

# Lea and Richard Rubenstein

I was nineteen years old when in the summer of 1966 I had a personal life changing experience as a young Jewish man. I was participating in a college mission under the auspices of the JDC (Joint Distribution Committee). It was a moving and enlightening 10 week trip throughout Europe, North Africa and the Middle East visiting the various programs and agencies that



JDC supported worldwide. During that summer, I discovered my Jewish roots and became quite interested (both emotionally and intellectually) in the future of the Jewish people. And as a “bonus” I met my future wife Lea (now some 45 years ago) in the HIAS office in Vienna. She was a refugee from Czechoslovakia. I met her for about 30 seconds and the rest, as they say, is history.

Of course, it was only natural for me to take an interest in Jewish philanthropy. My parents, Florence and Charles Rubenstein, were inspiring role models. I have always been very proud of the legacy they left in this great community by caring, giving and leading many of our Jewish agencies both in Hartford and throughout the world.

I eventually followed in my Dad’s footsteps when I served as President of the Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford as well as President of Congregation Beth Israel. I am currently First Vice Chair of the Hebrew Home and Hospital which my father headed in the 60’s. Lea has contributed her wonderful talents by serving as President of Jewish Family Services and the Jewish Historical Society and continues to be active in Women’s Philanthropy for the Federation. We are thrilled that our children, Anne Neuman and Peter Rubenstein, are carrying on this commitment in their own lives. In fact, we are very proud that Peter has just become President of the Charter Oak Cultural Association in Hartford.

Seven years ago we created a legacy at the Jewish Community Foundation in honor of my parents. It has been a pleasure to work closely with Deborah Rothstein, Vice President of Philanthropic Services at the Foundation. Deb has been a great source of information and guidance and has also been a catalyst for our membership in the Israel Fund.

Lea and I are also establishing additional family legacy funds through the Foundation so that we may continue our ongoing support for Jewish causes long after we are gone. - February 2011

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