

Max Einsteadig – a Pillar of the Indiana Jewish Community

Through his life and achievements, the late Max Einsteadig serves as a model of how an individual can affect a state-wide Jewish community. Max's leadership and accomplishments continue to have a significant and lasting impact on his local community, his local Jewish community, as well as the Indiana Jewish community and on all Hoosiers. For most of his life, he lived in Terre Haute until he passed away on November 12, 2006.

Max was born in Vienna, Austria on June 15, 1912 and came to the United States in 1915 on the SS France, one of the last ships to leave Europe before World War I. His family settled in Indianapolis where he graduated from Emmerich Manual Training High School in 1921 and received his Bachelor's degree from Butler University. He continued on to graduate work at the Graduate School for Jewish Social Work and the New York School of Social Work, receiving his Master's degree. He then spent a year working at the Kirshbaum Community Center in Indianapolis before turning to business.

In Terre Haute, Max was a successful businessperson. He started JEBB'S INC., furniture store, which later became a successful propane supply business that he passed on to his son, the late Jerry Einsteadig. He was also the owner of Daniels Appliances. As a businessperson he was active in his community and served as a board member of the Coordination Council of the Wabash Valley, chaired the Recreation Committee's project to repurpose Glen High School as a recreational facility and was a Boy Scout leader of Troop 29 for many years. During his lifetime, his actions had a positive effect on both the Jewish and secular communities in Terre Haute and on the Jewish community state-wide.

Max Einsteadig was initially affiliated with B'nai Abraham Orthodox Congregation and later, when that congregation was partnered with the Terre Haute reform Congregation, Temple Israel into United Hebrew Congregation, he remained an active member of that congregation for the rest of his life. He regularly attended services and took pride in doing what he could for his congregation and Jewish community. The local country club had a restrictive policy that would not allow Jews to join, so the Jewish community formed the Phoenix Country Club where he served as President

In 1935 he joined the Terre Haute Gan Eden Lodge #112 of B'nai B'rith and later served as president. In addition to his contribution at the local level, Max contributed in the state-wide arena. One particular venue of service was B'nai B'rith. As president of the local B'nai B'rith lodge, he joined the Indiana State Association in 1958, was elected Third Vice President in 1964 and President of the B'nai B'rith state association in 1968. He also served on the District Board of Governors and on the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith as a member of the Regional Advisory Boards.

One of Max's passions was Jewish history and the creation and preservation of local Jewish historical records. He was a founder of the Indiana Jewish Historical society and served as President from 1972 to 1975. He wrote articles for the society's publications, including one about the founding of the organization. He also wrote a history of the Jewish community on the South Side of Indianapolis.

Another of Max's passions was education. He was especially focused on Jewish students who leave their home environments and go off to college. Max worked with the Indiana Hillel Committee in establishing many Hillel Houses. When Max began there were Hillel Houses only at Indiana University Bloomington and Purdue University in West Lafayette. He was instrumental in creating Hillel Houses on several other campuses at other Indiana colleges. At IU Bloomington he helped organize a Jewish fraternity and was an honorary member of the Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity. He served as President of the Hillel Foundations of Indiana in 1966-67. Max, working with others, was instrumental in establishing the Chair of Jewish Studies at Indiana University and at Indiana State University. The result of Max's work is that Indiana University, especially the Bloomington campus, is nationally recognized as a center for Jewish Studies and is a magnet for Jewish students from within Indiana and nationally.

Max's long career of public service and community leadership were recognized when Governor Frank O'Bannon designated Max Einsteadig as a Sagamore of the Wabash. This award is given to those who have rendered distinguished service to the State of Indiana. To quote Governor O'Bannon, "Max you have distinguished yourself in your humanity in living, your loyalty in

friendship, your wisdom in council and your inspiration in leadership.” We’d like to present the family of Max Einsteadig with this Hoosier Jewish Legends Award.