individual who has shown exceptional dedication and leadership in supporting our local Jewish community or Israel.

The list of honourees this year was an impressive group – and one could argue that each deserved a separate story in the Jewish Post – but space does not allow for it. So I shall do the best that I can.

I am going to start at the end. The Sol Kanee Award is the most prestigious award given out by the Jewish Federation. The honouree is someone who has contributed to the Jewish community locally, nationally and internationally – and this year's winner fits the criteria to a tee.

"I am surprised that Gail hadn't already received this award," observed Moe Levy, the first executive director of the Asper Foundation in introducing Kanee Award honouree Gail Asper.

Gail Asper is the third member of her family to receive the award – following to the podium her older

brother, David, and her late father, I. H. Asper (along with Moe Levy himself).

I knew Sol Kanee. He was my father's first cousin. He has been described as arguably one of the most important forces behind the scenes in the annals of world Jewry in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was also modest about it. I recall one evening toward the end of his life when the community was honouring him. His speech was succinct – "The evening is late. So thank you and good night".

I have long been an admirer of Gail. She has made a huge difference locally – and not just in the Jewish community – nationally and internationally. She also shares Sol Kanee's sense of modesty.

In accepting the award, she spoke of the world being divided between those who give and those who are "leaners" – people in need and the importance of giving when you can. "Your life could change in a heartbeat and a giver could suddenly find oneself a leaner," she pointed out. "It is important to appreciate what you have and be prepared to share."

She also spoke of the rewards of being a volunteer. "By saying 'yes' to volunteering, to taking on new challenges, I have had so many adventures and met so many beautiful, big-hearted, caring people. I encourage everyone to say 'yes' when asked to volunteer."

The Max and Mollie Shore Memorial Award is presented annually to an individual who has distinguished him or herself through long-standing leadership and dedication to the Combined Jewish Appeal and commitment to the principles and goals of the Federation. This year's honouree was Mr. Justice David Kroft (who was appointed to the Manitoba Court of Appeal about a year ago – a court on which his late father, Guy, also served).

The award was presented by

the Shores' great-granddaughters, Stephanie and Emily Kalo.

The Kroft Family has a long history of volunteerism. David Kroft himself has served as president of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg (as did his father, Guy, and older brother, Jonathan). He has been a Combined Jewish Appeal canvasser for 25 years.

In his response, while expressing sadness about the events of October 7 in Israel and the upsurge in anti-Semitism – unprecedented in our time, Kroft stated that he remains optimistic about the future. He cited the newest jewel in our community, the new look Shaarey Zedek and the growing number of Jews who have been reconnecting with community over the past year.

In particular, he highlighted the strong leadership role that the Jewish Federation and its beneficiary agencies have played over the past year in helping the community get through what has been a very tough year for many.

"This evening is a celebration of the Federation, its beneficiary agencies and all of the staff and volunteers who have contributed to their success," Kroft said.

The third major award – the Larry Hurtig Award – was presented by Hurtig's son, Jack, to Belle Jarniewski – once again, a more than appropriate choice. In just a few years, the daughter of Holocaust survivors has carved out an outsized leadership role in Winnipeg, nationally and internationally in preserving the memory of the Holocaust and fighting anti-Semitism.

"About 15 years ago," she recalled, "Joe Riesenbach, a survivor, reached out to me to help move a project forward that had literally been collecting dust. Before I knew it, I was a member of the Holocaust Education committee, the federally appointed delegation to the International Holocaust

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**GAIL ASPER**  
SOL KANEH  
DISTINGUISHED  
COMMUNITY SERVICE  
MEDAL



**DAVID J KROFT**  
MAX AND MOLLIE  
SHORE MEMORIAL  
AWARD



**BELLE JARNIEWSKI**  
LARRY HURTIG  
JEWISH COMMUNAL  
PROFESSIONAL  
AWARD



**BRYAN HACK**  
HARRY SILVERBERG  
YOUNG LEADER  
OF DISTINCTION  
AWARD



**MICHAEL SILVER**  
MAX NATHANSON  
YOUNG LEADERSHIP  
AWARD



**NOAH GREENFIELD**  
DUBOFF FAMILY  
YOUTH AWARD

Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) as a member of the Academic Working Group and the Committee on Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial. The committee elaborated the first intergovernmental definition of anti-Semitism, adopted by consensus at the 2016 IHRA plenary. “

Through her work on Holocaust preservation and education, she was introduced to the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada. She was appointed the JHC’s executive director in 2018.

“The Jewish Heritage Centre is the key to our past and our future,” she noted. Exploring our archive is like walking back in time – it’s a treasure trove reflecting the incredible history and diversity of our wonderful Jewish community stretching back 125 years - the challenges and the many triumphs that have shaped who we are today. As the saying goes, you need to know the past to understand the present.

“The Winnipeg I grew up in was a golden age for Jews - a tapestry of multiculturalism with shared values,” she continued. “We thought that the kind of anti-Semitism earlier generations had faced was gone forever. While we may not be able to bring back the wonder years, we must stand united as a community and be strong in our convictions.

“As for me, I am profoundly honoured to work with all of you as we build toward a better tomorrow.”

Brownie Fleishman was the first recipient of the Gerry Koffman Award – which was presented by Koffman’s daughter Jody, and wife Rachelle. Brownie has been involved in community service all her adult life. Among the organizations to which she has contributed her time have been the Jewish Federation, CJA, Hadassah-WIZO, and the Jewish Child and Family Service.

The loudest applause of the evening was reserved for Einat Paz, who received the new Magen David Award. The Israeli-born social worker is, appropriately, the Jewish Child and family Service’s manager of volunteer services.

Paz was recognized in particular for her leadership in helping to organize and co-ordinate weekly vigils – now in their 11<sup>th</sup> month – that, in more recent months,

have been held on Kenaston by the Superstore – in support of the Israeli hostages in Gaza. She has also been prominent in fostering ties between Israelis in Winnipeg and the local community.

The award was presented to Paz by Jeff Lieberman, the Federation’s executive director.

The youth and young leadership award recipients were: Noah Greenfield (Duboff Family Award); Michael Silver (Max Nathanson Award); and Bryan Hack (Silverberg Award).

Hack came to Winnipeg only five years ago. Originally from South Africa, he grew up in Vancouver, where he was heavily involved in the community and Vancouver’s Jewish Federation. In Winnipeg, he quickly continued where he left off in Vancouver. While in Vancouver, the BHC Group principal chaired the Young Adult Division for the Vancouver Jewish community, for which he received the Young Leadership Award in 2017. Over the past three years he has served as the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg, Young Adult Division Chair/Co-Chair - and is currently the Chair of the CJA’s Ben-Gurion Society – the young adult outreach division.

Financial advisor Michael Silver has volunteered his time with the Rady JCC, and the JNF, as well as the CJA. He co-chaired the Top Donors

division with his wife Ellie last year. In his response, he noted the example that his late uncle, businessman and philanthropist Arnold Frieman set for him.

He also spoke of the impact of the events of October 7 on him personally and world Jewry. “The degree of anti-Semitism we are seeing now is reminiscent of the 1930s,” he observed. “The universities are breeding grounds for anti-Semitism.”

Still, he added, he firmly believes that the great majority of Canadians support Israel and the Jewish people.

“I consider it a privilege to be able to part of the Winnipeg Jewish community and help ensure a secure future for our children and generations to come.”

Noah Greenfield has been proving his leadership mettle this past year as president of Hillel Winnipeg. Since October 7, the University of Manitoba student has been speaking out against anti-Zionist and anti-Israel hate.

In presenting the Duboff Family Award, Neil Duboff described Greenfield as a “mensch”.

“If we don’t stand our ground, we will not have a place in



Canada,” he stated.

Among the Shem Tov winners were: Avrom Charach (Jewish Federation of Winnipeg); Ari Hanson (Jewish Child and Family Service); Bryan Borzykowski (Winnipeg Board of Jewish Education); Al Greenberg (Rose and Max Rady Jewish Community Centre); Amy Karlinsky (Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada); Marilyn Regiec (Saul and Claribel Simkin Centre); Howard Kideckel (Gwen Secter Creative Living Centre); Shea Lerner (BB Camp); Max Palay (Camp Massad); Shael Lander (Aleph Bet Child Life Enrichment Program); and Lyle Lockhart (Shalom Residences).

Mazel tov to all and Yasher Koach!

**Happy Rosh Hashana**

**JELYNN DELA CRUZ**  
MLA for Radisson  
204-599-2080

**MIKE MOYES**  
MLA for Riel  
204-421-4666

**MIKE MOROZ**  
MLA for River Heights  
204-774-3669

**BILLIE CROSS**  
MLA for Seine River  
431-323-6026

**RENÉE CABLE**  
MLA for Southdale  
204-222-9038

**ADRIEN SALA**  
MLA for St. James  
204-792-8779

**LISA NAYLOR**  
MLA for Wolseley  
204-792-2773

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CENTURY 21  
Carrie Realty

**Mike Bernstein**  
REALTOR®

1046 St. Mary's Road  
Winnipeg, MB R2M 5S6

C 204-293-2367  
B 204.987.2100  
E-mail: mike.bernstein@century21.ca  
Website: mikebernstein.c21.ca  
Instagram: @mikebernsteinhomes

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