

Louis and Gail Feinstein
Tiferes Yisroel Anniversary Concert Honorees

Congregation Tiferes Yisroel is proud to announce that Louis and Gail Feinstein are this year's anniversary concert honorees.

Louis, a native of Baltimore, grew up in a warm, traditional Jewish home. His connection with a former college fraternity brother who had become an Aish HaTorah rabbi based on Potomac, Rabbi Chaim Feld, first led him to Rabbi Goldberger. Through his friendship with Rabbi Feld and his family, Louis began to experience the beauty and depth of a Torah lifestyle. However, but with his second year of law school beginning, Louis was unable to continue to go to Potomac for Aish HaTorah events, so Rabbi Feld then recommended that he contact Rabbi Goldberger and Etz Chaim's Rabbi Porter in Baltimore. Louis soon went to an Etz Chaim class led by Rabbi Goldberger and inspired by the Rabbi's words, decided to see what his shul was like. When Louis showed up on a Friday night several days before Rosh Hashanah, he was moved by the incredible spirit of the davening and the genuine welcome he received. He decided then and there to come regularly to "Rabbi Goldberger's shul."

Gail, a Milwaukee native, grew up in a close-knit family with a strong Jewish identity. Active in B'nai Brith and Reform youth groups as a teen, Gail attended college at the University of Michigan, later moving to Oregon in search of spiritual community and the beauty of nature. Ironically, Gail and Louis attended the University of Michigan at the same time but were not destined to meet until years later. It was in Oregon that Gail met a group of Shomer Shabbos people for the first time, and this encounter inspired her to study in Israel, where she learned at the Midreshet Rachel seminary for eighteen months. She decided to return to the United States to attend graduate school in social work, and it seemed that everyone she knew in Israel and Milwaukee told her that the place for her was Rabbi Goldberger's shul. Sure enough, on her first visit here, davening Shabbos morning in the old TY garage, she fell in love with the shul, and immediately chose Baltimore as her new home, where she developed a close relationship with the Goldbergs, and found the wonderful and inspiring community she had always wanted.

Hashem orchestrated Louis and Gail's first meeting in 1994, shortly after Gail's visit to Baltimore. Louis, on his way to the airport to leave for a year of learning at Machon Shlomo in Har Nof, stopped to say goodbye to his close friends Aaron and Shoshana Shamberg. While Louis was speaking with Aaron on the front porch, Gail, literally having just pulled into town, came to get the keys to the apartment she had rented across the street from the Shambergs. Aaron introduced the two, and unbeknownst to them, the seeds for a future life together were sown that day.

The following summer, Louis returned to Baltimore and to Rabbi Goldberger's shul, where Gail was now a regular attendee. Mazel brought Louis and Gail to the same Shabbos tables — at all three meals — on Louis's first Shabbos back from the Holy Land! Conversation ensued, followed by the formation of a slow but steady bond that led to dating and, finally, marriage in January of 1998, with Rabbi Goldberger, of course, as mesader kiddushin.

The new couple settled into Gail's apartment, and within a year a son, Yaakov Chaim, was born. Sadly, Yaakov Chaim a"h, was born with medical challenges, and passed away after only one year of life. Reflecting on this part of their early married life, Louis and Gail are quick to point out that, despite the pain of such a loss, there was an incredible outpouring of compassion and a remarkable level of support by the Rabbi and Rebbetzin and the TY kehilla that, to this day, has left a deep and indelible impression upon this resilient couple. Louis and Gail have been blessed with three more children -- Sivia, 17, Avraham Meir, 14, and Eli, 11, and much of their energy and dedication to their Judaism is invested in their parenting.

The Feinsteins have always sought to make a contribution to Rabbi Goldberger's shul. As a new member, Gail was a regular on the old Motzei Shabbos cleaning crew, and has also put her efforts over the years into arranging and promoting shiurim given by the Rabbi and Rebbetzin, contributing to Camp Shabbos and Camp Yom Tov activities, shalosh seudos meals and holiday events. After suggesting to the Rabbi that a hospitality coordinator would relieve him of this responsibility, she was immediately "hired" and has served in the role for 13 years. Not only does she ensure that visitors to the community have places to stay and Shabbos and Yom Tov meals to share, but she is a resource for those looking to relocate to Baltimore. A therapist by profession, Gail readily shows empathy and grace and makes it easy for guests with whom she interacts to view Tiferes Yisroel as a natural stopover and desirable spot to revisit.

Louis was a shul officer for three years and served as the Purim card coordinator. He is a dedicated, familiar, and welcoming face on Shabbos, offering a smile, a handshake and a kind word to veterans and newcomers alike. As members of the kehilla, Louis and Gail are the preeminent face of all that is warm and welcoming about Tiferes Yisroel.

Both Louis's and Gail's parents have developed a warm relationship with the Rabbi and Rebbetzin over years of sharing life cycle events, and are grateful that their children have such dear friendships and the loving guidance and support of wonderful mentors.

The couple's relationship with the Rabbi, Rebbetzin and Tiferes Yisroel family has continued to deepen over time. Louis and Gail eagerly express their profound gratitude for the openness, passion, sincerity, kindness and acceptance that they see as the pillars upon which the shul stands.

The Feinsteins proudly stand for all that is great about Tiferes Yisroel and the Baltimore Jewish community. For all they have done for our shul and their many contributions to our congregation, we offer them our deep gratitude and proudly salute them as our honorees.