Kehillat Beth Israel 10 Years / Années שנים

OPEN DOORS, LIVING BOOKS –

Stories That Connect Us



A Collection of 20 Living Books

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2026: 1-4 PM

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1. My Name: Ralph Anzarouth

Book Title: *So How Did I Get Here?*

What My Book Is About:
My life has been full of twists and turns that have brought me to where I am today. The son of an immigrant Jewish Lebanese family, I grew up in Montreal with a foot in both my traditional Sephardic heritage and my Ashkenazi education. Today, my day job is managing a manufacturing organization, while at KBI I serve on the Board of Directors, chair the Ritual Committee, and am part of the Gabbai team. My 16-year-old self would have needed quite an imagination to dream up this journey!

My Biography:
In 1983, with a McGill Electrical Engineering degree in hand, I moved to Ottawa to begin my career at Bell-Northern Research. As an Orthodox Jew, I immediately joined Beth Shalom West in Craig Henry. In 1990, I joined Agudath Israel, after it became clear that an Orthodox shul was no longer the right fit for me. In the early 2000s, I became interested in the leadership of our synagogue, and eventually my involvement became, in many ways, inevitable! Fast-forward to 2015, when I was asked to join the amalgamation committee that developed the agreement creating KBI. I am very proud of what we have accomplished during our first ten years, and I am excited to be part of shaping the next decade.

2. Our Names: Judy & Michael Aranoff

Book Title: *How Two Maritimers Ended Up in Ottawa*

What Our Book Is About:
When the federal government department where Mike worked in Halifax, Nova Scotia, reorganized, we moved to Lahr, Germany, for two years, then to Ottawa. Our time in Germany gave us many memorable, once-in-a-lifetime experiences from a Jewish perspective. When we returned to Canada in 1992, we joined Agudath Israel and have been members of Kehillat Beth Israel (KBI) since its inception in 2016. Our book shares our experiences and challenges navigating life as Jews in Germany and our transition from a small-town community to a larger one.

Our Biographies:
Judy: I converted to Judaism in December 1979 while a member of Shaar Shalom Synagogue in Halifax, Nova Scotia. During my conversion studies, I became actively involved in congregational life, volunteering in the synagogue kitchen to help prepare weekly Shabbat Kiddushim and assisting the Gift Shop director with inventory management and sales during Jewish holiday fairs.

I began my professional career as a Library Technician in1977 at the Dalhousie University Library and continued in the field for nearly four decades. I retired in 2015 from the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board. Mike and I have two children: Jeremy Adam and Lindsay Tova, both of whom live in Toronto.

Over the years, I have volunteered with the Ottawa Kosher Food Bank, supported adult programming initiatives, and ushered during the High Holidays. I now volunteer at the Malca Pass Library.

Mike: I started working for the federal government in 1974, specializing in auditing and financial management. Over the years, I served on the board of Agudath Israel, chaired the building committee, and oversaw High Holiday usher scheduling, the Kosher food bank, and security ushering

3. My Name: Sarah Beutel

Book Title: *From Volunteer to Jewish Professional, A Link in the Jewish Chain*

What My Book Is About:
What began as a desire to connect to the Jewish community has turned into a career of work in the Jewish community. Important things in life rarely just happen and require intentionality and hard work. This conversation is about the challenges and highlights of working with people to build Jewish life and community for now and the future.

My Biography:
Originally from Montreal, I moved to Ottawa to study at Carleton University and have raised my family here in Ottawa with my husband, Steven Morgan. My family belonged first to Agudath Israel, then to Beth Shalom and now to KBI. I am the current President of the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (SJCC).

4. My Name: Dr. Howard Cohen

Book Title: *How the Torah has Helped Me Navigate Difficult Ethical Problems in Medicine and Life*

What My Book Is About:
As a busy family physician, I have had the honour of caring for a diverse population of patients since 1976. Some of my patients were strong social advocates who would challenge and coach me to deal with difficult ethical problems.

When my mother passed away in 1989, Rabbi Braun from Beth Shalom suggested I dedicate 15 minutes daily to the study of Torah. At the same time, Rabbi Fine of Agudath Israel started weekly sessions studying the Shulchan Aruch, “The Code of Jewish Law.” Rabbi Fine completed the study in the year following my father’s death in 2000.

Over the years, I was able to integrate the secular with the religious/ spiritual in approaching difficult ethical problems.

I would like to share what I have learned with you.

My Biography:
Our family has attended Agudath Israel since the 1950’s. Our extended family was very active at Beth Shalom. We have been blessed with the support and education gathered over the years. Our attachment has been enhanced over the past ten years with KBI. We look forward to the years to come.

5. My Name: Adam Dodek

Book Title: *Adventures in Law and Storytelling*

What My Book Is About:
The law has opened up many great opportunities for me. I was educated at four great universities (McGill, Hebrew University, Harvard Law School, and Toronto). I've worked at courts in three countries (Supreme Court of Israel, U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit, and Supreme Court of Canada) and I've worked in law firms in San Francisco and Toronto, for the Government of Ontario and as a law professor. This book includes chapters on the craft of storytelling about the people involved in law: lawyers, judges, and most importantly, the litigants whose cases changed the face of Canadian law and society.

My Biography:
I grew up in Vancouver and met my wife Nicole Goldstone in Jerusalem in 1995. She joined me on our adventures through San Francisco, Pasadena, Toronto, Ottawa and back to Toronto for a decade where our son Ben was born. We moved to Ottawa in 2009 and the Ottawa Jewish community embraced us immediately and we've found so many wonderful friends through KBI.

6. My Name: Barbara Farber

My Book Title: *A Family Legacy*

What My Book Is About:
The impact and influence of family, following in the footsteps of my grandparents and parents. My grandparents were the religious, business influencers and my parents, the educational and community influencers. It's a story of why I am who I am.

My Biography:
My grandfather, Harry Leikin, was the first and founding President of Agudath Israel Congregation. I began my life of community service by becoming the first woman president of my synagogue, a role that led to numerous leadership positions locally and nationally. I also started working in the family business with my grandfather 54 years ago, and, for the past 25 years, I have worked alongside my two brothers at Leikin Group. I went on to chair the Ottawa Jewish Federation and serve as National President of United Israel Appeal Canada, while also leading the foundations of Queensway Carleton Hospital, Algonquin College, and the Ottawa Heart Institute. My service further extended to the Ottawa Police Services Board and the Ottawa Airport Authority. Today, as Honorary Colonel of The Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa, I continue to serve the community I love. My contributions have been recognized with The Order of Ottawa, the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Medals, and the King Charles III Coronation Medal, but I consider my greatest legacy to be the family, values, and traditions I hope to pass on to future generations.

7. My Name: Cantor Jason Green

My Book Title: *The Heart of the Sanctuary: 45 Years of Jewish Music & Meaning*

What My Book Is About:
For 45 years in Synagogue music, 22 years as a Cantor, and proudly for the last 8 years here at KBI, my focus has been on bringing our ancient musical traditions to life. I believe that the melodies we share are more than just notes; they are the spiritual glue that connects us to our past and to each other. In this "book," I'll share what it means to be a guardian of these traditions and how we can continue to make our rich musical heritage accessible, vibrant, and deeply meaningful for our modern congregation.

My Biography:
A native of Montreal, I have served as Kehillat Beth Israel's Cantor since May 2018. Over my 22-year career in the Cantorate, which has included wonderful communities in the US and London, England, I have developed a deep love for teaching. At KBI, my greatest joys include being a senior clergy and leader for our congregation; guiding our B'nei Mitzvah students to meaningful bimah leadership on their Simcha day and beyond; teaching adults the skills of Hebrew reading and cantillation (trope) for Torah, Haftara, and Megillot; directing and arranging spiritual and familiar music for our very special volunteer choir; and finding moments of humour and connection with our community through the highs and lows of Jewish life. I am thrilled to share in this special milestone—KBI’s 10th Anniversary—with you!

8. My Name: Evelyn Greenberg

My Book Title: Shul and Me

What My Book Is About:
I decided to write this book, just for my family and friends, to celebrate my life as a Jew. Naturally, shul has played a constant role in these eight decades.

Music and worship go side by side in Judaism. As I was born to make music, the melding of both has always given me a happy place in synagogue.

From Adath Jeshurun to Beth Shalom and now KBI, walking into shul makes me smile.

My Biography:
I was born in Ottawa, married and raised my family here and taught at the uOttawa School of Music. Giving back to the community is in the DNA of my family. Whether volunteering as a pianist, fighting antisemitism or building bridges between Canada and Israel, I can do all this as a proud member of KBI.

9. My Name: Jeff Greenberg

My Book Title: *Where Westmount Met Lowertown: A Jewish Son's Story*

What My Book Is About:
I was one of five children raised by two Jews who came from entirely different worlds—my mother from Westmount, shaped by quiet elegance, independence, and acts of kindness like her work with the chevra kadisha, and my father from Lowertown, shaped by poverty, community responsibility, and the drive that eventually made him Ottawa's first Jewish mayor. Their unlikely partnership created a home where contrasts became values. This is the story of how their two worlds became the landscape of my own.

My Biography:
I have been a realtor with Royal LePage since 1991 and am committed to building community and fostering a strong sense of belonging. I serve on the KBI board, the Pride Committee and Building & Land Committee and chair the Membership Committee, reflecting my dedication to inclusion, engagement, and community service. As a proud ally of the 2SLGBTQI+ community, I also support and fundraise for a range of organizations.

My wife, Leanne, and I are proud parents of two daughters, Abigail and Elizabeth.

10. My Name: Barbara Levine

My Book Title: A House of Secrets

What My Book Is About:
My brothers and I always knew that my father Aron (Harry) Levine had come to Ottawa from Lithuania after WWII, but we knew nothing about his or his family's experience during the war. As we grew into adulthood, our dad recounted a few stories of 'narrow escapes' or outwitting the German occupiers, but never did we consider ourselves children of a survivor until one day, more than thirty years after he passed away and 75 years after the war ended for him and his family, we were contacted by a 'new' American cousin with an interest in our family history. That's when we started to dig deeper.....

My Biography:
My parents were members of Beth Shalom, it's where my brothers and I grew up and where my husband David Spring and I were married. After a three-year stint living and working in Indonesia, David and I joined Agudath Israel as young parents of two (seems like eons ago!). My career in international development, working on behalf of both the Canadian government and the non-profit sector, took me to countries in Asia, Latin and Central America, and southern Africa. But many KBI congregants know me better for my involvement over the last 15 years with a small but mighty local charity called the Multifaith Housing Initiative, which provides deeply affordable housing to hundreds of Ottawans in need of safe, secure, affordable housing.

The coming together of the two Ottawa shuls we belonged to seemed like a natural evolution, and David and I deeply value and appreciate the learning, connections and community-building we see taking place at KBI.

11. My Name: Marie Levine

My Book Title: *Capturing Memory with Light*

What My Book Is About:
I have always believed that each of us holds a light waiting to be released into the world. How that light expresses itself is different for all of us. After studying theatre arts at Ottawa University, I turned my love of performance to the studio. Theatre taught me how to take raw emotion, structural tension, and empty space and transform them into a story. In theatre, light is everything—it creates mood, reveals emotion, and defines the space. But performance is inherently ephemeral. The curtain falls, the lights go down, and the moment lives on only in memory.

I wanted to give that light a permanent home. My move into glass fusing was a natural evolution. I traded the heat of the stage lights for the literal heat of the kiln, discovering that the same principles guide both mediums. Instead of directing actors, I am directing materials. Instead of building tension in a script, I manage thermal tension in a firing schedule. Just as a lighting designer uses shade and color to evoke a feeling, I layer transparent, translucent, and opaque glass to capture, trap, and refract light. Glass fusing allows me to take the fluid, unpredictable energy of live performance and freeze it into something enduring. The kiln is my stage, the glass elements are my cast, and every time the sun hits a finished piece—or the kiln lid opens—it is opening night all over again.

My Biography:
About 17 years ago, while running KBI's gift shop, I began searching for meaningful, handcrafted pieces that could be treasured for generations. A local fused glass artist shared my vision and mentored me in creating glass menorahs.

Through years of hands-on experience, experimentation, and plenty of trial and error, I developed my skills and found my own artistic voice. Today, I continue to create menorahs, along with unique seder plates and mezuzahs. More recently, my husband Howie retired and started creating menorahs using wood and resin. In the summer months, as a team, we travel to craft shows and show our creations.

Each piece begins as an original idea and is lovingly handcrafted with the hope that it will be enjoyed and cherished for generations to come.

12. My Name: Orah Liss

My Book Title: *“Not All Those Who Wander Are Lost”: Experiencing Judaism Across Three Continents*

What My Book Is About:
A Jew from Germany who has lived in Scotland, Sweden, and Israel, and now studies Jewish literature in Canada: this “Wandering Jew” has experienced Orthodox, Reform, and Conservative Judaism, has lived in the most Jewish (Jerusalem) and in one of the least Jewish cities (Aberdeen) in the world, and has felt at home wherever she went. This book is about compromises, stubbornness, and the quintessentially Jewish ability to make any place a Jewish makom.

My Biography:
When I moved to Ottawa, I wanted to find a shul where full gender equality and halachic observance coexisted in (at least somewhat) perfect harmony. Thinking this was akin to finding a unicorn, I was mentally preparing for a long and disappointing search. However, after attending one service at KBI, I knew I had found my shul, so two years later I still have no desire to look anywhere else.

13. My Name: Fred Litwin

My Book Title: *Debunking Conspiracy Theories*

What My Book Is About:
The rise of social media has seen a corresponding rise in conspiracy theories. My major job today is to debunk the foundation of many conspiracy theories - the JFK assassination. Not surprisingly, many people are now blaming Israel for the assassination. To fight this disinformation, I have a blog and a YouTube channel. Another part of my story is my music company, and I will be handing out free CDs to everybody who stops to talk (My Tribute CD to Gordon Lightfoot).

My Biography:
I am the author of five books, including four which debunk conspiracy theories on the JFK assassination. In 2000, I founded NorthernBlues Music, a cutting-edge blues music label, that has released over 70 CDs and garnered twelve Juno Award nominations and over forty Blues Music Award nominations. In 2007, I started the Free Thinking Film Society to showcase films on liberty, freedom and democracy. The Society has sponsored more than 100 events which included four film festivals, multiple book launches and panel discussions. In 2007, the Iranian Embassy in Ottawa stopped the showing of one of my films and that prompted the intervention of the Canadian government.

14. My Name: Michael Moskovic

My Book Title: *Following in my Parents' Footsteps: Moskovics Thrive on Volunteering*

What My Book Is About:
The book is about my life in a traditional Jewish household in Ottawa's west end. My parents had three children - me, Bev and Lawrence. My father is a Holocaust Survivor, and my mom was Canadian. It highlights my family's attachment to Conservative Judaism. It cites examples of our volunteerism in the Jewish community, especially in this building.

My Biography:
I am a second-generation member of Agudath Israel / KBI. My parents were active volunteers at Agudath Israel. I try to emulate their volunteerism. From my days at the Junior Congregation to the present day, my shul membership has spanned many decades. Celebrating family simchas in this building has left me with lasting memories.

15. My Name: Carol (Dubinsky) Pascoe

My Book Title: *Expect the Unexpected: Life is a Crapshoot*

What My Book Is About:
I had a wonderful upbringing in the 1950s, 60s and 70s in Nova Scotia: family, friends, Jewish summer camp, education, community and the luxury of never really having to think about the future. At 24, life came calling. With a Master's degree and a job offer in Ottawa, my supportive husband gave up his law career in Halifax and said: "You should take the job. Let's have an adventure." 51 years later, we look back upon this decision as pivotal. In Ottawa, I became an adult: public servant, mother/grandmother, caregiver of parents, volunteer, member of a community, student of guitar, baker, Blue Jays fan. No regrets, only deep appreciation for that decision and all that followed it. My book would be about life's unexpected routes, the occasions when you may have to overcome fear, and the importance of partnership and friendship.

My Biography:
I was raised Orthodox and had a thorough Glace Bay Hebrew School education. In 1984, the birth of son number two caused only one challenging issue: who will I sit with at Machzikei Hadas where we had belonged for a decade? I could not sit alone. I went to see Rabbi Bulka and told him I had to leave and go to that shul somewhere in the west end where I can sit with my family. He was so nice to me. It was a major decision; I had no clue what being Conservative meant. Happily, I have felt at home since day one, Agudath Israel and then Kehillat Beth Israel. Both sons' Bar Mitzvahs and one son's wedding at shul. I have been a Board member, Committee member, B'nai Mitzvah liaison, Bulletin proofreader, and my most cherished and fun memory, chair of the catering for Rabbi Fine's retirement dinner (440 guests). All labours of love.

Our shul is a family, and we are obliged to check in on each other to make sure we are OK. Our first responsibility is to each other; the outside community can come next. I feel strongly about this: we are not "the biggest" or the "best" in town; we are our own Kehilla, and we need to consistently honour and respect all our members.

16. My Name: Rabbi Kliel Rose

My Book Title: *The Other Side of the Bimah*

What My Book Is About:
For most of my adult life, I've stood on the other side of the bimah: leading services, teaching Torah, officiating at life's biggest moments, and helping people navigate moments when there are no easy answers. But what happens when the rabbi becomes the newcomer, the one who doesn't know where everything is or quite how things work? This is a story about rabbis, communities, transitions, and what we discover when we allow ourselves to be strangers again.

My Biography:
I was ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary in 2004 and have served Jewish communities in a variety of places, and now Ottawa. For the past eight years, I have served as Rabbi of Congregation Etz Chayim in Winnipeg, where I have focused on teaching, pastoral care, community building, and creating meaningful Jewish experiences. I am now beginning my next chapter as Senior Rabbi of Kehillat Beth Israel and am looking forward to discovering the people and stories that make KBI a community.

17. My Name: Suzi Shore-Sauvé

My Book Title: *Transforming Empty Spaces*

What My Book Is About:
My belief since youth is that people who feel secure and comfortable are more likely to succeed. This pertains to people from all backgrounds. So, when my father (of blessed memory), said “wouldn’t it have been nice if someone had helped his parents when their families came to Canada”, it resonated with me. Giving people the basics to live in a respectful way would go along way to establishing their lives in their new country. This book is a view into how I make this come to fruition.

My Biography: My family were founding members of Congregation Beth Shalom. In fact, my father ran the business while my uncle physically stood and watched as the rebar was laid into the ground to help support the new building at 151 Chapel Street. This building became our “home away from home”, hosting many of our simchas from generation to generation. The natural progression was for me to become an active member at our amalgamated shul, Kehillat Beth Israel.

18. My Name: Naomi Starosta

My Book Title: *If I Tell You, I'd Have to Kill You*

What My Book Is About:
Tikkun olam, or repairing the world, is a core Jewish value we have placed at the centre of family life (now with three young adult sons). I have set an example with my legal-compliance career in anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism. Every day, I encounter a secretive and scary underworld of crime, corruption, terrorism, and fraud. My job is to use Big Data to bring the perpetrators' activities to light for prosecution and help governments and banks keep the financial system safer for the rest of us.

My Biography:
Our family arrived in Ottawa in 2023 and joined KBI within a few months. After several years of membership, my husband Yaron is now the Executive Director. For me, KBI is a place where I feel at home as part of a vibrant community. I have made enduring friendships while having fun at congregational events, learning and reflecting through adult education opportunities, and spending meaningful time in the pews on Shabbat and holidays.

19. My Name: Laurence Wall

My Book Title: *On the Air: A Life in Canadian Broadcasting*

What My Book Is About: I worked with CBC Radio for 44 years at four stations, the last being CBC Ottawa from 1993 to my retirement in 2024. I was the afternoon newscaster in Ottawa for 28 years. During that time, I estimate that I prepared more than 50-thousand newscasts and news updates. I also voiced the National Research Council's Official Time Signal ("The beginning of the long dash...") every day at 1:00 pm. Over the years, I've also MC'd hundreds of concerts, moderated panels and interviewed authors for both Jewish and non-Jewish groups in the community, including Agudath Israel/KBI.

My Biography:
Synagogue was always important to me growing up in Winnipeg at the Shaarey Zedek. So, my family and I joined Agudath Israel in 1993 soon after we arrived in Ottawa. Our daughters had their bat mitzvahs there so we've spent many hours at the shul over the years. Aside from the spiritual connection, I've sung in the shul choir, served on the shul board and have written articles for the shul bulletin.

20. My Name: Sheldon Wiseman

My Book Title: *Sailing Uncharted Waters*

What My Book Is About:
This book tells the story of a life that took many unexpected turns. I grew up in a small town in Ontario, became a lawyer, started businesses, got involved in politics, and eventually spent 40 years producing television programs seen around the world. None of this was planned. Looking back, I can see that the most interesting opportunities came from following my curiosity, taking risks, and saying “yes”, even when common sense might have suggested otherwise.

My Biography:
I grew up in Smiths Falls, Ontario. After careers in law, business, and politics, I spent more than 40 years producing television and film projects broadcast in over 135 countries. Now retired, I enjoy reflecting on the unlikely journey that took me from a small-town upbringing to an international career in entertainment.

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