

# Amy Abrams

## Honoree, Past President 2017-2019



Amy grew up in Glencoe, Illinois, in the northern suburbs of Chicago. She and her family belonged to North Shore Congregation Israel, a large classically Reform Temple where both Amy and her only sibling Kathie attended through Confirmation.

Amy graduated from Grinnell College, Iowa, Phi Beta Kappa with an AB in American Studies, and a teaching certification for secondary school Social Studies. After a year of substitute teaching, she shifted to abstracting real estate titles, then became a paralegal, all in Des Moines. That experience led Amy to study law, graduating from The University of Chicago Law School and practicing real estate finance law in Chicago. She met her husband Arnie Graber when they worked together in a large Chicago law firm. Amy then moved on to the Finance branch of the Law Department at Allstate Insurance Company. They married and moved to Evanston, close to Northwestern University's football stadium and Mustard's Last Stand hot dogs.

Their three children, Scott, Elizabeth, and Melinda were all born in Evanston. Eventually, Arnie took a job as general counsel to a company in Fort Lee, and they moved to Tenafly. Amy stopped practicing law to become a full-time mom, active in the Tenafly Home School Association. After a few years at the local Temple Sinai, they joined Temple Emeth.

Both Amy and Arnie got involved with Temple activities, each serving on the Board of Trustees for a few years. Amy subsequently became an Officer, first as Assistant Secretary and then working her way up to President in 2017. She also became a Bat Mitzvah as part of Rabbi Sirbu's Adult B'Nai Mitzvah class. Along the way, Amy worked on a wide variety of committees and task forces, including acting as liaison for the rental of our school wing, facility rentals and addressing security issues, contract negotiations, running the Activities Fair with Carol Shansky, serving on the Strategic Planning Committee, and co-chairing the 2005-2006 Strategic Plan Implementation Committee with David Fox. Amy served on the BARJ reorganization task force and chaired the 2014 Silent Auction. It wasn't all work, though – Amy had a great time being in the cast for both *Fiddler on the Roof* and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (including sewing costumes), enjoyed working at Bazaar, polished the silver annually under the direction of Laurel Kane, and organized a knitting group of Temple members.

Amy's Presidency focused on the implementation of the newly adopted Voluntary Commitment program, working closely with the "Nuts and Bolts" committee. She also concentrated on strengthening Emeth's internal community aimed at involving Temple newcomers. With the national political environment becoming more strongly conservative in 2017, she also enthusiastically encouraged participation in the activities of the Social Action committee and the Religious Action Center of the URJ.

During her tenure, Emeth upgraded its database system to ShulCloud, and we evaluated our employee health insurance coverage. While she served in this role, we also celebrated Cantor Tilem's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as our Cantor and sadly, commemorated the terrorist attack on the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh. Amy's favorite part of the presidency was getting to know as many congregants as possible.

Amy and Arnie have traveled with the Temple to Prague and Israel in 2017 and on the Civil Rights Trail trip to Alabama in 2019, as well as visiting their children in their respective pursuits around the globe. Outside of Temple, Amy reads a lot of books and pursues a variety of crafts, including ceramic pottery, metal jewelry, knitting, crocheting, and sewing, as well as anything else that is not housekeeping!

Amy wants to thank Arnie and her kids for supporting everything she has done at Temple. She notes that none of the activities listed above were accomplished alone, and extends her gratitude to the many friends, congregants, staff, and clergy who participated, led, or assisted along the way.

