

# DARRELL FRIEDMAN

## A Professional Leadership Career

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Sitting across from Darrell Friedman, it is difficult to view this dynamic individual as retired. Even when sitting, an energy level and aura of vitality radiate from him. Indeed, Darrell's retirement is anything but. He has really just moved on to the next phase of life.

Paying tribute to Darrell Friedman has been an expression of collegial pride and satisfaction in the accomplishments of a professional whose work reflects well on our entire profession. We applaud his success and view his leadership as a paradigm for the field.

Darrell's success comes as no surprise to those who have known him since childhood. His parents moved west, to San Francisco, seeking a better life, and Darrell grew up in a middle-class family that stressed traditional values. He speaks reverentially about his parents and with deep pride for their ethics and work values. Ever since grade school, he has been on a leadership track, serving year after year as a class officer. Yet, even as a high-energy person, Darrell takes time to open doors for others or to leave work to greet an out-of-town visitor at the train. His accessibility is legendary, and one is left with the sense that this is a man who *cares* for people.

In the societal turmoil of the late 1960s, Darrell was stirred by the growing interest in ethnic pride and cultural expression. He was proud of his Jewish identity and felt compelled to take the opportunity to help the Jewish people. He became president of the Northern California region of AZA of the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization during high school and began to hone his leadership skills through their programs. Daniel Thursz, z"l, was the executive director of B'nai B'rith at that time and became a role model

for Darrell. Everyone seemed to expect that he would lead, and Darrell met their expectations, deciding to work in the Jewish community while still a teen.

After graduating from UC Berkeley in 1964, Darrell entered their School of Social Welfare seeking a graduate degree and was on a direct track to enter Jewish communal service. His plans changed after his father's sudden death in 1965, and he took a job in business that allowed him to remain in the San Francisco area and assist his mother. Although well paid, Darrell felt unfulfilled in business. He soon realized that he needed to follow his dream to work in the Jewish community.

Darrell convinced the federation leadership in Rochester, New York, to take a chance on him, and he moved across the country in 1972, now married and with two children, Marty and Jill. He became the federation's associate executive director and began to build his reputation as a tireless worker and consummate fundraiser. Four years after arriving in Rochester, he became the executive director of the federation.

Darrell was then asked to join the staff of the Council of Jewish Federations where he served as a senior associate executive vice president. His marriage ended, but Darrell remained in daily phone contact with his children and visited them frequently. His children and four grandchildren are compelling reasons for his early retirement.

In New York, Darrell was introduced to Felice Shapiro and, as the couple jokes, he married into the family business. Felice is the cousin of Steve Solender and the niece of Sanford, z"l. She holds a master's degree in Early Childhood Education from Bank Street College of Columbia University and was in national demand as a lecturer.

Nonetheless, when their son Jacob was born, Felice recognized that their household was a whirlwind of activity that required her attention. Darrell's pace and intensity necessitated a calm home life, which Felice created. Darrell acknowledges and appreciates the partnership he has with Felice, commenting that his work has been "24/7." Felice has also been recognized for her own volunteer activities and received the respected Golda Meier award in Baltimore.

When the federation leadership of Baltimore hired Darrell as their federation's executive, they were looking to create a new model. They saw the role as similar to that of a university president and supported Darrell in his natural instincts to reach out to diverse sectors of the community, both Jewish and non-Jewish. He took some initial risks that later proved to be pivotal for Baltimore. As Darrell relates, early in his tenure, one of the Orthodox Jewish day schools was in serious financial straits and faced the threat of closing. Leadership was divided on whether to allocate funding to religious institutions, and, at the time the Orthodox community was somewhat tangential to the federation. Nonetheless, Darrell could not turn his back on the school, and he convinced the leadership that funding it was the right thing to do. It was a pivotal turning point, and today the Orthodox community participates fully in the activities of THE ASSOCIATED.

Darrell takes risks with people, as well. Recently, he was asked to help a young filmmaker find financial backing for a documentary. "What do I know about filmmaking?" he asked rhetorically. He answered his own question by adding, "But I know fundraising." He was moved and identified with the young man who wanted to complete a film about his father, the little-known but creative architect, Louis Kahn. Today, "My Architect" is being shown in art cinemas and is a contender for an Academy Award. Darrell Friedman is the film's executive producer.

Darrell takes pride in his leadership and also feels there is a duty that comes with the work. "Leaders have a responsibility to the

institution they steward," he explains. "They must leave the institution from a position of strength." Being a role model is important to Darrell, and he is particularly proud that Baltimore's leaders renamed the Jewish communal service program in his honor—it is now known as the Darrell Friedman Institute. He is pleased to see that the program has a multi-million dollar endowment and a strong board. "It bodes well for the future and for the development of Jewish communal leadership," Darrell says.

Because Darrell and Felice always planned to return to New York so they could be closer to family, Darrell knew he wanted to plan for his successor at THE ASSOCIATED, as well. Darrell brought Marc Terrill back to Baltimore and began a planned succession as mentor and partner. "The transition has been seamless," Darrell beams.

If there have been disappointments in Darrell's career, they are few. "I have really been privileged," he notes. "But I would like to see our field advance further." Darrell now has more opportunities to fulfill that wish. He has a half-time consulting position with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, serves on foundation boards, and mentors colleagues across the country—perhaps full-time work for most people. He is trying to say "no" to further requests because "this is family time," he says.

He acknowledges that leaving Baltimore was hard and praises the community for how far it has traveled. When he came there it was a divided community—racially, Jewishly, and religiously. Darrell worked with leadership to address these divisions and earned the affectionate title, "Jewish Mayor of Baltimore." At his retirement party, a major donor commented on Darrell's ability as a consensus builder and his ability to move the community in the right direction. Cardinal Keeler of the Baltimore Archdiocese described him as a quiet giant with an ability to resolve conflicts. Numerous political and civic leaders were on hand to applaud his accomplishments for Baltimore and the Jewish community.

Darrell's tenure in Baltimore will leave a long legacy. His high standards and responsibility for leadership are benchmarks for the field. He is mission-driven to do the right thing, which moves him to take risks. He has reached out to all segments of his community

and nurtures leadership. He takes pride in his heritage and encourages younger professionals to build their careers in the Jewish community. He is the embodiment of the professional who is making a difference, and his example illuminates all of us.

*"That man deserves the highest honors who does not ask for them, but performs worthy deeds."*

—Yiddish saying

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