

I recently read a quote describing someone as being a goliath of intellect that influences with a wondrous heart. I love this phrase, and I can't think of a more perfect time to apply it. I'm here tonight to toast my Faith Levy. My predecessor, my mentor, my running inspiration, my friend.

It is a rare and brilliant person that humbly shares their intellect, and yet is always seeking knowledge.

I was lucky enough to hear from Faith herself that so much of her drive for continued learning and growth comes from her parents, and very specifically her Dad, of blessed memory. She doesn't stop at educating herself though, Faith loves to share her learnings with her community, and ensure that more people have the opportunity to learn, individually and as a group. Culminating in so many exceptional adult educational programs at Shearith over the years. Faith champions education in her home, as evidenced by her accomplished kids, in her work at Emory University, and in her volunteer time at Shearith and beyond.

Faith lives all three pillars of our Shearith foundation...Torah, Avodah and Gmitut Chasadim. She often takes a stand in areas that cross all of them. Like her insistence on English translations of Hebrew or yiddish phrases in our writings to ensure that everyone that crosses our path is included and has the opportunity to learn.

Faith is a prophet of courage...quietly and behind the scenes she did the exceptional work of executive VP and added more and more to her already full plate, handling things that quite literally nobody had ever faced before.

- When Nancy Green moved her family to Equador, Faith simply absorbed the Organizational VP duties in addition to her own.
- When Rick Kaplan's term was coming toward an end, Faith worked tirelessly with the nominating committee to find the right candidate for President. And she did 😊. Faith worked with Rick to create, define and gracefully navigate Shearith's first-ever Co-Presidency. And then stepped right up to be half of it!
- And then the most obvious of unprecedented events...COVID. Faith stayed calm and curious during the pandemic, always referring back to our mission and commitment to community first. She made decisions that nobody had experience in making.

During this tumultuous time, Faith's leadership helped accomplish so much.

- Closing our doors and building virtual community
- Reopening MS

- Transitioning to a new high holiday prayer book
- Oversaw the overhaul of the process for selecting future leaders. Ensuring that the experience I had as I considered this big role was a kind, thoughtful journey. She learned from her experience and made it better for the next guy. That's all you can ask a leader to do.
- Implemented a long overdue bylaw requirement of an annual board assessment, to ensure that we are always looking at ourselves with critical and future-forward eyes
- An extraordinarily successful annual appeal campaign in the heat to uncertainty of pandemic times...reflecting just how committed and connected people felt from a distance.
- Support and partnership in developing Equity @ CSI – our first committee focused specifically on equity, education and inclusion.

Faith told me that one of her favorite things about her Presidency was writing welcome letters to new families. Faith is an eloquent writer, so it doesn't surprise me that she took this on with gusto. But what I love is that she knew this was an opportunity to share who WE are, by being who SHE is.

I'm honored to be here tonight to celebrate you Faith...you create space for everyone around you to be heard and that is the sign of an irreplaceable friend and history making leader.

The best part is that Faith is just getting started. In her role as Past President, She has been a partner on the Executive Committee anticipating potholes along the way. She was critical in the creation and kickoff of the Past President's Council that will light the way for generations of leadership, and we know she'll continue to invest in our educational offerings. Faith, there is so much written about you, but in the words of Natasha Bettingfield, today is where your book begins...the rest is still unwritten.

On behalf of the congregation, the Executive Committee, the Board of Trustees and very very much me, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your service and the love that you have poured into our community. Shabbat Shalom