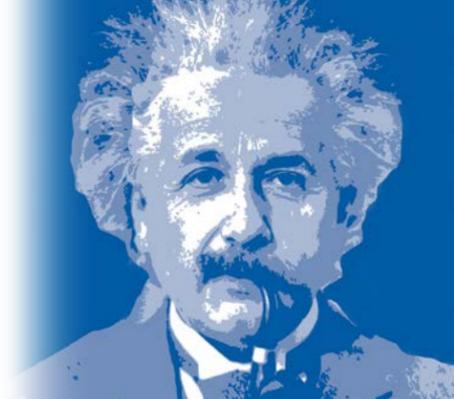


# RELATIVITY



THE CFHU TORONTO  
NEWSLETTER THAT BRINGS YOU  
NEWS RELEVANT TO YOU

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## MASTER'S *piece*

I am now entering the second year of my term, and I am as pleased as ever with our chapter's progress. We've held several successful events culminating with the Celebration of Excellence honouring Morgan Freeman. Not only did we raise money through the highly publicized event in May, but we also raised the profile of CFHU.

The following month, I attended the Board of Governors meeting in Israel. I had the chance to again spend time on the Hebrew University campus and witness the incredible work that is being done there. Naturally, celebrating the 90th birthday of Shimon Peres and seeing Barbra Streisand receive her honorary doctorate were both memorable experiences. It was a rewarding trip overall, but one moment in particular sticks out in my mind.

While standing on Mount Scopus one afternoon, it occurred to me that I was in a place that represents both past and future. In front of me was the Dome of the Rock, a centuries-old shrine that is important to Jews, Christians and Muslims alike, while behind me was an institution dedicated to improving the lives of future generations through medical breakthroughs and other advancements.

At that moment, it became clear to me, more than ever, what an integral role Hebrew U plays not just in Israel's past and present accomplishments, but for its future. The university needs to be protected and promoted — and I'm proud that the Toronto chapter of CFHU has dedicated itself to such an important endeavor.

*Yours Truly,* Randy Masters



Risa and Randy Masters with Morgan Freeman.

"You could see that it meant a lot to David," said Harary. "It was an emotional moment for him to hand the award to Morgan in recognition of his father's legacy. It's clear there was a bond there."

Before the presentation, Freeman was interviewed on stage by two-time Emmy Award-winning filmmaker, Canadian Paul Saltzman, who collaborated with the actor on the 2008 documentary *Prom Night in Mississippi*.

Freeman touched on many topics, including childhood education. Noting that a young child's brain is like a sponge, the Academy Award-winning actor suggested that, instead of going to daycare, toddlers should go to school and expand their minds. "Education," he said, "is learning how to learn."

CBC Radio host Jian Ghomeshi emceed the



Ronen on Stage

“Education is learning how to learn.”

- Morgan Freeman

event, which also included appearances by Josephine Ojiambo, Kenya's ambassador to the United Nations and a Hebrew U alumnus, and Amir Amedi.

Amedi is a brain scientist at the Institute for Medical Research Israel-Canada (IMRIC), which conducts research into cancer, Alzheimer's disease and related brain disorders through joint research between Hebrew U and Canadian institutions.

The Celebration of Excellence gala raised about \$2 million for the institute. Some of the funds are being used to establish the Morgan Freeman Scholarship Fund to help international students studying in Hebrew U's public health and community medicine program.

Harary, who co-founded Spin Master in 1994, is selective about the organizations and causes he backs. But he supports CFHU, and chaired the gala, because of the organization's dedication to bringing together great minds from Canada and Israel.

"I believe in building bridges," he said. "Working with people from other countries can be difficult at times but when done right, it can produce incredible results. I know this from my own experience working with business associates in Japan."

"Also, I think it's important for Canadians to have a physical presence in Israel rather than just a conceptual one," he said, referring to IMRIC. "This attracts people and makes things happen." ■



Ronen Harary and Dan Glazerman

## MORGAN FREEMAN EVENT A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

Nine months later and people are still buzzing about the unprecedented event that put one of the world's most recognizable faces (and voices) front and center with CFHU.

More than 700 guests gathered at the Toronto Centre for the Arts on May 6 2013 to honour Morgan Freeman, one of the most respected figures in modern cinema.

Ronnen Harary, co-CEO of Spin Master, a giant children's consumer products and entertainment company, chaired the event.

With several major media outlets on hand, Freeman received the Jake Eberts Key of Knowledge Award honouring his dedication to combating racism and promoting knowledge and education.

David Eberts was moved to tears when he and Hebrew University President Menahem Ben-Sasson presented the award named in honour of David's father, a film producer and financier involved with films such as *Chariots of Fire*, *Gandhi*, *Dances with Wolves* and *Driving Miss Daisy*, Freeman's breakout film.

# A L U M N I I M P A C T



## BEN MOGIL

Ben Mogil is managing director of equity research (media and entertainment) at Stifel Nicolaus, an investment bank. He's a married father of two who lives in Toronto. He attended Hebrew University from 1992-1993

### What was your most memorable experience at Hebrew University?

I had a great time there going out with friends. I have a vivid memory of having a snowball fight in the Old City that winter. I also remember how challenging it was to find somewhere to watch the 1992 World Series!

### How did your time there make an impact on your development professionally and/or personally?

I established some enduring friendships at Hebrew U. When I moved to New York in 1995, one of the first people who contacted me was a former classmate there. He's now one of my closest friends.

Just this morning, I had breakfast with former Hebrew U classmate Berry Meyerowitz (the president and CEO of Phase 4 Films.)

I went back to Israel in 2007. It struck me

how much the country had changed since I had been at Hebrew U. Israel now has a highly developed consumer economy. The country is much more Westernized. You can really see how far the country has come in the past two decades.

### How did you get started in your current career?

My current career is really a two-part story. After undergraduate school, I worked in New York for an entertainment company. When I graduated from business school a few years later, I was able to find a job that merged finance and entertainment.

### What has been the highlight of your career so far?

I am fortunate to have been a relatively early partner in my first firm, which ended up growing quickly and being sold. I was proud about how many jobs and, really, careers we created during that short time. ■

Stella to Toronto, my hometown, in 2012.

### How did you get started in your current career?

As undergraduate student at the University of Toronto and at Hebrew University, I majored in art history.

At Hebrew U, I was fascinated by seeing the ruins of the sites I had learned about as a student at Hebrew Day School. It made me feel very connected to the land and to Jewish history.

I went on to study arts administration, working and interning in art museums in Chicago, New York, and San Francisco.

When we moved back to Toronto, I accepted the position of the director of the Ontario Jewish Archives, to bring the stories of the Jewish community to life through exhibitions, online initiatives, and other programs. Our collection here is pretty magical!

(The OJA is a department of the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. It's responsible for acquiring, preserving and making available documentary sources related to the Ontario Jewish community.)

### What has been the highlight of your career so far?

In 2006, I joined the team at the Contemporary Jewish Museum where we opened a brand new Daniel Libeskind-designed museum in the heart of San Francisco's cultural district. I spent six years there, putting much of my early Jewish education to work, curating art exhibitions that made Jewish concepts and ideas accessible to a broad audience. ■



## STANLEY KUGELMASS AND MARGERY HECHT-KUGELMASS

Stan and Margery: Love and Rockets

### When were you at Hebrew University?

**Margery:** We were both there in the 1970-71 school year.

### How did you meet?

**Margery:** We met on the flight there. I'm from New Jersey and Stan is from Montreal. I was sitting in front of him. I asked if I could lean my chair back and he said sure. I thought he was pretty cute.

**Stan:** I thought she was hot!

### Describe your first few months in Israel.

**Margery:** We both went directly to Ulpan, which was at a teachers college right there on the Kinneret. That is when we started dating. It was like being in camp. There was a small group of students from North America and we were all together there. It was kind of like being in camp.

**Stan:** At the time, the PLO was active in Jordan. Rockets were coming in from Jordan and Israeli warplanes were dropping bombs there. Most afternoons, we would go swimming then sit and watch the hostilities from a distance. I remember watching all this while eating cookies and drinking juice. It was surreal. It was like watching a movie.

We woke up one morning and most of the Israeli staff members had left because they had been called up; the Jordanian king had thrown the PLO out of Jordan.

**Margery:** The Ulpan lasted two months. After that, we went to a kibbutz for a week and picked fruit. From there, we went to Jerusalem.

### What are your most vivid memories of the school year?

**Stan:** After the PLO was thrown out of Jordan there seemed to be complete quiet. It was peaceful and we were able to travel around without a problem. We went to Mount Sinai and visited the West Bank. I remember interacting with the people who lived there and finding them quite friendly.

**Margery:** Believe it or not, Stan appeared in a movie funded by the Jewish Agency. It was about North American students in Israel. He met David Ben Gurion.

**Stan:** Meeting him was a great experience. He was pleasant and very approachable. He commented

on my hair, which was quite long at the time. In response, I said, "Your hair isn't too bad either!"

**Margery:** The movie is in the archives at Hebrew U.

### What did you do when the school year ended?

**Margery:** That summer, Stan and two of his friends hopped on motorcycles and headed to Europe. I travelled separately with friends. The two groups would meet up in every city. It was great.

### And after that?

**Margery:** Stan returned to Montreal to finish his undergraduate degree, and I went to Ohio to do the same thing. But believe it or not, we continued dating for another two years. We got married in 1973 and lived together in Windsor, where he was attending law school. I attended school in Detroit to do my masters degree in social work.

At that time, time zones were different in Canada and the United States. So, for our first year of marriage, my clock had a different time than his. If you can survive that, you can survive anything!

### When did you settle down in Toronto?

**Margery:** We moved to Toronto in 1975 and started a family six years later. We now have four kids -- Rachel (32), Jordanna, (30), Gabriel (27) and Davida (24).

**Stan:** Rachel went to Hebrew U too. She was there for the second intifada and the 9/11 terrorist attacks. It was really tough for her.

### Have you been back to Israel?

**Stan:** We took our children to a Hebrew U reunion in 2001. Life was so different than it had been when we were students there. We had no cell phones or computers - no way to be in constant communication with our families at home. That's why we developed such close bonds with our fellow students. We only had each other.

**Margery:** We've been back to Israel many other times, too. The last time we were there, we spoke at a conference there.

**Stan:** It's very important that we maintain our ties to Hebrew University and to Israel overall. ■



## DARA SOLOMON

Dara Solomon is director of the Ontario Jewish Archives. She's also a married mother of one who lives in Toronto. She attended Hebrew University from 1994 to 1995.

### What was your most memorable experience at Hebrew university?

The travelling we did as a group, seeing Israel and travelling to surrounding countries, was most memorable. Early in the year, we spent the High Holidays in Turkey and attended services at a synagogue in Izmir. The experience gave me a chance to see Sephardic culture up close. During the January break, we visited Barcelona and Paris, also very impactful experiences.

### How did your time there make an impact on your development professionally and/or personally?

Well, it was my first time living away from home. It was very exciting to be living in a dorm with students from all over the world. I made close friends with students from other Canadian and American cities, with whom I am still in touch. And, I even married one of them!

Jay Rosenthal, a fellow student from Boston, and I were friends during the time we spent at Hebrew U. It was a few years later, when re-connected in New York during the summer of 2000, that I knew he was "The One."

When I completed my masters at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2001, I moved to San Francisco, where he lived. We have been together ever since and we moved from San Francisco with our daughter

# Lorne Persiko: On the ball

One of Lorne Persiko's most vivid memories of his year at Hebrew University is his successful attempt to hike up Mount Sinai — and the unsuccessful attempt that immediately preceded it.

"A friend and I started hiking before sunrise," Persiko says with a laugh, 30 years later. "But it didn't take us long to realize we were in the wrong place. So we walked back down and headed to the real Mount Sinai — then started our second hike of the day."

Persiko has other great memories, too. He recalls "the incredible experience" of walking from Mount Scopus to the Old City for Shabbat — and he remembers having some rewarding experiences in the classroom.

"I remember that Yitzhak Rabin came into the classroom [as a guest speaker] and he was great," Persiko says of the late Israeli prime minister. "I remember thinking it was really impressive just to be sitting in the same room as someone so influential and well-known."

Ultimately, Persiko returned to Canada to build a family and a career — he's now president of the Toronto Parking Authority — but he maintained his ties to Hebrew U, and continued to communicate with former classmates in cities around the world.

Nineteen years ago, he and a friend started the March Madness Online Basketball tournament. Thanks to the involvement of corporate sponsors and hundreds of participants, the event has managed to raise approximately \$600,000 to date.

Proceeds have gone to Hebrew U research on Alzheimer's and other illnesses — and in the past two years, money raised has gone to the Bernard J. Persiko Merit Scholarship Fund at Hebrew U.

**"I remember that Yitzhak Rabin came into the classroom (as a guest speaker) and he was great, I remember thinking it was really impressive just to be sitting in the same room as someone so influential and well-known."**

Persiko established the fund to honour his late father, who was passionate about both sports and education. The fund gives financial aid to top Canadian students planning to study at Hebrew U. The 2013 tournament raised more than \$55,000, which was divided among three students.

"Academics aside, these scholarships help create a personal connection with Israel and a social experience you just can't



Lorne Persiko

get through any other program or mission," says CFHU Executive Director Elan Divon. "So it's a win for the student, a win for Hebrew University and a win for those who participate in March Madness."

Persiko traces his concern for Israel and its institutions straight back to his days as a student there. "There's no doubt about it," he says. "My time at Hebrew University

was very rewarding and it strengthened my bond with the Jewish state." This year, Persiko joined forces with long time buddy and fellow HU alum David Kendal, to create the Bernard Persiko & Darren Kendal Merit Student Scholarship Fund. Proceeds raised from the 2014 tournament will be used to support this new scholarship, while a portion of funds will also be directed to the Sam Garten Fund for Leukemia Research. ■

# Gary Opolsky

Gary Opolsky is a disability insurance expert at Opolsky Louis. He's a married father of three who lives in Toronto. He attended Hebrew University from 1969 to 1972.

Between work commitments, family obligations and trips to far-flung destinations, Gary Opolsky has little downtime. But despite his busy schedule, he devotes time and energy to maintaining close ties to Hebrew University.

The reason? Being a student at the school was one of the most rewarding experiences of his life.

Opolsky arrived in Jerusalem just two years after the Six Day War.

"It was a great time. Being away from home, in such an amazing country, was very exciting," he says. "Jerusalem was different then. Israeli society was much more open and relaxed. It was a time of peace. You could go into the Old City and roam around without looking over your shoulder."

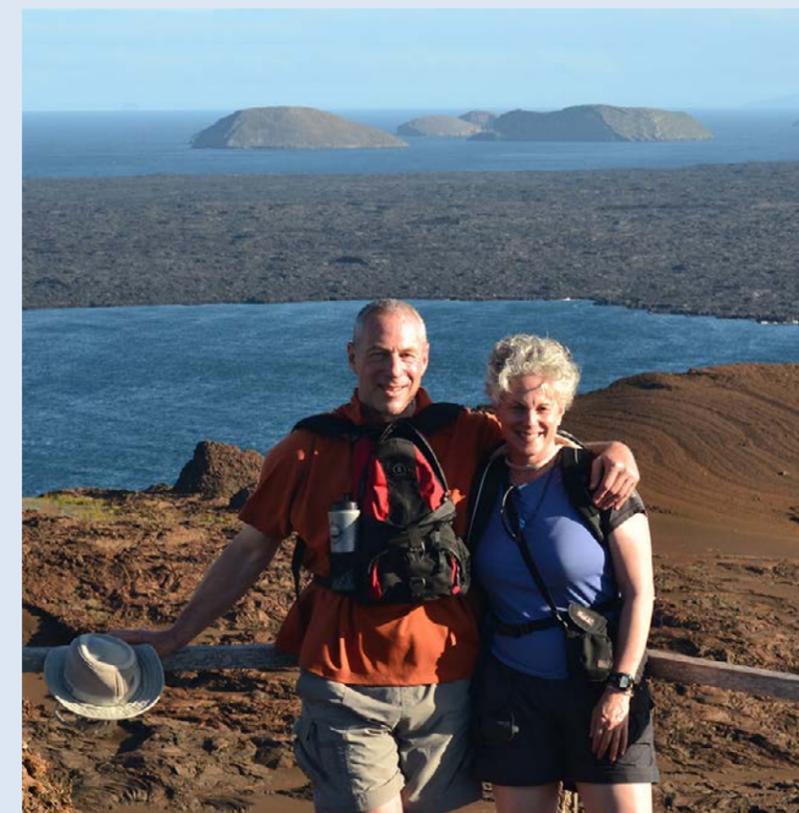
He remembers travelling around the country on his Vespa, from Jerusalem to Jericho and all stops in between. But his fondest memories are of his time as a student at Hebrew U, which extended from 1969 to 1972. "I experienced culture shock for the first few weeks," the Montreal native recalls. "But then I immersed myself in Israeli culture."

Opolsky made Israeli friends, dated Israeli women and attended Sabbath dinners at the home of local families. Determined to learn Hebrew, he did an Ulpan and even persuaded his Israeli roommate to teach him Hebrew slang.

Once his "love affair" with the school began, Opolsky couldn't leave. Instead of returning to Montreal after one school year, to continue his studies at McGill University, he decided to pursue his education at Hebrew U.

When he returned to Canada after graduation, he went to business school, started a career in the insurance industry and started a family. But as is the case with all great love affairs, he couldn't forget Hebrew U.

About ten years ago, Opolsky and his wife Marney — who have visited India, Peru, the Galapagos Islands and many other places — started going on the Live, Learn and Explore trips organized by the Canadian Friends of Hebrew University. They were such rewarding experiences, Opolsky renewed his commitment to his alma mater and began making



Marney and Gary Opolsky

**"I experienced culture shock for the first few weeks," the Montreal native recalls. "But then I immersed myself in Israeli culture."**

financial donations. "Those trips showed me how much more there was to the school than what I already knew," he explains.

Opolsky is particularly enthusiastic about the Hebrew University's new Institute for Medical Research Israel-Canada (IMRIC), which conducts research in the field of biomedicine.

"It's amazing because [the work being done there] touches so many people. Researchers are doing great things but, unfortunately, no one here knows about it," he says.

"So many more people would gravitate toward Hebrew University if they knew what was going on there, and felt they were supporting research that could make their lives better."

Opolsky is planning to continue his support for Hebrew University. The reason, he says, is simple: "It's important to me." ■

# Safra and Hebrew U President to Attend Parkinson's Benefit Gala

Philanthropist Lily Safra and Hebrew University President Menahem Ben-Sasson will be among those attending a spring gala honouring one of the world's leading experts on Parkinson's Disease.

Dr. Anthony Lang is on staff at Toronto Western Hospital, where he heads the Krembil Neuroscience Centre. The Centre treats patients with diseases and injuries to the brain, spinal cord and eyes.

Dr. Lang and Hagai Bergman, a professor at Hebrew U's Institute for Medical Research Israel-Canada (IMRIC), are developing a research project dedicated to finding better ways to treating Parkinson's disease.

Half the proceeds from the gala, which will be held at the Carlu Hotel on May 14, will go to the project. The remaining funds will go to the highest priority of both institutions.

The event is being organized and chaired by Gerry Halbert, a past president of CFHU. Halbert has been a strong supporter of Toronto General Hospital and Toronto Western Hospital, and has played a pivotal role in several big fundraising initiatives.



Gerry Halbert

important not just to Halbert but also to Lily Safra. Lang treated her late husband, Edmond Safra, when he was suffering from Parkinson's Disease. The Lebanese-born banker championed many causes including the building and renovating of synagogues around the world. He died in a fire in 1999.

The Safra family has supported both the Toronto Western Hospital and Hebrew U. In fact, they have generously donated roughly \$100-million to The Hebrew University alone.

"Bringing together two world class institutions for such a worthy cause is extremely rewarding" said CFHU Toronto Executive Director Elan Divon. "But what's particularly exciting is the impact you can have when you bring together two giants in the field like Dr. Lang and Prof Bergman; scientists who come from different cultures and offer different perspectives. This is how innovation happens."

Halbert concurs and sees the joint project as one that will strengthen the bond between two doctors, two institutions and two countries. "With the world getting smaller, doctors and researchers from various countries are collaborating in the effort to find a cure for Parkinson's," says Halbert. "This is a very good thing. It should be encouraged and celebrated." ■

“This is how innovation happens.”

- Elan Divon, CFHU Toronto Executive Director

Halbert is co-chair of the Brain Campaign. Established two years ago, its objective is to raise \$200 million for more labs, equipment, support staff, fellowship programs and renovations at the Krembil Neuroscience Centre.

The new undertaking by Dr. Lang and Bergman is



On February 25, CFHU hosted the Premiere of the IMAX film "JERUSALEM" at the Ontario Science Centre in front of a sellout crowd of 320 supporters. A visually stunning expose of the ancient city, the film explored the history and diversity of Jerusalem through the eyes of three teenage girls; Christian, Muslim and Jewish – in 45 tantalizing minutes.

Prior to the film, leaders of the three Abrahamic faiths brought greetings and shared words of wisdom, while guests were treated to a fascinating (and first ever) Q & A with the film's stars and director shortly after the screening.

But what's a premiere without a party?! To welcome the film's cast to Toronto, Judy Bronfman and Karen Simpson Radomski, both recently appointed CFHU Board members, hosted an intimate welcome dinner at Ms. Bronfman's home. This was a chance for the girls to unwind, enjoy a



(Left to right) Rami Kleinmann, Ms. Samira Kanji, Rev. Damian MacPherson, Rav Baruch Frydman-Kohl, Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton, and Elan Divon

home cooked meal, and learn a little more about their new environs in Canada.

Ms. Bronfman who was beaming after the premiere had this to say: "I enjoyed the film and the breathtaking views of Jerusalem. There's nothing like seeing a city as sacred and magnificent as Jerusalem in IMAX. But the highlight for me was and is that I am proudly affiliated with an institution and organization that builds bridges and supports initiatives such as these. I love the fact that CFHU brings together leading Israeli and Canadian scientists to solve problems that benefit people of all backgrounds – and the film tonight embodied this message.

Ms. Simpson Radomski agreed: "This movie was not only visually stunning and informative, but it was also about building bridges. It took 3 girls from entirely different backgrounds whose lives do not intersect and brought them together. It allowed their worlds to meet and helped tear down negative stereotypes. With knowledge and awareness comes progress and understanding, which interestingly enough applies to science and technology, as much as it does to building relationships between people." ■



(Left to right) Judy Bronfman, Nadia Tadros, Farah Ammouri, Revital Zacharie, Daniel Ferguson, and Karen Simpson Radomski