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## Marc W. Freimuth

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Joseph L. Pollack- Pollack Studip

A native of Duluth, Minn., Marc Freimuth said he would not have predicted his level of involvement in the Cleveland Jewish community at the time he became a bar mitzvah.

His great-grandfather was a founder of Duluth's Reform congregation, Temple Israel.

"It starts with family," he said. "My family one way or another was Jewishly committed. And so I learned Jewish values to one extent or another."

After relocating to Cleveland with his first wife, Sharon Sager Freimuth, the family joined Park Synagogue and decided to send their daughter, Ladeene, to The Agnon School in 1972.

Agnon founders Bobby Goldberg and Peter Rzepka invited Freimuth to join the board he eventually chaired and propelled him to more expansive roles in the community.

Other Jews in Cleveland also had an influence on him, he said, naming philanthropists Morton Mandel, Albert Ratner, Chuck Ratner, and Milton and Tamar Maltz.

“These are first-generation or second-generation immigrants,” he said. “Their families came from nothing and they ... are just so exemplary in their commitment to Jewish community broadly speaking, not just locally but obviously internationally.”

Freimuth said the Sager family also guided him as a Jew.

In fact, Freimuth’s children and grandchildren have Shabbat dinner with his father-in-law, Richard Sager, now 98, along with other family members on a weekly basis at his table.

“He still studies Torah every week,” said

Freimuth of Sager. “He’s a man of great religious knowledge and great faith and he’s been a real role model for me.”

Now semi-retired at Wachter Kurant, LLC in Pepper Pike, Freimuth served as general counsel for Ohio Savings Bank for much of his career as a lawyer.

He was often sought for leadership when organizations were facing particularly difficult challenges. Freimuth served on the boards of the Jewish Federation of Cleveland, Mandel Jewish Community Center including as chair, Park Synagogue as vice president, and Cleveland Jewish Publication Company, which he chaired for 5 years. He helped found the Cleveland Jewish News Foundation. In addition, he served as vice chair of Siegal College of Jewish Studies and on the board of the former Bureau of Jewish Education.

Freimuth said his second wife, Ann, has also been a trusted adviser in connection with much of his recent community service.

In the broader community, he was involved with Leadership Cleveland, served as vice president of United Way of Cleveland and has played walk-on roles at the Cleveland Opera, where his late wife served as development director and he also served on its board of trustees.

“They needed some supers for a production of ‘Turandot’ and convinced me,” Freimuth said. “I was hooked. Loved it. I appeared in many of their opera productions.”

Now 73, he has donated blood and platelets to the American Red Cross for more than 50 years.

“I think we have an obligation as people and as Jews to give back to the extent that we’re able to, and I am a strong believer of the miracle of the existence of the state of Israel and believe that is an essential ingredient of Judaism and Jewish continuity today,” he said. “It requires our devotion and support because it is a miracle – we went over 2,000 years without a state of Israel – and there’s no guarantee.”

Freimuth has been to Israel eight times. His trip two years ago was with family, he said, and was the most meaningful to him, because all of his biological children and grandchildren, including his son, Joel, now deceased, were there.

Two of his grandchildren performed b'nai mitzvah projects while there, and the family took part in both. His grandson, Zack Freimuth, a hockey lover, wanted to support a rink in Metullah, near Israel's northern border, that serves Jews, Druse and Arabs.

And his granddaughter, Ariana Freimuth, chose a contribution to a school in Beit Shean, the Jewish Federation of Cleveland's sister city. The project entailed painting games on concrete so the children at the school would have more options for outdoor activities.

Freimuth said Ariana was able to converse in Hebrew with students at the school.

"It was just a fantastic experience in every way, and the people were just so warm and welcoming," Freimuth said.

**Marc W. Freimuth**

**Age:** 73

**Residence:** Pepper Pike

**Synagogue:** Park Synagogue

**First job:** Golf caddy

**Guilty pleasure:** One piece of Malley's milk chocolate before bed

**Best advice you ever received:** Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Moderation in all things, and its corollary: just because some is good doesn't mean more is better.

**Vice you refuse to give up:** Manhattans

**Favorite piece of clothing you own:** Shirt with names of my three grandchildren

**Favorite place to unwind:** My loft at home or Riviera Maya

**Your biggest fear:** Destruction of Israel



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