

Rutgers Hillel Mourns the Passing of Edgar M. Bronfman



Edgar M. Bronfman

New Brunswick, NJ (Dec. 23, 2013) – Rutgers Hillel joins with the many voices across the global Jewish community in mourning the passing of Edgar M. Bronfman, a guiding force and visionary Jewish leader, who was fundamental in molding the modern Hillel movement and a strong influence on Rutgers Hillel.

Mr. Bronfman, the founding chair of Hillel International’s Board of Governors, passed away Saturday, December 21, from natural causes.

He particularly enjoyed meeting Jewish students and personally visited more than 130 college campuses on five continents including a visit in 2005 to Rutgers Hillel, forging a personal connection with Hillel Executive Director Andrew Getraer.

“I am grateful to have met Mr. Bronfman when he visited the campus to kick off the Rutgers Hillel Capital and Endowment Campaign,” reminisced Executive Director Andrew Getraer. “I remember our conversations to this day, as he gave me tremendous strength and inspiration.”

Getraer is still touched emotionally when he remembers standing in Winants Hall before an audience that included the university president, the Hillel board and numerous New Jersey Jewish leaders, when the great philanthropist “put his arm around me and called me a great Hillel director.”

“In his memory,” Getraer said, “we will work even harder to make Rutgers Hillel a leading organization in shaping the Jewish future, to build the finest Jewish center in the country on our campus – thinking of him every day as we do it.”

The Capital and Endowment Campaign kick off ceremony at which Mr. Bronfman spoke is in its final phase having raised \$12 million of its \$18 million goal. Groundbreaking is expected in the spring.

Getraer explained that Rutgers Hillel strives to mirror Edgar Bronfman’s own views by offering students diverse opportunities and portals to Judaism. “The essence of my Judaism,” Mr. Bronfman was quoted as saying, “is my pride in Judaism, The only way you can have pride is to have knowledge. The only way you can have knowledge is to study. I would like every Jew to be as comfortable in his skin as I am in mine.”

“Edgar was a visionary leader and philanthropist, as well as a dear friend and partner, who paved the way for many who shared his commitment to sustaining the Jewish future,” said Lynn Schusterman,

Chair of the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, and a former co-chair of the Board of Governors. "His tireless devotion to the global renaissance of Hillel is testament to his vision."

"Edgar Bronfman was the great Jew of his era," said Michael Steinhardt, a former co-chair of the Hillel International Board of Governors. "He had both courage and integrity. Edgar was a true friend. We toiled in the same vineyard of Jewish renaissance and he was always optimistic and encouraging. I will miss him sorely."

Every year there is intense competition among recent college graduates to join Hillel International as the Bronfman Fellow, working in the Office of the President. The current Bronfman Fellow, Mia Jacobs of Millburn, sister of Rutgers student Danny Jacobs, said "Hillel has made me who I am, and Hillel is what it is today because of Edgar Bronfman. But I am only one of the countless Jewish students who have benefitted from Mr. Bronfman's incredible generosity. He believed in Jewish leadership and a bright Jewish future, and he believed that we— young Jews— were the ones to get us there."

Edgar Bronfman was buried in a private family service. A public service will be held in coming weeks. The family asks that donations be made to Hillel, MyJewishLearning.com or Bronfman Youth Fellowships in Edgar's memory.

Our condolences go to the entire Bronfman family. May they be comforted among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Hillel Chairman Edgar Bronfman Visits Rutgers University Hillel

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<http://www.njjewishnews.com/njnn.com/2005/111005/njhillel.html>