

## **Jerry Einsteadig - Jewish Hoosier Legend Presentation - August, 2024**

Thank you for the honor of introducing Jerry Einsteadig as a 2024 Jewish Hoosier Legend.

It would be easy to list the many accomplishments that led Jerry to this honor - accomplishments that will later be noted - to the many organizations that he participated in and led, his success as a Terre Haute businessman, the outstanding friend he was to so many and, of course, the family he adored and adored him.

The best way, however, to paint the picture of Jerry is through the words of those who wrote letters in support of his being named a Jewish Hoosier Legend.

Daniel J. Bradley, President Emeritus of Indiana State University, wrote: "Jerry ... was a citizen of Terre Haute in the truest sense of the word. He participated in and at various times led a wide range of civic, educational, religious and charitable organizations in our community. He did it all with grace, competence and empathy while being truly one of the nicest people you would ever hope to meet." Later in his letter Bradley wrote, "Jerry viewed service as an important part of his life... service to the poor and disadvantaged in our community was a big part of Jerry's life."

A friend and Executive Director of the Union Hospital Foundation, Jim Bertoli, wrote, "When I think of Jerry Einsteadig, I am overwhelmed by the thoughts in my mind and heart. The words that best, but hardly, describe Jerry are compassionate, caring, intelligent, dedicated, jovial, hardworking, loving, positive, genuine, inspirational, loyal, and humble. This wonderful man made such a positive impression on me and everyone in the Terre Haute community that knew him." In an interview, Bertoli noted "More recently Jerry and Jo Einsteadig were the first people to donate to Union Hospital's new Guardian Angel grateful patient program. After spending several weeks in the hospital, Jerry Einsteadig wanted to thank dozens of hospital employees for the outstanding care he received. Every time I went to see him in his hospital room, he'd be providing me with a list of names of the people he and Jo had interacted with. It ended up being about 65 guardian angels. It just shows what type of person Jerry was."

Attorney and friend B. Scott Skillman, after noting the warm way Jerry and his wife Jo welcomed him when he relocated to Terre Haute, spoke about Jerry's synagogue leadership. "What made such a strong impression on me

about Jerry was his level of activity. The man was everywhere and managed to take on tasks with an impressive 'can do' approach... He brought a positive proactive approach to his tasks. He seemed to view problems as opportunities to engage others in order to obtain constructive results. He did not shy away from conflict but rather embraced the issues by listening to the members and seeing input from everyone to reach a solution. What I found so inspiring was his ability to wade through emotional responses and acknowledge the depth of emotion, all the while, he was de-escalating the conflicts and helping others see the resolution to the problems. There is a certain amount of genius to a person who can assess the situation and lead a discussion to reach a consensual conclusion that he saw immediately. Skillman ended his recommendation letter with "when I find myself getting weary or uninspired to a good cause, I merely remind myself that Jerry would do it and so should I. Can there be any better role model than that?"

Rabbi Stephen Chicural-Stein, a rabbi at Terre Haute's United Hebrew Congregation from 2000-2003, noted "As I remember Jerry with deep affection and admiration, the name he has acquired for me is *Tzedek* - a man who studies Torah, who lives Torah, and who in memory becomes a legend of how Torah can shape us and our people." Another rabbi, Stanley Miles, who incidentally was also born & reared in Terre Haute, said "If there would be more Jerry Einfelds in this world we would see the survival of more smaller Jewish communities. Jerry's deeds are truly legendary!" Rabbi Joe Klein, rabbi of the congregation for 15 years, wrote "For many in our community he was a model of civic pride and responsibility. And because we were the only Jewish presence in Vigo and neighboring counties, his place in the community at large and as a representative of our congregation was a significant factor in how well our congregation was viewed by the general public."

Welcome, Jerry Einfeld, to Indiana Jewish Historical Societies *Indiana Jewish Legends Hall of Fame*.