

IN MEMORIAM 2014: Norman D. Schwartz

Norman Schwartz passed away November 28, 2014.

Norman was on the board of directors of the Maxwell Street Foundation (MSF) from 2004 until 2008. He informally kept notes of all our meetings and projects. Following his resignation from the board, Norman served on the Maxwell Street Foundation Advisory Council until his passing. In 2009, his four binders of MSF material that he had collected since 2003 were placed into the MSF collection.

However, Norman's association with the Foundation's organizing members reaches back much further—all the way to the exhibit about the Jewish presence in the Maxwell Street neighborhood prepared for the 1990 opening of the UIC Levine Hillel Center. He generously lent mounted photographs that had been on display by the Chicago Jewish Historical Society at the Chicago History Museum. In 1994, Norman joined members' efforts to nominate the Maxwell Street Market Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places. He traveled downstate with the group to testify before the Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council, resulting in the nomination's unanimous support by the Council.

Norman was a founding member and past president of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, and he maintained a longtime interest in the history of synagogues in the Chicago metropolitan area. This prompted him to produce a list and map of forty synagogues of the Near West Side, including the Maxwell Street Market. He generously donated a report of his results to our collection.

As President Emeritus of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, Norman contributed an enormous amount of historical research to the Maxwell Street Foundation. He would always answer research inquiries directed to him with a typewritten letter, and he'd enclose documentation such as map excerpts, newspaper clippings, and pages from a census, city directory, or tract book, carefully annotated in his hand. His research assistance to the Foundation was tireless and ranged from interpreting Hebrew script to the identification of historic records for the people and businesses associated with the Maxwell Street Market and its buildings.

His immigrant grandfather, Samuel Schwartz, was a member of the First Roumanian Congregation that met in the Maxwell Street neighborhood from 1902 to 1912. The only known photograph of their synagogue, Shaari Shomaim, when converted from a German schoolhouse was located by Norman in the 1929 publication, "History of the First Roumanian Congregation of Chicago," which included a photograph of his grandfather and a short biography of him. Norman also located the only known photograph of a neighboring synagogue that is no longer extant, Poal Zedek Anshe Sfard, formerly Young Izrael. Copies of both treasures are now part of the Maxwell Street Foundation collection. Norman additionally expanded the MSF collection by his donation of a wooden "hat block" that he collected from Paul and Bill's Tailor Shop, formerly at 719 W. Maxwell Street, when it closed in 2002 for the street's redevelopment. Hat making businesses and hat retailers were common in the storefronts at the Maxwell Street Market, and it is cherished artifact from the former businesses there.

Apart from his research work for the Maxwell Street Foundation and the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, Norman was a prolific author. He co-wrote *A Walk to Shul: Chicago Synagogues of Lawndale and Stops on the Way*, in 2003, and produced a trilogy of booklets about Temple Sholom in Chicago, where he had been a member since 1975 and where he established a fund in the name of his late and beloved wife, Moselle. The first in the series (2001) featured its stained glass windows; the second featured its interior and artifacts; and the last in the series (2013) featured the exterior architecture of the building. It is perhaps the first booklet's introduction, *The Stained Glass Windows at Temple Sholom*, that provides a "window" into Norman's own historical research interests:

"The windows provide a visual link to the moral and spiritual values of the past. Their glow provides a tradition and accentuates Reform Judaism's emphasis on connecting the present with the past."

It can be said that Norman's determined efforts to research the details of the past have given visibility to the present.

Norman D. Schwartz will be remembered for his warmth, honesty and diligence that set him apart as a special person, and he is greatly missed. His generous contribution of original research to the Maxwell Street Foundation is an unforgettable legacy.

Submitted by Lori Grove, President of the Maxwell Street Foundation

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