

Let me begin by saying how meaningful it is and how exceptionally honored I am to be receiving the Spector Award.

I would have liked to be able to accept and express my gratitude in person, but many months ago, My husband, Nick and I had decided to observe Yom Kippur in London with our family there. So unfortunately this video will have to suffice, though I know it can not truly convey the sense of pride and excitement I feel.

In reading about the Spector Award, I was struck by the fact that it was established not by the funds contributed by a single individual, nor a particularly wealthy one, but by a group of friends and colleagues of Emanuel Spector, who had worked together with him in advancing the causes he supported, and who shared with him over 6 decades ago, the commitment to a newly reborn state of Israel. That resonates deeply with me, not only by having adopted the very same causes, but in the great satisfaction that I have derived not by my

efforts alone, but in working alongside so many other dedicated individuals, volunteers and professionals, who serve and contribute to our community. And in that vein, I want to offer my congratulations to Rabbi Rosenblum and all those honored this evening for their service and leadership in our much blessed Pittsburgh Jewish community.

I am particularly delighted to be counted among the women and men who have previously received the Spector award, individuals whose long history of involvement and leadership I admire, and many of whom have directly inspired and mentored me. Though perhaps there are none more so than my own parents, who jointly received this award 34 years ago. My Mother and Father, Ethel and Bernard Halpern were involved in providing for and promoting the health and welfare of both Pittsburgh and our Jewish community. I'm proud to carry on their commitment and involvement, their teaching and example. The concept of from generation to generation is one that is taken very

seriously in my family, a tradition that I first learned at Shabbat dinners at my grandparents. And I want to acknowledge them, and all the members of my family; my husband, my children, my brother, cousins, aunts and uncles, parents and grandparents who have actively involved themselves in the Jewish community, here and abroad, and who I truly believe stand alongside me in receiving this recognition.

At tonight's Annual Meeting we are celebrating journeys, and bridges to the future. Perhaps one of the most significant paths on my own Jewish journey was my involvement in the Soviet Jewry Movement that started in London in the early 1970s, and then bridged the Atlantic when I moved back to Pittsburgh in 1978. The success of that long and difficult struggle, one that initially was rather dismissed by the Jewish establishment, is never far from my conscience. I came to know the real heroes of that struggle, the dissidents and refuseniks of the former Soviet Union who at tremendous risk stood up for their beliefs and embraced their Jewish

identity. That's when I saw first hand the importance and results brought about by activism and speaking out. It brings to mind other struggles; personal, institutional and political in which as Jews we have engaged and which we continue to confront. And it confirms for me how important it is to act on our responsibility to our fellow Jews. To practice civility and to respect the differing opinions and perspectives of others To on occasion speak out even when our views are questioned and unpopular. To bring those who are distant or marginalized into a circle of a caring and inclusive community. I appreciate that our Federation values all that, and has enabled me to have a voice, and to learn and grow by listening to the voices of others. The pylons that underpin our bridge to the future are based on just such values, and I am certain will ensure a just, humane and thriving community.