

History is a fascinating branch of learning. Dates, names, places, and events are recorded but are constantly being interpreted and analyzed. There are no precise mathematical formulae in this discipline; everyone is entitled to an opinion about causes and effects.

Perhaps we Jews, with our heritage of 3000 years, are especially attuned to the significance of history. Everything is relative. This country is a little more than 200 years old. We have just joined in celebrating Israel's 31st birthday. Our Pittsburgh Federation is now 67 years old, while the year-round Women's Division has just completed 20 years.

Because history is a continuum, it is virtually impossible to establish a perspective about the times in which we live. Most of us don't stop to think that we are each a part of history. People play many roles in relation to the course of the world. Some are absorbed in their own affairs and remain unaware of broader trends or issues. Some are passive; they shrug their shoulders and believe that all of life is "beshairt". Some people are unwittingly thrust into history as events, often traumatic ones, propel them into the mainstream. In every age there are the rare few who choose to participate actively in their world. These people display vision and tenacity. They don't settle for the easy way. They have the courage of their convictions, are willing to shoulder responsibility, and dare to take chances to achieve their goals.

We all applaud Sylvia Robinson's leadership. She is one of those participants in history. Beneath that cool quiet is a deep dedication to the Jewish people and a determination to work for their survival. Serving as Chairman of the Women's Division campaign when the Yom Kippur War erupted, Sylvia was able to make quick decisions and galvanized us all into actions required by the emergency. Certainly the heartwarming disabled Israeli veterans program, which she adapted and pioneered on this continent, is another example of her awareness of

history. Other Americans had also heard about this project, but our Sylvia was the first to envision its feasibility for the United States and to work out the endlessly complicated details necessary to translate it into reality. Pittsburgh is proud to have the privilege of being the model for this program in the entire country. After each of her study missions with Don to observe little-known JDC activities, Sylvia's trenchant reports have broadened our knowledge about our fellow Jews in Roumania, Iran, and Hungary.

As the 9th President of the Women's Division, Sylvia has brought this sense of history to her administration. With a firm sense of past accomplishments, she has not settled for the status quo, but has analyzed present needs and looked for new ways to meet them. She is able to strike a balance between stability and change. Looking to the future, she has constantly encouraged young leadership. She initiated several exciting programs. In September, the first all-day Board Retreat set the tone for a productive year. In October the Vanguard Division kicked off the overall 1979 campaign at the festive Previn-Rosen taping at WOED, a real coup for Women's Division. Another first, a management-training session, sharpened our leadership skills.

Sylvia rises to the challenge of history. Our world is better because she has participated with a full heart and shared herself with all of us.

It is only fitting that our tangible tribute should be of historical significance. This sterling plate is centered with a relief by the renowned sculptor Jacques Lipchitz, titled "The Struggle". It was commissioned by the Israel Museum of Jerusalem in 5733, to commemorate the founding of the free State of Israel on May 14, 1948 (Israel's silver anniversary). This is a limited edition. The plaque reads "In appreciation to Sylvia Robinson, President, Women's Division, United Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, 1977-1979."

It is my privilege to present you with this Certificate of Award from the Women's Division of the Council of Jewish Federations, the national organization which binds together almost 200 Federations throughout North America. Council unifies the efforts of North American Jewry in support of Jewish life and Jewish survival all over the world, locally, nationally, and overseas.

The security and well-being of Jews has always depended upon a sense of mutual responsibility and mutual concern. CJF's Women's Division feels that it is important to present this award because it demonstrates the interrelationship between the activities which take place in Pittsburgh and world-wide Jewry.

This certificate of appreciation is presented to you as our outgoing present for all of your efforts in the past two years, and through you it is symbolically presented to all of the women in this community who have <sup>helped to</sup> make your leadership vital and significant.