

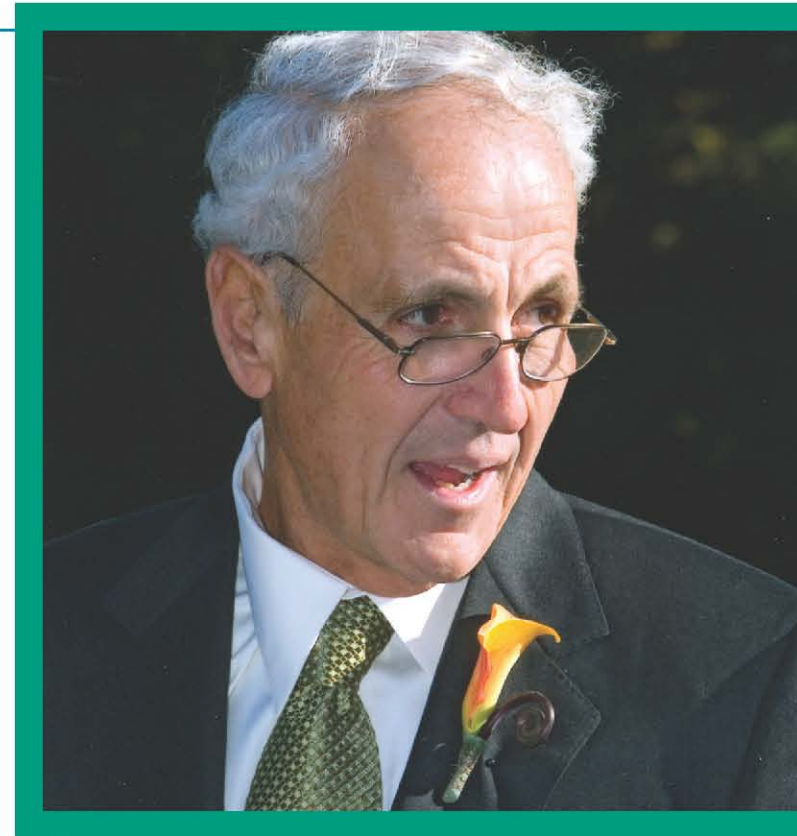
Gideon Rutenberg

I was born in Palestine. My mother, an American citizen and my father, born in Russia, were idealistic, pioneering Zionists. Together, they moved to Palestine and established a Kibbutz in the early 1930's. They left Palestine before the war in 1939, when I was five years old. My roots and connection to Israel have influenced my commitment to our Greater Hartford Jewish community and world Jewry.

Today, I am a retired businessman and the only member of my extended family in the Hartford area. As a young real estate developer in Hartford with three young children to support, I had little time to devote to volunteer activities. As my family matured, my Zionist roots prompted me to become involved with Jewish agencies locally for the sake of Jews here at home and throughout the world. My work with the Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford, the Jewish Community Center and the Hebrew Home brought me closer to my family traditions and reignited my commitment to Judaism.

The establishment of the State of Israel was a momentous event for my family. As time passes and American Jews continue to assimilate, the magnitude of that event will inevitably become part of a distant past.

I urge all people, young and old, to connect to their Jewish heritage by visiting Israel. It is very important for American Jews to maintain their cultural identities and understand the struggles of our ancestors. Israel must be visited to be understood...the spirit one experiences there is life changing; so many have sacrificed so much for a free Jewish State.



I feel it is my privilege and responsibility to leave a legacy to Jewish agencies in Greater Hartford. It is vital for the State of Israel and Jews worldwide to maintain strong Jewish communities throughout America.

I never take for granted the success I have enjoyed in Greater Hartford. This thriving Jewish community has a remarkable history of giving, caring, and sharing. My gift will help to ensure that this tradition is carried forward for generations to come. - April 2008

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