

Happy 60th Murray and Lila Kirsh



Murray and Lila Kirsh celebrated 60 years of marriage by establishing another enduring commitment, this time to Baycrest.

The couple, who marked their 60th wedding anniversary last June, are very pleased that their children, **Este, Eric and Howard**, chose to establish a special gift fund at the Baycrest Foundation in honour of their marriage milestone. “Baycrest is always in need of funds because they’re trying to keep

everything first class,” Lila explains. “We’re glad we’re able to help Baycrest keep up its excellent work.”

Murray and Lila’s long-term involvement with Baycrest began more than 50 years ago. Murray, a life member of the Men’s Service Group, helped out with everything from membership drives to hosting Mazel Tov nights for residents and helping create the annual Fun Run along with Phyl Goldner. Lila began her Baycrest service as the first beauty salon receptionist and is a life member of the Women’s Auxiliary.

The couple, who still live down the street from Baycrest, recall responding

to a request from then Baycrest CEO Sam Ruth to help new Yiddish-speaking residents settle into their new home at Baycrest. “We’ve always been willing to do whatever Baycrest asked of us,” the Kirshes say. “It makes us feel like we’re giving back to the community.”

These days, Murray remains actively involved with overseeing maintenance issues as part of Baycrest’s preventive maintenance program with the physical plant. “I help make sure the engineering systems are working properly and that the buildings are well maintained,” he explains. “I like feeling that I’m still making a worthwhile contribution.”

The Lieberman family is attached to Baycrest

Thanks to **Nathan Lieberman**’s love of music and his commitment to Baycrest, residents of the Apotex Centre, JHA, will be enjoying the sound of music for years to come.

“My husband and I have been supporters of Baycrest for as long as I can remember,” says **Frances Lieberman**, a life-time member of Baycrest’s Women’s Auxiliary. “It just came naturally to us.”

When their daughter **Susan** read an article in Baycrest’s Attach Your Name Newsletter she and the rest of the family thought it would be a great idea to honour Nathan by making a special gift to Baycrest after he passed away in 2004. Having loved to play the violin and listen to all kinds of music, Frances agreed that purchasing a new entertainment unit for residents in memory of her husband was the perfect tribute. “Nathan would have loved knowing somebody was enjoying music thanks to his generosity,” she says.

Frances is also pleased that her six grandchildren will be able to take pride in their grandfather’s contribution for many years to come. “Because of this gift, our family will have a meaningful and lasting connection to Baycrest and I know Nathan would have been very happy about that,” she adds.

In addition to their ongoing financial support, Frances volunteers for various research projects. “Baycrest does so much for others that I feel it’s important for me to do my part.”



The Lieberman family



Norman and Sharon Bacal

When it comes to Baycrest, **Norman Bacal** doesn't mind mixing his personal life with business. In fact, according to the tax law expert who is a managing partner of Toronto's Heenan Blaikie, the two are quite a good fit.

"There are some very good natural synergies, such as the estate work we do and the Baycrest Foundation's planned giving program, that allows our firm to use its expertise for Baycrest's benefit," explains Bacal, a

member of the foundation's professional advisory committee.

The firm, which is one of five sponsors of the foundation's planned giving program, is very committed to community service, especially in the area of education on such topics as elder abuse. Norman is particularly impressed with the way Baycrest applies its approach to caring for Holocaust survivors to all seniors who are victims of trauma. "Baycrest's sensitivity to the unique experiences and needs of Holocaust survivors serves as a valuable community resource," he says.

"The more my wife, **Sharon**, and I learn about what Baycrest does, the

more it becomes the focus of our commitment to community service," he adds.

In addition to volunteering his time, Norman, whose daughter **Vanessa** also volunteers at the facility, has recently deepened his financial commitment by making a four-year pledge to support the annual campaign.

In recognition of their generosity, Norman and Sharon Bacal have been added to the prestigious Annual Campaign Circle of Honour. "My commitment to Baycrest is long-term," he says. "I want Baycrest to know it has my support for years to come."

Endowment fund recognizes long-time volunteer

Providing hope through his active involvement with Baycrest was something **Joe Kichler** felt compelled to do ever since the Holocaust survivor and Schindler's List member was rescued from death at the hands of the Nazis. After suffering a debilitating stroke in 2002, it was Joe's turn to receive hope from Baycrest.

For more than two decades, the modest, unassuming husband and father volunteered with the Men's Service Group. But his commitment to community

service didn't end there. Although his children, **Steven** and **Harry**, knew of their father's involvement with Baycrest, Beth Emeth Congregation and the Zaglembier Society, they didn't know about Joe's deep dedication to Holocaust education.

Harry and Steven didn't know their father spoke regularly to students as well as adults about his Holocaust-related experiences, until they found thank-you letters written by those whom his words had touched. "Although we had never known this side of our father", explains Harry, "we did know he was always committed to community and to Baycrest in particular."

"Helping out at Baycrest was a big part of his life," wife Jean echoes. In recognition of Joe's strong connection to

Baycrest, Harry and Steven established an endowment fund in both their parents' names to help mark a special anniversary and to help Baycrest meet its most pressing needs.

The Kichlers weren't given much hope following Joe's severe stroke at 83. After being transferred from an acute care facility to Baycrest rehab, Joe, who doctors predicted would never recover, started to make tremendous progress. "Amazing things began to happen once he was at Baycrest," Harry says. "My father improved so much that eventually he was able to come home."

"Baycrest gave us hope when there really was none," adds son Steven, crediting Baycrest's Jewish environment along with its incredible staff for his father's dramatic improvement. "It's where he wanted to be."



The Kichler family



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Knowing that three generations of his family were residents of Baycrest causes **Joel Miller** to feel an innate sense of responsibility when it comes to supporting the place his father, grandmother and great-grandmother once called home. One could even say Baycrest runs in his blood.

“Baycrest has been an important part of my life for as long as I can remember,” says Joel, whose recollections of his family’s strong connection to Baycrest go as far back as his teenage years when he first learned to drive. Joel remembers looking forward to getting in the car and driving to visit his grandmother **Mary Etkin** at Baycrest where she lived for almost eight years before she passed away in 1965.

After his father, **Jack Miller**, suffered a stroke at age 73, leaving him with dementia, he too moved into Baycrest to receive the kind of care he couldn’t receive at home. “He needed a lot of supervision and it was just too much for the family to deal with,” Joel explains. “Not only did Baycrest provide excellent care for my father, the staff provided my family and me with the support we needed to cope with his difficult condition.”

To show appreciation to Baycrest for years of care and compassion and to pay tribute to his family’s long

association with the facility, an endowment fund in honour of **Jack and Dora Miller** was established after Jack passed away in 1994. “My father had a saying about charity that a person should ‘give until it hurts,’” Joel explains. But after taking an early retirement, Joel and his wife, Sara were hard-pressed to make the kind of contribution they wanted to make to Baycrest until their investment advisor suggested they purchase a life insurance policy naming Baycrest as the beneficiary.

“It was a win-win situation,” Joel says. “Purchasing the life insurance policy allowed us to make a significant gift to Baycrest without drawing on our own cash reserves. It’s truly a great product for people who want to be generous but have limited access to funds.”



Joel and Sara Miller

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Baycrest has always played an important role in the lives of **Florence and Sydney Cooper**. So when the couple recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary it was no surprise they chose to include Baycrest.

“Baycrest was the natural choice,” explains daughter **Tobie Bekhor**, who, together with husband **Ted** and siblings **Richard and Clara Cooper** and **Lynda and Steven Latner**, organized a party and established a Baycrest special gift fund in recognition of the big day. Friends and family were invited to make contributions to the fund in honour of the anniversary, which took place on May 19th.

“Both my parents have a long and meaningful history with Baycrest, which is why we chose to make it a part of our celebration,” Tobie adds. “For my parents’ 50th wedding anniversary we asked that donations be directed to Baycrest in lieu of other gifts and when my father celebrated his 80th birthday five years ago, Baycrest was once again the charity of choice. This 60th anniversary fund builds on this tradition.”

The Cooper family gathered with close friends and relatives at Toronto’s Four Seasons Hotel to celebrate the monumental milestone. The fund, which raised about \$60,000, is the largest special gift fund to date.



Florence and Sydney Cooper, May 2006

Florence and Sydney credit exceptionally generous friends and family for the fund’s success.

“We were simply overwhelmed by the tremendous response,” Florence says, adding that it demonstrates that “those close to us realize how strongly we feel about Baycrest.”

Sydney and Florence’s involvement at Baycrest goes back to the 1970s.

Florence is a lifetime member of the Women’s Auxiliary and has been the lead patron of several special events, including *Tables of Distinction* and *Still Hot at 50*.

Sydney first became active at Baycrest in 1979, when friends and Baycrest visionaries Sam Ruth, Abe Posluns and Eric Exton asked him to chair the building committee in charge of constructing Baycrest’s new 300-bed hospital. Later, he lent his engineering experience and expertise by serving as co-chair of the building committee for the Apotex Centre, Jewish Home for the Aged, and served on the boards of the Baycrest Foundation and Baycrest for many years. The Baycrest Men’s Service Group honoured him in 1992 with their Man of the Year Award, and in 2002, he became a Baycrest Honorary Director.

“My husband and I, as well as our children and grandchildren, have always held a special place for Baycrest in our hearts,” Florence says. “Sydney and I are so pleased to be honoured in such a meaningful way by our dear friends and relatives.”



Florence and Sydney Cooper on their wedding day, May 19, 1946

Gift to annual campaign ensures continuity



Milton Shier

Long-time Baycrest supporter **Milton Shier** can't really explain the reasons behind his strong commitment to Baycrest except to say, "It's what we Jews do."

But when pressed further the 89-year-old retired businessman reveals a strong family connection to Baycrest which began with his parents, **Sadie Shulman**, one of the founding members of the Moshav Zekaynim, Baycrest's predecessor on Cecil Street, and **Joseph Shier**, who supplied

marble counter tops for the dining room at the same location.

"My parents didn't talk much about tzedakah or their community service...they just did it," explains Shier, who was just 10 years old when he accompanied his father on the Cecil Street delivery. He still recalls the pride his father exuded on that day. "I remember realizing that this delivery was special because we were doing something for

our community," he says. "It's part of our culture. It's just who we are."

Later, Shier, who took over the family restaurant and store fixture business, ended up outfitting Baycrest with a new kitchen when it moved to Bathurst Street. His ongoing connection to Baycrest also revolved around regular visits to the father of his first wife, **Shoshana**, when he became a resident for five years following a stroke.

After Shoshana passed away in 1954, Shier remarried **Joyce Levy** and continued to be a strong Baycrest supporter. Although he retired more than six years ago, he still keeps regular hours at his mid-town Toronto office where he spends most of his time on philanthropy and helping people in the community.

When it comes to Baycrest, he admits, there isn't much to contemplate. "It's one of the most important Jewish institutions in the world," says Shier, who recently joined the Baycrest Foundation's Circle of Honour by making a four-year commitment to the annual campaign. "Continuity is very important to a place like Baycrest. It should be more than a one-time commitment."

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Attach Your Name to Baycrest is published semi-annually to keep you up-to-date on events, individuals and programs that relate to activities at Baycrest.

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