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Connecting Jewish Cincinnati

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"LET THERE BE LIGHT"

## Murray Guttman: An appreciation of his life

Maimonides expressed it best when he said "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." Thank you Murray Guttman, on behalf of your entire immediate and extended family, your Jewish community and your greater Cincinnati community for sustaining and teaching us the values that will help us grow and build a more justified, beautiful and harmonious world. We will forever be grateful for the many lessons you have provided over your 90 years of being on this earth. B'shalom.

Murray Guttman was born in February 2, 1930 in McKeesport Rocks, Pennsylvania to Mayme and Louis Guttman. Murray was the middle child and adored his sisters Elayne and Faye. As a young family during the Depression, they moved around a lot and in 1937, arrived in Cincinnati. Lou and his brother, Joe, created Lifeguard Industries, a siding business.

From Lou, Murray learned to take care of others. This apple didn't fall far from the tree; Lou was part of the Huchum Club, a generous poker game that quietly gave proceeds to community members in need and local Jewish charities alike. While much of Murray's philanthropy was well known, he also gave on a personal level to those he cared for. Many remember Murray as a kind and generous listener – never rushing or offering a quick fix, but being present with those he cared for in a moment of need.

From a young age Murray understood that hard work led to pocket change. In high school he pumped gas and sold Fuller brushes door to door, learning early on how to make a sale and how to make customers happy. At Hughes High School, Murray played football, swam and was an all-around great guy.

When he set his sight on young Florence Hiudt, Murray didn't know he'd get the entire Hiudt mispocha as well. Florence sealed the deal by making Murray an apple pie on their first date. They were married August 26, 1951.

The newlyweds settled into their apartment on Dana Avenue and it wasn't long before Steve and then Laurie were born. When Mayme told Murray that Florence needed more help, Murray re-



Murray Guttman

sponded to his mother "I only make seventy-five dollars a week!". Mayme replied, "Well, I guess you'll have to work a little harder". Hard work and big ideas came easily to Murray.

In 1955, the young Guttman family moved to their first home on Meadowridge Lane where Harold and Louis were born and then, in 1962, into their home on Laurel Oak that so many remember fondly. Florence wanted a true California-style contemporary ranch but they didn't have money for a marble floor so to make Florence happy, Murray worked with their dear friend Rubin Slovin to claim the remains of a US Post Office demolition to complete Florence's marble floor. As the family grew roots on Laurel Oak, Ian completed the close knit family. Regardless of what time Murray came home from work, the family gathered around the dinner table together.

As a budding entrepreneur, Murray started to build his business legacy. During the early years of Murray's ca-

Over the years, their house became "home" for many friends, community members and extended family. Murray and Florence were always willing to provide basic needs and emotional support to the people who took shelter and lived in the safety of the home Murray and Florence created.

Monday through Fridays were for hard work but the weekends were for fun. Murray and Florence had lifelong friends – there were golf games, dinner parties and card games. On many Sundays, the entire Guttman/Hiudt crew would gather for some healthy baseball or football competition in the backyard finished off with a picnic and Meemaw's famous assorted cookies and cakes.

Florence and Murray loved to travel. Whether it was a weekend in Bermuda or an epic tour of Asia, Florence, along with Dollie and Bert Levine, schlepped Murray on many trips that he loved. As the family grew, their travel agenda included big family trips to Hilton Head with all of the children and grandchildren that created many years of amazing memories and joy.

Commitment to the Jewish community was so important to Murray. When he and Dick Shenk, of blessed memory, co-chaired both the Federation annual campaign and the special campaign for Operation Exodus to bring Jews out of the Soviet Union, record amounts were raised. The slogan that year "We Stand Together So No Jew Stands Alone" was personal for Murray. In 1970, he and Florence, along with a local group, traveled to Russia with Rolly Schwartz and the US Boxing Team, where they met Florence's cousins, Paula and Edward Kuchmar. They worked with the US government for several years and in 1975, the Kuchmars arrived in Cincinnati from the former Soviet Union.

Shep Englander, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati said "Murray Guttman led when asked. He did serve as the Federation's Annual Campaign Chairman and he was proud of that. But he did not seek to be in the spotlight. But he had an enormous influence on those around him. His influence was driven by his values. They were relatively simple. He put his family and his Jewish community before everything else. He led by example. He just did what he thought was right. Every day. He inspired his family to be deeply devoted to each other and to their Jewish community. And the Jewish community has been deeply affected by

