



HONORING DR. MARC AND LAURIE BERSON

73rd Gala & Evening of Tribute



Early days

Laurie Goldfarb and Marc Berson met in Philadelphia at a social event called the Jewish Alternative. Marc went for a free breakfast, and Laurie went to make her mother happy. Following their meeting, Laurie told her co-workers that she met the man she was going to marry. She was right! They married on December 25, 1983 (an easy date to remember) at Temple Sinai in Dresher and moved to Allentown in June 1984.

Marc grew up in Pomona, NY and Laurie was raised in Dresher, PA (but originally the Mt. Airy neighborhood of Philly). Marc attended Muhlenberg College for his undergraduate studies, followed by the Pennsylvania College of Optometry. He later received an MBA from DeSales University. Laurie attended Northeastern University in Boston for her undergraduate degree, followed by her graduate degree from Temple University. Marc opened his Optometric practice in Allentown and Laurie was beginning her career as an Early Intervention Speech and Language Pathologist with the Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit.

For Laurie, her Jewish identity was shaped by her traditional Conservative upbringing, weekly Shabbat synagogue attendance (Ramat El and Temple Sinai), many summers at Camp Ramah in the Poconos and synagogue Hebrew School and Gratz College attendance through graduation from high school. For Marc, his classical Reform observance included Hebrew School, holiday observance and Bar Mitzvah. For both of them, joyful commitment to the Jewish community was modeled by their parents. Laurie's parents were active in their Temple and held leadership roles. Marc's parents were active lifelong members of their Temple.

Move to the Lehigh Valley

Upon moving to Allentown, the desire to establish a connection to the Jewish community was automatic. Laurie and Marc joined Temple Beth El, and have been associate members at both Congregation Sons of Israel and Congregation Keneseth Israel for many years. They regularly attend Shabbat and holiday services. They have participated in numerous Federation

missions to Israel, loving every visit to our homeland. Both Laurie and Marc have volunteered in countless roles in the Jewish community. Marc was Treasurer of the JDS in the 1990's and a member of the Board of Directors. Marc served as President of the Jewish Day School from 2021-2024. He is currently active on the House Committee and other roles associated with the school. In addition, Marc was on the Board of the JFLV, and served as President of the Maimonides Society. Marc has volunteered on many eye care missions across the globe, sharing the gift of sight with those in need. Laurie was on the Education Committee at the JDS for many years, and volunteered as a substitute teacher and even a COVID tester during those challenging times. At Beth El, Laurie is on the Ritual and Service Committee, a Shabbat Angels delivery person and participates in the community garden. At Jewish Family Service, she volunteers in the Food Pantry. Both the garden and Food Pantry have been incredibly rewarding pursuits. Both Laurie and Marc have been members of the Chevra Kadisha for over 20 years. Their adult children, Andrew and Ronni proudly attended the Jewish Day School through middle school.

Currently

Laurie and Marc are now happily retired. They are relishing their roles as Bubbe and Papa Marky to their five precious grandchildren. Andrew and Kourtney are raising their three boys in Greenville, NC. Ronni and Dave live in Springfield, NJ with their two girls. In his spare time, Marc enjoys running, biking, boating, skiing, woodworking and magic. Laurie is gardener, baker, gym devotee and big-time reader. Retirement has afforded them the time and freedom to dive deeply into our heritage, recognizing that Judaism is an inheritance to be practiced actively, not an heirloom be set on a shelf untouched.

For Laurie and Marc, being a part of the Allentown Jewish community has provided comfort, connection and support in times of sadness and simcha. They are profoundly grateful for the relationships they have made, and believe their lives have been immeasurably blessed by them. Their hope for the Jewish Day School is for it to thrive, grow and be enriched by the contributions of the next generation of students and supporters.