

ALFRED GOTTSCHALK

For Rabbi Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, the Holy One had a special plan, a special purpose and a unique providence. The very day that he was born....March 7, 1930 ...was a Friday erev shabbos. But not only was it an erev Shabbos. It was erev Shabbas Zachor.....erev the Sabbath of Remembrance preceding the festival of Purim.

I know of no one more deserving or better suited to be born Erev Shabbas Zachor....the Sabbath that includes the commandment “to remember.” Of all of Fred’s outstanding and wonderful attributes, it was his dedication to the memory of the entire seep of Jewish history and to the full scope of Jewish civilization that was the most distinguishing aspect of his life. Every day for Fred was a day on which he fulfilled the commandment to remember. His entire life was a realization of the commandment never to forget. Whether it was the history of the Holocaust or the history of Zionism; all of the personalities whom he encountered in his wonderful career; all of the teachers and luminaries long gone who inspired him; all of the events in which he participated.....what tied them and Fred’s life all together was his passion for the word Zachor...remember. And so for Fred the Torah portion

of his birth was not merely just another Torah portion. For Fred, his sidra was his sign; his parasha was his portent; his drash was his destiny.

When Fred became the president of HUC in 1971, he was all of forty-one. Never in his wildest dreams could he have imagined that he was going to hold that position longer than any of his predecessors ever did, and probably longer than any of his successors ever will. And for Fred these were years of tremendous innovation and expansion: the first ordination of women as rabbis and cantors; major expansions of the College-Institutue; For Fred, no task was too difficult; no mission was too impossible; no effort was too exhausting. I know of no other person who was ever so capable of building from the bottom up. And if it happened that a bottom didn't actually exist, then Fred knew how to create one. He didn't just need students to start a program. All Fred ever needed was a vision. He would create the vision, and then everything else would fall into place.

He was one of the bravest people I ever knew. He had many lives...as a child in Germany; as a young immigrant in B'klyn; Boys High School in the legendary days; Brooklyn College and HUC in New York; then to Cincinnati, and upon ordination in 1957, sent to Los Angeles to build HUC, and then back to Cincinnati. Watching Fred over the years was like witnessing the wonderings and the struggles and the challenges of the Jewish

people and of Jewish history. He went wherever and whenever the Holy One demanded.

He and I were both young kids when we lost our fathers....each to the same disease...leukemia. And for so many years and no matter where he lived or what his lot, Fred always took care of his mother Irna, and his Uncle Julius and Aunt Alice. He now joins them all in eternity.

And life ultimately yielded for him the greatest blessings ...Mark and Rachel, Charlie and Andy, and then those who came through marriage Debbie, JB, Dawn, and Amy, and all the grandchildren. May the Holy One never forget the love and the care given to Fred by his children and especially his three eldest granddaughters who alternated sitting vigil for 11 months.

And through thick and through thin, Jeanna was always with us too.

He was a virtual part of my own family and my family a part of his. Syl was in charge of his office for his entire presidency. We all stood by one another as we watched our lives unfold together.

Fred had a very full life – even at times too full. There were hopes that were unrealized, and dreams that were unfulfilled. The Holy One did not lead him the straight and easy paths. There were long distances, and there were long issues. Those who loved him ultimately understood. The greatest tragedy – the loss of Dee— who slips further and further away from him...and

from us all. This was the beginning of his final days. And the terrible accident hastened the process.

His seat at the college – in Temple Emanu-El – at shabbos in my home...it's now empty. His place in our hearts...that's eternal. Wait for us Fred, and we shall wait for you. Pray for us, Fred, and we shall pray for you. Zecher Tsaddik livrocho...the memory of the righteous is a blessing.