

Share My Dreams

A Memoir

By William Stark

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I started out wanting to share with my grandchildren some of my pleasure in having "done my thing." Then I realized that some of this history may be of interest to others. So many of my contemporaries helped create a climate that inspired me to try to "make a difference." They have my highest respect, and my thanks, for helping to make much of my life meaningful. It was fun getting here, and I am sincerely grateful for having had so many opportunities.

PREFACE - TO MY GRANDCHILDREN

My brother Sidney, Jr. once told me that nothing gave him greater pleasure than to see his children accomplish something beyond anything he had done, or could have done. I share this feeling, and I have enjoyed seeing my children, your parents, engaged, in their own way, in the struggle to build a better world. There is no nobler or more exciting pursuit, and I consider their efforts the fulfillment of my fondest dreams.

I offer this book to you, my grandchildren, in the hope that you will be inspired by your progenitors' efforts to make a difference -- to make the world a better place. I hope you will share this belief that the right way to live includes the longing to make a difference and have one's life really count, the desire to fulfill the Jewish mitzvah of "tikkun olam." I hope that each of you takes advantage of every opportunity to contribute a portion of your life to the betterment of the common weal.

I have been fortunate in having had many opportunities to engage in the affairs of my community and of my business, and I have found great excitement in doing so. I firmly believe that, for every person who is creative and open to the possibilities, many such opportunities will present themselves.

As a sample of the many different ways one determined person can make a difference, this memoir was compiled to show what some members of our family have chosen to do. I hope each of you will find his or her own way, because the world will benefit so much. And so will you.

IN THE BEGINNING - MY DAD, SIDNEY SENIOR

My dad Sidney Stark came to this country in 1905 at age 12 from Stanislaw, in what is now Poland but then was part of Austria and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He arrived alone with minimal schooling. Nevertheless, he was a voracious reader. I always said that he was better read than anyone I'd ever known, including my Harvard Law School professors. When he died, he had five books on the night stand and was part way through each.

My father was a true scrounger, a hardy survivor. He had to have found relatives immediately after his arrival, because he was a great "family kind of guy." I remember going to Far Rockaway with him when I was eight to visit with his numerous cousins, some of whom I noticed, even at my young age, were very pretty females.

On dad's mother's side the family names were Boxer and Lipschutz. On his father's there were Starks, including a cousin Mack Stark who became general manager of Mills Music and attained a wide reputation in the music publishing business. He "discovered" Morton Gould and LeRoy Anderson. Mills was a well-known music publisher from around 1910 to the mid 1960's. Mills was later merged into MCA.

My father's first job was delivering glassware from the East Side to wealthy families uptown. On his first trip he decided to save the five-cent trolley fare he had been given by hopping onto the back of a wagon going uptown. Of course his package fell off the wagon, smashed, and ended this job. He scrounged for other jobs but, to my knowledge, during this period, he never had adult supervision.

In his late teens, my father went to work for the International Ladies Garment Workers Union as an organizer. At this time he developed extraordinary skills as a street-corner speaker. When we subsequently moved to Pittsburgh, I had an opportunity to witness his skill at Saturday night street-corner rallies among the steel workers and railroad workers (Eugene Victor Debs' boys) on Second Avenue and Flowers Street in Hazelwood. It was 1931 and I was 14.

My job was to circulate among the crowd and pass out literature extolling the advantages of Socialism and soliciting votes for Norman Thomas, the Socialist candidate for President in 1932. I had heard Eugene Victor Debs, Robert LaFollette, Fiorella LaGuardia, and Bishop Fulton Sheen speak publicly, so I feel qualified to judge a good public speaker, and my dad was one! I am especially proud of the fact that my father was entirely self-taught. I am not aware of any formal program he attended, even to learn English. Knowing his drive to make a buck, I doubt he was likely to stop long enough to listen to a teacher.

In his early twenties dad went to work for a New York clothing company called ROMBRO and they sent him to Pittsburgh in 1916 to manage a store on the corner of Fifth and Smithfield where Mellon Bank is now located. The store had ten tailors and dozens of salesmen. After several months my father quit because he didn't approve of their pay practices and thought his staff was being short-changed.

He immediately went out to Braddock and got a job with Abe Ohringer who operated the largest furniture store in the area. Six weeks after my father arrived, the other salesmen went to Mr. Ohringer and asked him to fire my dad because he was making all the sales and they were losing out on commissions.

My dad quit rather than continue to hurt family men with children. He went across the street and opened up a men's clothing store in partnership with his older brother Lou. Stark Brothers at 819 Braddock Avenue stayed in business until 1924. It took my father until 1940 to pay off all the debts that resulted from the failure of that business. Uncle Lou moved to Charleroi to manage a Cox store and died in the mid 1960's.

Lou had two sons. James Faber Stark was the child of Lou's wife Mary and her first husband who died in World War I before James was born. James became a very successful science teacher in the Pittsburgh Public School system. Lou's son Harry Stark became a professor of Labor Relations at Rutgers University.

My grandmother Stark arrived in Braddock in 1920 with a recipe for strudel which I remember to this day. She had been a midwife in Europe. She is buried in Forest Hills. My grandfather Wolf Stark, after whom I was named, evidently died in Europe because we were never invited by my father to visit his father's grave. He had come to America years before my father and had returned to Europe at least once. He and my grandmother had 11 children, only three of whom survived to reach the U.S.

My father could read, write or speak nine languages. He read many of the dozen daily and weekly German newspapers being published in Pittsburgh in the 30's. These he found at Oswald and Hess, the largest meat-packer in the area and a friend and customer of his. He also read the Jewish Daily Forward, which was days and even weeks ahead of the New York Times in its coverage of what was happening with Hitler and his persecution of Jews. Today, the Forward is making a comeback, publishing weekly in English and Yiddish.

My dad was a *helluva* fellow, probably one of the most popular people who ever lived. In the 20's, before he moved to Pittsburgh and became active in the Jewish community, there were a group of Christians who would take him fishing and hunting, even though he had no rifle and never caught a fish. He was a good poker player, a good pool shooter, and just great company.

He was extremely affectionate with my sister, about as affectionate as he could be. If she had to make a choice, I'm sure she would have favored my father over my mother. He also seemed quite affectionate with my younger brother Karl.

By the time Sidney, Jr. came along, he was a more relaxed father and his style may have changed, but he never hugged or kissed me. It was just a sad thing that has always been a source of great pain for me. I'm pretty sure that he was proud of me in his own way. He just didn't have a way of showing it. After a while I didn't care. I spent so much time alone, literally and figuratively, that I finally said "the hell with it."

(Sidney Stark Eulogy, 1960, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

(Genealogical Chart, 1998, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

IN THE BEGINNING - MY MOTHER, SADIE

My mother Sadie came to this country in 1908 at age fourteen, 38 days out of Hamburg, Germany, in a small ship with hundreds of people sick in the hold. She had two younger sisters in tow.

They had started in Buccacca, a small village in eastern Romania where their father had been a grain dealer. An older brother and older sister had preceded Sadie, and the siblings stuck together, living at 13 Ridge Street on the East Side of New York. Their mother remained in Romania, where she died at age 39 after having sent all seven of her children to the United States.

My mother had four years of schooling in Romania, at a Catholic school where the anti-Semitism was quite nasty. Her father had provided a childhood which was relatively comfortable economically, but filled with the rough anti-Semitism known best by Romanians. He died in this country, but we were never told where he was buried.

Sadie became a neckwear maker and a leader in the union. Having rejected the orthodox Judaism in which she was raised, she found a new "religion" in the Socialist movement. She was always an independent woman. She marched with Margaret Sanger in 1916 at the beginning of the women's movement that led to the growing opportunities that exist for women today.

She had to work to survive, so Sadie had little time for study. She learned English by reading magazines. A slow but deliberate reader, she formed a reading circle among Jewish housewives of her acquaintance. They met every Monday afternoon and, while their babies slept, they took turns reading and discussing Schopenhauer and other philosophers.

The reading circle helped to alleviate the boredom of child care and housework. I remember her peace of mind after these sessions. Conversation was "medicine for the soul" for my mother.

Sadie was a literalist. She had trouble understanding how, in the United States, a man could call another man an s.o.b. and then say he was only kidding.

My mother's older brother David went to Cooper Union night school in New York and became a C.P.A. He changed his family name Abromowitz to Braham to enable him to succeed in the accounting profession. He had three sons, Marvin, Lionel and Harold.

Sadie's older sister Dora married Max Perlmutter, brother of the famous Jewish poet Sholom Perlmutter. She had two children. Her son Joshua became an art teacher at Drexel Institute in Philadelphia, and her daughter Leah Semmel raised a family in Philadelphia where she lives today.

Sadie's younger sister, Rose, married Frank Strick, inventor of the aluminum trailer that you see on the highways, the Strick Trailer. They had six children. Their oldest son, Leonard, is the only one not living. Their second child, Edith Shepherd, is a retired psychiatrist living in Meadowbrook, Pennsylvania.

Their son, Joseph Strick, who produced the movies "Ulysses," "The Balcony" and "Never Cry Wolf," lives in Paris with his second wife, an officer in the French government. Maida Gordon is a widow living in Miami Beach. Gertrude, a former candidate for the U. S. Congress, lives in Philadelphia, and the youngest child, Jacob, lives at Aventura in North Miami.

Sadie's younger sister Gertrude had two daughters, Shirley and Marilyn, with her husband Paul Lessem, a box maker who shunned the Union. Box-making was an art form in the early 20th century, but because of his anti-union stand he was never allowed to fulfill his potential.

Aunt Bella was the only child of my grandmother's seven children who had the opportunity to go to college. She went to Hunter College and married a wonderful man, Aaron Paltiel, a Canadian. Aunt Bella became president of Hadassah in Montreal, Canada.

Uncle Aaron Paltiel was a realtor and an older man. In return for a favor to Queen Victoria, he was granted life income from Queen Charlotte Island in the mouth of the St. Lawrence River. A kinder man never lived.

Aunt Bella and Uncle Aaron had six children. Their son Khayyam was a professor at Carlton College in Ottawa and their son, Ephraim, a taxi driver in Vancouver. Their son Daniel, a labor arbitrator and economist for unions, had three children: Harriett, a professor of Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School; David, a professor of Economics at Yale; and Ellen, a lawyer.

Bella and Aaron's daughter, Naomi Paltiel Lowe, has been a well-known obstetrician/gynecologist in Montreal for 50 years. Daughter Leah married a Spectropatist named Moishe and they lived in Ottawa and had one daughter. Daughter Judith married Allan Flom from whom she's now divorced, and they had three children: Suzanne, a Urologist in Chicago; Jonathan, a lawyer in Florida, and Amy, an architect in New York.

Sadie's youngest sibling was Uncle Charlie. He was a happy man with a fine voice but, an early victim of Polio who died in his youth, he never had a chance. My maternal grandparents had 23 grandchildren but didn't live to know any of them.

Like my father, Sadie was a voracious reader, albeit a slow one. She was also a great listener and always encouraged young people to talk. My mother worked and remained active in her union and in the Socialist party. In those days the union was the "in" place to meet other young people.

Free love abounded in the time of her youth and Sadie was a radical woman. Nonetheless, she was a literalist who was strongly committed to family values, and she convinced my father Sidney that marriage came before sex.

Even after moving to Pittsburgh, in 1917 when I was six weeks old, Sadie maintained the habits of a New Yorker. She never drank Pittsburgh water. She was so spoiled by the lack of taste in New York's water that she waited from year to year until she was in Manhattan to partake. She loved to walk and did it out of sheer enjoyment. She never lost the "country girl" in her.

In her travels to New York, Sadie accumulated birth control information. I remember her drawing the drapes in our dining room, sometime in 1926-27, and spreading the materials out on our dining room table so she could teach our Christian neighbors the fundamentals of birth control. Sadie may not have accumulated the material trappings of the upper middle class milieu in which we ultimately lived, but she was a wonderful human being just for her sheer humanness.

Sadie had grown up on a farm and had been entrusted as a young teenager with keeping the books for her father after her two older siblings had departed for the United States. She was evidently sensible and responsible enough to be trusted to go to America with her 10- and 12-year-old sisters.

My mother trusted me and respected me and made me aware of that at age eight or nine. She let me do the shopping. I would come back to her and describe the judgments I had made: the Eight O'clock Coffee was 23 cents and the Bokar was 35 cents, so there was no sense in buying the Boker when the benefit was the same. The apples were three for 10 cents and the oranges were three for 13 cents, so I bought the apples. Until the day she died I made her beam.

My parents were married in New York City on December 25, 1914; one of the few days in the year that the "greenies" had off. They had both come from orthodox homes and had both revolted against organized religion. Both had become active in the Jewish Socialist movement which was prominent on the East side of Manhattan. When teenage kids travel in the hold of a ship for 38 days to a strange land, where they learn that women have rights they did not have in Europe, especially in orthodoxy, revolt is not difficult to understand.

(Sadie Stark Eulogy, 1985, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

(Genealogical Chart, 1998, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

MY GENERATION

My parents lived a most interesting life, always maintaining hope for a better world. I often wondered if Sadie herself listened to the birth control information she had taught our neighbors. My sister Leah was born in February, 1916, I in September, 1917, and my brother Karl in February, 1919, less than three years separating the three of us.

When Sidney, Jr. was born in June, 1928, he was the seventh full-term baby my mother Sadie had carried in 13 years. Between Karl's and Sidney Jr.'s births she lost three full-term pregnancies through doctor error. I suppose there really was nothing to be done in those days. Still, I never heard my mother place blame or complain about being pregnant. All of life's processes were normal in her mind and nothing was too much of an effort.

There was, however, some discomfort suffered by the three of us older children. We were required to wash diapers, clean the house and literally raise ourselves while mother was almost constantly pregnant.

I don't remember many fights between my parents, except about money. Sadie was a good financial manager and Sidney was not. My father's attitude toward money was to enjoy what he had and not waste time worrying about what might be. He chose to take life as it came, working hard and keeping going, while mother was always concerned with feeding her kids.

Though Sadie rejected her orthodox Jewish upbringing, she had a more tolerant regard for believers than did my father. On the other hand, when my father died, a half dozen rabbis came to the funeral parlor to tell us how generously my father had supported them.

I now believe that my father, more than my mother, maintained fears or superstitions with regard to his family's religion. We never had an opportunity to confront him with this. The dinner table constantly resounded with heated discussions on every conceivable subject, but this sort of confrontation would have been difficult, and probably of little interest to us as children.

All my mother's siblings settled in this country and embraced Judaism in one form or another. My parents did not go to religious services. The only time my mother went into a synagogue was on Rosh Hashanah. She went to Greensburg to hear Perry Morrison sing because he was Sidney Jr.'s closest friend and he had a beautiful voice. And what was the impact of their beliefs on their children and their progeny? We received no religious instruction whatsoever and even went to school in Squirrel Hill on Yom Kippur.

My sister Leah married a Jewish man, Maurice Freedlander, and their two sons were given a Reform Jewish education. The elder, Barrett, is raising three Jewish children. He practices law in Baltimore and is a trustee of the alumni association of the University of Pennsylvania. The younger, Howard, a colonel in the Maryland National Guard, writes speeches for the Governor of Maryland. He married a Christian woman and has one daughter being raised Episcopalian.

My brother Karl married a Catholic woman and his five children were raised without any religion. The eldest son was married in Catholic church and the other four appear to have no interest in religious affiliation.

My brother Sidney's eldest son Seth, a lawyer, was married in a Conservative synagogue in Washington, D.C., and his youngest son, Sidney III, is not yet married. Sidney's family belongs to Rodef Shalom.

I sat in Rodef Shalom on the holidays for 57 years, bored to tears and never touching a book. I did this to keep the peace and to support my wife in her beliefs. My father would not have stepped into a synagogue for any reason.

I tried to create a climate wherein my wife could believe and observe as she wished and my children could do likewise, with complete freedom. I take pride in not having demanded obeisance as a condition of living in peace with their father. I only asked that they listen to my point of view.

My daughters are very comfortable in the practices of Judaism. They were trained in Reform Judaism and choose now to light Friday night candles and maintain Jewish households. Both married men who had been raised in Conservative Judaism and both seem to enjoy their "duties" as Jewish women, but I believe that both have also reserved their right to think independently. They make me proud!

All four of their children read Hebrew, observe holidays with their parents and seem to enjoy being Jewish. They went to college and preserved their Jewish identities. In my 60 years of fundraising in the Jewish community I have managed to preserve my beliefs, as well as the rights of others to hold to theirs. I thoroughly enjoy being Jewish and fulfilling what I understand to be my Jewish responsibilities.

In essence, my parents' children remained Jewish and took responsibility in the Jewish community as well as the general community. My sister Leah accomplished this in the political arena and my brother Sidney in the arts, as a member of the JCC Music Series for 45 years and chair for 7 years. He continues an active participation in music groups and community groups.

My father was in Pittsburgh running the store for ROMBRO when I was born in New York City at 13 Ridge Street surrounded by aunts. I went to look for the house several years ago and found the space occupied by a large public housing structure.

When I was six weeks old, we moved into a two bedroom apartment in Braddock with Abe and Helen Ohringer and their son who was Leah's age. I shared a crib with their daughter Anita, who subsequently became the wife of Julian Ruslander with whom I still play poker 80 years later.

Within a few months we had moved into our own house at 503 Center Street in Braddock. The street was half black and half Italian and I acquired most of my "street smarts" here. The doors had no locks and I never remember my mother having the money for baby-sitters. We three never knew the difference because fear was never a part of our psyche.

The close ages of the three oldest children afforded built-in playmates. The basement was a crawl space where we would play "hide and seek." The back yard had a fire escape and the iron supports were set in concrete three feet above ground. Two clothes poles tied between the supports constituted a boat and we sailed all over the world on the imaginary sea below our dangling feet. What fun!

Saturdays, to raise money for their church, our black neighbors half a block up the street cooked ribs. That smell still lingers 70 years later. I didn't have the money to buy a rib, but fortunately the church got built without my help.

When the burnings of the late sixties occurred in Pittsburgh, at no time did it involve a confrontation between blacks and Italians. I believe that a census across the country would prove my contention: from the beginning of the vast migration in 1880 all the way through 1980, Italians and Blacks lived side by side in peace all over America, as in North Africa and Italy.

By 1929 I had five little businesses. They included two paper routes, a gardening service, an ash-hauling business (two bushels for a quarter) and digging and planting lawns for the neighbors for five dollars each.

In August, 1929, my father forced me, on advice from a Mellon Bank manager, to give up the \$100 that I had saved and to use it to buy Westinghouse Airbrake stock. Of course, I was wiped out in October. This added to my already strong conviction that most adults were stupid: they worked until 65 and died at 66 with money as their god.

My father was a traveling salesman in Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey, working for others until he became a partner in KoverKwik in the early 30's. This company patented a work garment that converted from a three-quarter length shop coat into a three-quarter length pair of coveralls, using snaps from the crotch to the knee. Father sold these and other work garments to dairies and meat packers.

We three oldest children did get into our share of hell-raising. Our chores around the house earned us an income of 10 cents a week. Every Monday, I would walk the three miles to Kennywood and then "thumb" back, to save my ten cents for a hot dog and coke or to give up one nickel for a "ride." We had to cross the Rankin Bridge. Every time a street car passed, the bridge would shake like crazy and scare the hell out of us.

We bummed around and dreamed of things we could not afford to do. We learned in a very concrete way that making decisions was at best a choice between uncertainties. Managing that big dime, and my savings, was good training.

My father was a great believer in the American flag. Each Fourth of July and Labor Day, he proudly hung his flag in front of our house.

On July Fourth, a river steamer like the Delta Queen would dock in Braddock and load us on. Then it would travel up the river (the Mon flows north) and dock at the wharf in downtown Pittsburgh at Water Street and Smithfield. Then the boat would cruise down the Ohio to Weirton, West Virginia, turn around, and get back to Braddock long after dark. Oh, what a happy memory. After Sidney, Jr. was born in 1928, we stopped going.

In 1926, we bought our first house, in Belmar Place in Swissvale. By 1931, my mom had moved us out of Swissvale and into Squirrel Hill. We never heard the discussions that led to this decision. My father was traveling and his office was in Pittsburgh. I assume that it was cheaper to rent. If I know my mom, she had it all figured out, including Leah's being able to walk to college at Pitt.

I have always loved going to school because it meant getting out of doing diapers. I also enjoyed school because I experienced success. I graduated from both high school and college in 3½ years with honors.

Also, every year, from first grade on, my mother went to the school and told my teachers that I was hard of hearing, so I got to sit in the first row and get a lot of attention. I had three tonsil operations before I was 15 because in those days they believed that removing tonsils and adenoids improved hearing. I sometimes think that my hearing loss was a psychosomatic problem and that, as the middle child in a highly competitive family, I simply enjoyed the extra attention.

Having been raised in Swissvale, my contacts with Jewish girls and boys was non-existent. I always felt lonesome as a child. We were living in an all-Christian working-class neighborhood, and I had almost no opportunity to develop close friendships with anyone. I felt closest to the four very bright Christian kids with whom I competed for grades, but I never visited their homes, or they mine.

One boy was Italian and he became a school teacher. The other boy was the son of a Presbyterian minister. One boy went to Auburn and "engineered" important avionics for Martin Marietta. The two girls lived in another part of town so all I could do was fantasize about them, which I did all through my adolescence.

My school memories from that grade-school time are the most exciting. We had excellent training in arithmetic, English composition, geography and history, and this learning served me well all the way through to law school. What a thrill to take three-hour comprehensive exams each semester and to have the five of us score from 98 to 99½ on all four subjects.

We lived an exciting life at home. The dinner table always had intense conversations about any subject, and no one let anyone else finish a thought. It was a fascinating environment, with less than 36 months separating the three of us and with great conversations and opportunities to defend a point of view. As we had grown older, and economic pressures had diminished, the fighting and concern over money had abated. We then had the chance to grow.

Leah was a senior in high school and wanted to go to Pitt. My father was noticing a better way of life that looked attractive. So we moved to Gettysburg Street across from Perle Mesta's carriage house and next door to a house full of free spirits, musicians whom both parents recognized back to their New York years.

HIGH SCHOOL - ALLDERDICE

When I entered Allderdice in 1931, there was a group of upper middle class Jews whose social life revolved around Rodef Shalom, Westmoreland Country Club and the Concordia Club. They excluded anyone who didn't enjoy their affluence, social relationships or philosophy. That was me!

Allderdice was an exciting experience in every way except socially. My first experience with Jewish kids was to enter a 38-seat classroom at Taylor-Allderdice with 37 seats filled, sit down next to a girl, say hello, and have her turn her face away. This was my first exposure to the kind of girl that gave rise to the stereotype of the Jewish American Princess.

For over sixty years I've had to be nice to this person, as she became the wife of a very prominent member of the Jewish community. I can never forget the hurt.

Fortunately, two weeks after the snub, Irving Sachs, Helen Ohringer's nephew, invited me to become a member of the Adelphi Club at the YM&YWA on Bellefield Avenue. This was a turning point in my life. I made new friendships with ten Jewish boys, and these friends gave me the opportunity to grow, to be myself, to enjoy victories in athletic events, and to learn to get along with other kids my age. We played softball and basketball and we had parties. I'll never forget the girl who taught me to dance.

Every Friday night we held a meeting in one of the kids' houses. Nine of them would gamble at card games while I sat in the kitchen with the mother. I didn't have money to gamble, and I really had no interest. No one ever criticized me for this and I never felt excluded. All of the members of the Adelphi Club had religious affiliations and none had any interest in my views on the subject.

I had some great teachers at Allderdice. Lon Colburn was a superb teacher in Inorganic Chemistry, and I aced this course in college thanks to his preparation. My home room teacher, Mrs. Simpson, was an excellent Latin teacher with whom I had a terrible run-in when she decided who would be home room president and I contested her authority.

Miss Zeigler, the music teacher, was a great inspiration, and my German teacher, Miss Brennan, helped me be excused for a language requirement in college because I had passed an exam for that purpose. I later qualified for military German at the college level when I tried for a commission in the service, after having flunked the physical for my hearing and flat feet.

At Allderdice I played "B" basketball. Even though I was a "runt" I was a good shot. I watched at Schenley High School as Morris Fountain established a Pittsburgh City Schools record by scoring 34 points in 1934. The city schools had some great small teams. Allderdice sent Kweller to Duquesne and Miller and Greenberg to Carnegie Tech. South High sent Radvansky to Pitt where he earned a Ph.D. and became head of the West Mifflin Schools. In those days, the Depression and the struggle for Jewish survival created a strong drive and we created our own opportunities.

Those were the days when Long Island and City College and Columbia made national reputations in basketball with no one over 6'5". Pitt was the national champion in 1928 with Chipper Charley Hyatt and the Cohen boys from Uniontown – all under 6'3". Today there's a special professional league for basketball players under 6'5"!

Allderdice won the state music championship against Clairton and Charleroi in 1933 and 1934. We were great. We won state championships in quartets, wind quintet, and string trio, as well as symphony orchestra. For all these reasons I enjoyed Allderdice in spite of the social disappointments.

MUSIC - A LIFELONG PASSION

In some ways I lived in a different world from even my Adelphi friends in high school. In spite of mother's need for penny-pinching, she always found the money for what she believed to be a high priority: music lessons. We all took piano or violin lessons and music became an important part of each of our lives. Daily, I thank my mom for having given me the chance to enjoy music-making all my life.

From the age of eight, we walked the three miles to Braddock to take music lessons. While other kids were playing ball we had to practice. In Swissvale we studied with Oscar Helfenbein. Karl and I studied violin with Ed Phillips and Eugene Reichenfeld. Sidney Jr. had a great experience with Aaron Gross. Those music experiences are part of the foundation of my whole life.

The Pittsburgh Public Schools had an excellent music program beginning in the late 1920's. It included 80-piece symphony groups, marching bands, and all kinds of good instrumental instruction and voice training.

When I got to Alderdice, I saw an orchestra for the first time in my life. I went to the teacher, Miss Laura Zeigler, and asked to play. She said she needed a bass viol player and she showed me how to hold the bow and how to position my fingers. At that time I was taking violin lessons because my brother played the violin and my father adored my brother. I figured that if I learned to play the violin, my father would like me more. No such thing happened.

Thirty days after showing me how to play the bass, Miss Zeigler sent five girls to me and told me to teach them how to play. I would practice every day and coach them after school. None of them aroused fantasies, but this sure helped me to get better as a bassist.

I qualified for the All City Orchestra as a sophomore. When I was a senior, Sid Dickler, a local recruiter and bandleader, invited me to join Glen Gray and the Casa Loma Band, one of the "big bands" of the 1930's and 1940's. My mother quickly put the kibosh on this plan. She insisted that I was going to college as she "didn't need a bum for a son."

As a result of these high school experiences, I later played with several amateur symphonies in the area. I had the honor to play with Bakaleinakoff, assistant conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony under Franz Reiner, in the first Pittsburgh Opera Orchestra staging of *Eugene Onegin* in 1941. Our Allerdice Orchestra had been state champions in 1933 and 1934 and, when Otto Klemperer came out of a mental institution to create a new Pittsburgh Symphony in 1936, six of the fellows I had played with in All City were selected to play in that orchestra.

Now I play piano two or three times a week and, to this day, I continue to play in organized symphony orchestras in Florida and in Pittsburgh. In Florida, where I play in three different orchestras, they had too many bass viol players so I decided to teach myself the viola. The viola section in the Century Village Symphony consists of six really good players who have helped me hone my skills.

In 1988, my daughter Sally was a vice president at the Jewish Community Center in Pittsburgh. She noted that I was having such a good time playing in the orchestra in Florida that I should do the same thing in Pittsburgh. I went to Alan Sher, the head of the JCC Music School, and in 1989 we organized the Pittsburgh JCC Symphony. It now has 45 players and is gaining a good local reputation playing at nursing homes in the summer and concertizing in the winter.

The JCC Symphony was first conducted by Betsy Heath, Assistant Director of Music at Duquesne. In 1999, it is being conducted by Ken Lutz, Music Director at Allderdice High School.

Our 1994-95 concert mistress, Alison Peters, is third desk for the Pittsburgh Symphony. Also several of our soloists have been Pittsburgh Symphony musicians: Patricia Prattis Jennings, piano; Bernard Goldberg, flute; Irwin Kauffman, cello; and Alison Peters. Our 1997 concertmaster played in Bosnia just before that country's devastating war. Our 1999 concert mistress is a member of the Pittsburgh Symphony.

The JCC Symphony, which has included a 14-year-old oboe player and a 94-year-old violinist, is still going strong. I'm proud to have been able to help accomplish this with the help of George Foreman, a retired grocer who hadn't touched his violin in 25 years. He went back for lessons and now enjoys playing professionally with his pianist cousin.

Stanley Ehrenpreis, our talented clarinetist also helped recruit players. Together we built a community resource and have brought much pleasure, to those who come to the concerts and to those who play.

Today I play the viola for my own amusement, and I play the tuba which I taught myself in high school so I could join the band. Leah had a piano and played until she died.

Sidney, Jr. is an outstanding amateur piano player who enjoys chamber music weekly. In April, 1997, he played at Lincoln Center as part of a piano quintet.

I am grateful that my mother always found the 50 cents for our music lessons. Music has certainly been a fulfilling part of our lives all these years.

(Jewish Community Center Concert Orchestra, 1990-1992,
William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical
Society of Western Pennsylvania)

(Boca Century Village Symphony Orchestra, 1993-1998,
William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical
Society of Western Pennsylvania)

MY SISTER, LEAH

In 1937, my father sent my sister Leah to Europe as a graduation present and she heard Hitler speak in Berlin. She wrote home describing how frightening it was to hear.

That same year, my father persuaded his friends Leo Lehman and Louis Caplan to convene a meeting of the leading Jewish philanthropists at the old Fort Pitt Hotel. At the meeting he translated articles from the Jewish Daily Forward and the seven German papers available weekly in Pittsburgh.

The meeting included Leon Falk, Edgar Kaufmann and other wealthy Jews who that day organized the United Jewish Fund and raised \$105,000 on the spot. This essentially was the beginning of Pittsburgh Jewry's commitment to providing overseas support to European Jews and Palestine.

I remember my father coming home and relating this experience. The Fund became the fundraising arm of the Pittsburgh Jewish community for overseas needs while the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies continued to meet the social needs of the local Jewish community, having started in 1912.

In 1938, Dr. Maurice Taylor, the CEO of the Federation, engaged my sister Leah to do the first demographic study of Pittsburgh Jews. They were concentrated in Squirrel Hill, East Liberty, Stanton Heights and a few remained in the Hill District. Only Henry Posner, Sr. and Edgar Kaufmann lived in Fox Chapel, where they had resided since the late twenties. Dr. Taylor's study was not updated until the 1970's and then again in 1984.

In the meantime, in 1955, the Fund and the Federation were merged to form the United Jewish Federation. This was a very difficult merger involving strong personalities, each of whom did not believe the other was capable of understanding the significance of their philosophical differences. Fortunately, each side trusted Louis Reizenstein. He facilitated the merger and became the first president of the new Federation. No one who was not present can imagine the philosophical differences, intensity of feelings and antagonism of that time. I remember it well.

My sister Leah had a successful career at the University of Pittsburgh. She married Maurice Freedlander and moved to Baltimore where she became president of the National Council of Jewish Women, Baltimore Chapter, and represented NCJW for several years in Senate hearings in Washington. She became the campaign manager for Mayor William Shafer, who subsequently became the governor of Maryland. He was a bachelor and Leah was a good cook who fed him good chicken soup during frequent Friday night dinners. Shafer subsequently hired Leah's younger son Howard as a speech writer, a relationship which still exists with the current governor.

At the age of 45, Leah went back to school at Johns Hopkins for a master's degree in Political Science and then taught as an adjunct professor at Goucher College. She developed significant political influence and was responsible for having Barbara Mikulski elected to the U. S. House of Representatives and later to the Senate.

Six weeks before she died in 1989, Leah persuaded the Governor to put the seven Maryland museums on the Governor's budget. When Leah died, her sons, Barrett and Howard, held a memorial service in the Baltimore Museum of Art. Several judges spoke at the service, noting that they were elected because Leah believed they deserved to be.

Governor Shafer, Senators Sarbanes and Mikulski, and many of Maryland's elected officials acknowledged that Leah was instrumental in their political successes. Her sons made great fun of the fact that their mother always seemed to accomplish whatever she believed was important. She even moved the U.S. Army to do things for deserving veterans. Leah surely raised the level of female accomplishment.

I expended a great deal of effort trying to emulate her successes at Pitt, but I never sensed that we were rivals. In fact, I believe that my road was made easier because she went first. She made us all proud.

(Leah S. Freedlander, 1936-1982, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

COLLEGE - PITT

I started college at the University of Pittsburgh in February, 1935. My sister Leah had graduated high school in three years and started at Pitt in 1932. My father had borrowed \$150 from Mellon Bank which he paid off at \$10 a week. For the second semester he had borrowed another \$150 and paid it off the same way. When I started at Pitt, my father began borrowing \$300 a semester and paying \$20 a week. When Leah graduated, Karl started, so the process just continued.

I had a scholarship to Bethany College in West Virginia but we didn't have the carfare to find out where Bethany was. Pitt was within walking distance and we are all grateful that the University was there and that we could enjoy its benefits.

Each of us was glad to support the University after graduation. We took great pleasure in establishing an endowment fund in honor of our parents, the Stark Listening Center at the Hillman Library. My parents donated a substantial personal collection in creating the Sidney and Sadie Stark Collection in American and European Economic History. Over 2500 items of the spoken record as a teaching tool make up the core of the Stark Listening Center. This record collection began with my gift of \$17 and has now grown to an endowment of \$200,000.

At Pitt, with our meager family resources, I carried a sandwich from home. Besides, there was no place to eat between classes unless you could afford to belong to a fraternity. We all crowded into Alumni Hall, which is now chemistry classrooms. I earned five dollars a week working the trucks in our family business, Penn Overall Supply Company, from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. every Saturday. From this job I was able to save \$450 by my junior year. My father was persuaded to match that with another \$450 and I bought a new Ford for \$900. I no longer had to walk to campus every day.

In September, 1937, I became the manager of the men's debate team at Pitt and got five cents a mile for taking the team members to debates. That money paid for the gas and for my Saturday night dates.

Pitt was an exciting time for me. I achieved a by-line in the Pitt News within a month after arriving on campus. My sister Leah, who was on the Pitt News staff, had told me about an assistant dean of men named Bill Daufenbaugh. Over a period of several years, many had tried unsuccessfully to get an interview with him about his background.

I sidled up to him in the men's room in front of the urinals and struck up a conversation. It turns out that he had been a warden at Western Penitentiary and had some interesting ideas on Capital Punishment. This was meat for any college student in those days, so I went back to the office and wrote my story. It got a by-line and engendered an editorial in the Hearst Sun-Telegraph. At age 16 and only a freshman at Pitt, was I ever launched!

I won a byline in the first month, but the real pay-off of my experience on the Pitt News was learning how to write newspaper articles. I also helped organize our Pitt chapter of the American Newspaper Guild which Haywood Broun had started in 1937.

I was also involved with the debate society where I became manager for an exciting group of freshman debaters. They included: Ruggerio Aldesert, who recently retired as senior judge of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals of the United States; Jerome Lieber who enjoyed a distinguished career at the Allegheny County Bar; and several other promising men who died in World War II.

As the team manager, with a \$500 budget subsidy from the Dean of Men's office, I arranged a trip for two of us to Carroll College in Wisconsin, and to the University of Missouri in Columbia as a "guest" of the University. The debate at Missouri was on Industrial Unionism vs. Craft Unionism. I created the subject and arranged for publication in the 1938 annual debate handbook, a distinct honor.

When Pitt defeated the University of Washington in the Rose Bowl on January 1, 1938, I arranged the first transcontinental debate by radio. It was the first of its kind in the history of our country.

In 1937, I took five kids to Harrisburg for the Intercollegiate Conference on Government (ICG), where representatives from 38 colleges in Pennsylvania conducted a model unicameral legislature. At the 1938 "National Convention" I served as Governor of Pennsylvania, and after stiff competition, especially on Roberts Rules of Order, I was elected Chair of the entire convention. We were all depression babies and had such high ideals. It was very exciting for me. The ICG was organized by Genevieve Blatt, Pitt class of 1935. It "lived" until World War II, and Genevieve was the first woman to be elected to state-wide office.

I was very active in politics as an undergraduate, securing the highest vote in history at that time in student elections. I had run on a platform that promised the introduction of a significant music program and the addition of a course that prepared students for marriage.

"Preparation for Marriage" was only the second such course ever offered at a college in the United States. When I researched this I found one existing course at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I created the curriculum for the Pitt course and presented it to the Director of Women's Health, Dr. Auleen Marley Jamison.

After getting the blessing of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, she taught the one credit course herself. "Preparation for Marriage" was the closest we came to sex education in those days. The course drew 80 students the first year and grew from there.

I was also successful in creating a new cultural program in music. In 1937, the first nationality room at the Cathedral of Learning, the English Room, was finished. I arranged to bring in the Mary Cardwell Dawson Singers, a thirty-voice group of Negro men and women. I got the Dean of Men to spring for the \$250 to pay them, in spite of the fact that the university was uncomfortable because of the race factor. The room was packed and many other cultural programs followed in later years.

I was one of the original Press Old Newsboys in 1936. I would stand in front of the Cathedral selling the Pittsburgh Press for a nickel to those who wanted to buy it and collecting whatever else they wanted to give. From that effort in 1936 has grown this incredible project that now raises over a \$1 million a year as the Free Care Fund of Children's Hospital.

I had a wonderful time at Pitt in so many activities: Pi Sigma Alpha, the honorary political science fraternity and ODK, the honorary activities fraternity. If you look at the 1938 Owl Yearbook, I had an outstanding career and was elected to the Hall of Fame.

As a senior and as an honors candidate in Political Science, I had no compulsory class attendance for eight of my credits in my last two semesters. But I had to stand for honors before the entire Political Science faculty -- a three-hour oral exam! Today this is more routine, but in 1938 it was pioneering.

I took the Constitutional Law class because it was a very difficult course that had to be attended to be mastered. My other class was a three-credit night course with the professor of economics who left to become the head of the Economics Department at Yale. There were two of us in the class. The first semester we covered the history of the theory of wages and the second semester the history of the American Labor Movement. Each semester required reading fifteen books.

I needed one more credit to graduate so, as a special dispensation of the English Department Professor of Communications, I wrote the history of the freedom of the press. I became adept at using the Library of Congress. What a great year that was!

When I graduated, I studied the faculty list of 980 names. There were three Catholics: the football coach, the debate coach, and a fellow up in the Medical School. There were 80 Jewish teachers that I could recognize by name. There were 900 Protestants. This was "normal" for a Presbyterian university in those days.

We Jews were not completely comfortable at Pitt in the 30's. There were Pi Lambda Phi, Phi Epsilon Pi and Sigma Alpha Mu fraternities and two Jewish sororities. Of course I couldn't afford to pledge any of the fraternities, so I was a G-d-Damned Independent, a GDI, and we made our own life.

Anti-Semitism existed to the extent that there was a quota of ten Jews that could be admitted to the medical school, and Mr. Falk picked those. My father had some influence with him so he had a chance to help some young men, including at least a half dozen of the Jewish doctors practicing today in Pittsburgh.

I was the outstanding senior in my class and, principally because I was Jewish, and not a fraternity person, I was passed over as the independent candidate for President of Student Government for Al Barr, a Christian and brother to the next mayor. Barr was a 5th year student with three years at Carnegie Tech before transferring. The election was tied and the Dean of Men got the decisive vote.

I was head of the debate program, and the guy before me was Jewish. The guy before him was Jewish and edited the Pitt News. The yearbook was put out by a Jewish girl. However, Chi Rho Nu was an honorary medical school fraternity that accepted Christian boys with C averages while Jewish boys couldn't get in with A's, except for Mr. Falk's ten Jews.

My basic fight at that time was against the Communists. We knew we couldn't do anything about the university's social policies, so we were pretty much constrained to accept it. Unlike now, Pitt at that time was a private, Presbyterian university, unrelated to the state.

The Chemistry Department was all Jewish. Alexander Silverman and Alexander Lowy were preeminent chemistry scholars. A significant number of the dentists practicing in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens in the 1950's and 1960's were from the Pitt Dental School. Jewish students who couldn't get into New York schools came here. At that time, the University didn't own the dental school, which was private until the 1950's when it became part of the University.

As non-fraternity people, we lived our own life. None of us had money. We took a street car to school, or we drove in from McKeesport with six guys in the car, or we walked. There was no place to eat and no place to congregate if you didn't belong to a fraternity. We couldn't stay around campus, so we were dead socially. Now I see people who were in my class, and I have no recollection of them. But we had a lot of fun because we made it for ourselves.

There were only three blacks in my graduating class in Arts and Sciences out of approximately 195 of us. One of the three was Johnny Woodruff who won a gold medal for the 440-meter race at the 1936 Olympic games. This was the year that the games were held in Berlin and every medal won by a black person was a direct affront to Hitler's theories on Aryan supremacy. Another black graduate was a woman who later became the head of the English department at West Virginia State University. The third black graduate became an important administrator in the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

Because I finished high school and college in 3½ years each, I graduated college at the age of 20. I graduated with honors with a Bachelor of Arts degree in the class of 1938. Then I attended Harvard Law School for one year.

Contracts was being taught at Harvard that year by a professor named Gardner. He was replacing Samuel Williston, one of the greatest authorities on contracts, who was retiring after teaching at Harvard for over 40 years. Gardner was inept. He threatened us with failure if we quoted Williston and his definitive work, The Restatement of the Law of Contracts. He used a text which he had written himself, and he spoke with a pencil in his mouth, making him impossible for me to understand with my hearing problem.

I came up one point short of passing this Contracts course, and I was not invited back, although I had passed all my other courses. I had successfully passed Criminal Law at midterm. I had "aced" Constitutional Law as a college senior using the case book method, and I knew how good I was. In this case, I believe that my hearing loss "did me in." On the first day of classes at Harvard, we had been advised: "look to the right of you and look to the left of you, because one of you will not be back next year." Nevertheless, Harvard was a sensational experience!

I don't know what percentage of my Harvard Law School class was Jewish, but it seemed that the best students were. I don't even know what happened to them. Many of them were killed in the war. The only famous members of my class at Harvard were Congressman Johnny Rhodes from Arizona and Casper Weinberger, that Jewish fellow who never wanted to be Jewish and became Secretary of Defense for Ronald Reagan.

(Stark Family Memorial Fund, 1960-1991, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

(College Papers, 1935-1936, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

(1930s Reunion, 1988-1991, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

AFTER COLLEGE

My brother Karl, who was only about 16 months younger than I, was my friend for many years, although I rarely had him as a partner when we were kids. He was always pampered because he had suffered from rickets and, until his teens, was very small for his age. It seems to me that he often dropped his share of the load and, although he may have a different recollection, I recall that whenever I lent him my toys (which I'd paid for), he always returned them broken or not quite right.

When I went off to law school and left him with my car for safe-keeping, he managed to allow one of his friends to con him out of the tires for some deal I never understood. The first day he took the car to college, he came home and forgot the car.

Karl and I remained partners until he forced my mother, under threat of extensive litigation, to sell him the family business in which she owned a controlling interest. He subsequently bankrupted the business, the first time in the history of our industry that such a company went bankrupt.

Unfortunately this is one of many examples of the foolishness of adults who are willing to give up important values for the almighty buck. To say the least, I was hurt to have lost a friend over money.

My youngest sibling, Sidney Stark, Jr., who was born 11 years after me, was raised in a different milieu. Our parents had overcome their financial problems and he experienced none of the privations we three older children had known. Because most things were easier for him, he was endowed with different values.

At the age of four, Sidney Junior developed a staph infection following a mastoidectomy at West Penn Hospital. They accidentally severed his jugular vein and he was close to death.

As a last resort, they injected me (15 at the time) with typhoid germs and raised my temperature to 105 degrees within 15 minutes. Then they transfused my blood into Sidney and 10 days later he came home. This was known as "fever therapy."

Sidney Jr. earned a Masters degree in English Literature from Columbia University and later developed excellent skills as a salesman. When we lost our business, he began a new business and raised two fine sons, Seth and Sidney III.

(Harvard Law School, Class of '41, 1941, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

MARRIED LIFE - OLGA

I first saw my wife Olga when we were in high school, but she was a half year ahead of me, and her life revolved around the synagogue. Not being part of the Rodef Shalom milieu, I was excluded in high school from meeting girls like Olga.

My time was engaged at the Jewish Community Center at the YM&YWHA where they didn't ask what church I belonged to or what religion I was. My experiences within the Center were very positive and I enjoyed being Jewish. I always remember feeling comfortable with being Jewish, even though I had no formal training whatsoever. When I was in my sixties, I found out that much of my personal philosophy coincided with Judaism.

I tried to date Olga in Chicago, where she was a student at Northwestern and I was on a debate trip to Wisconsin and Missouri. She was busy. We didn't start dating until after I graduated from college. After Harvard I had returned to Pittsburgh to enter the family business, Penn Overall Supply Company, the industrial laundry business my father had helped organize in 1931.

Olga and I were married at Rodef Shalom on July 26, 1940. We were 22. I was enjoying great success in the family business, enough to take an extensive honeymoon. We started in Niagara Falls and planned to go to Toronto and then on to Montreal. However, Canada had already entered the war and the St. Lawrence was barb-wired, so we headed straight for Montreal and only stayed one night.

We went on to Dixville Notch, New Hampshire, from there to Boston, and then on to New York. We stayed at the St. Moritz and went to the museums and to Central Park while Olga taught me French. We ended up in Harrisburg and then Hershey, Pennsylvania.

We blew the whole \$900 I had saved and had a hell of a honeymoon. I then went to work for my father for \$25 a week.

Before her death in 1997, Olga and I had 57 years, one month, and one week of great fun and many opportunities to do good together. Olga and I did not always share the same viewpoint, but in our commitment to community we were completely in concert.

Olga was an expert in creating a warm and nurturing family life. She was a devoted helpmate, mother, daughter, grandmother and friend. She developed Jewish traditions in our home that our children have inherited and have used to enrich their lives and the lives of their children.

But her sense of responsibility did not end with her family and friends. Olga was a trustee of the Rodef Shalom Sisterhood and the Ladies Hospital Aid Society (where she served as board member for 50 years). She also had a successful "career" as a fundraiser for the Federation and was involved in numerous Jewish community organizations. Her energy and commitment inspired others to become involved. She was the perfect role model of a Jewish woman for our two daughters.

When she died, on August 3, 1997, 350 people contributed in her memory to Rodef Shalom, where she was supremely happy. Her religion meant much to her, and the contributions to Rodef Shalom enabled us to establish the Olga Stark Mitzvah Fund to underwrite Rodef Shalom's Annual Mitzvah Day, a fitting memorial to a woman who enriched so many lives with her warmth and sensitivity to those in need.

(Olga Stark Eulogy, 1997, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

MY CAREER

I had started out in the industrial laundry business in 1931, working on a truck from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays for five dollars a day. In the summer I would work in the laundry, learning all the processing and pressing of the garments in the 110 degree heat.

When I came back from Harvard, I became an outside salesman, the first one in the history of this particular company. I was only the third college graduate to be in the industrial laundry industry in the United States. Most industry leaders were former truck drivers and other self-made individuals with no college-level education but with great common sense.

My dad had started selling work clothes to the dairies and meat packers when his store in Braddock went broke in 1924. He began on the road selling bib overalls up and down the east coast to National Dairy and to all those small companies in the food industry.

Eventually my dad became quite knowledgeable about the milk business. He helped build an important local conglomerate in the merging of six dairies into Country Belle, a large cooperative which operated until it was liquidated in the sixties.

Dad and his partners, Howard and Al Lichtenstul, had absorbed the Armstrong Sanitary Wipers business, and by 1930 they had joined forces in establishing Penn Overall. In 1933 the wiper industry leaders were invited to Washington by the NRA to write a code for wiping materials. Seven of them from Chicago, Youngstown, New York and Cincinnati, and my father and Herman Fineberg from Pittsburgh, realized they were all engaged in the same business and decided to write a code for the industrial work clothes laundry business instead.

They had started this concept of cleaning dirty work clothes and they organized themselves into the Institute of Industrial Launderers. Today it's an industry that includes 800 plants and \$8 billion worth of business.

In "our" business, a truck would stand outside the Ford Motor plant at Morewood and the Boulevard and pick up the dirty overalls each Monday, bringing back the clean ones on the following Monday. My father added the concept of a rental service as an alternative to the employee buying his own work clothes for which we were offering a laundry service.

It was 1937 when my father pioneered the rental of pants and shirts. He was on the national board of the Industrial Laundry Trade Association and thought they should have a magazine. So my sister created the first magazine on the floor of our house at 5711 Northumberland Street. The magazine now earns over a half million dollars a year for the industry. This all started with my dad who had many creative and original ideas long before their time.

In the business world it was incongruous that this Socialist could become such an incredible success. He was such a fabulous salesman, and he was so creative and imaginative, that he was able to run a very successful business that never posed a conflict with his ideology.

Our business featured a majority of black female workers on our production section, and my dad's trade union "history" bespoke excellent work climates and good wages. He believed that well-paid employees in the community enhanced the economic climate, which was good for our business.

When my dad sold Newark Milk to National Dairies, the commission was \$75,000. My mother said "Where's the money?" and he said "They're saving it, building for the kids." She would say "I don't want them to save it. I'll save it for my own kids." By 1940, after sustaining great financial loss for not watching the till, they were rid of the partners.

When we finally broke with them it was a very interesting lawsuit. They were represented by Elder Marshall who had been a Pitt Law School professor and a judge of the Common Pleas Court in 1932 when he was accused by a woman of being the father of her child. When he was tried, Sadie was on the jury. She hung the jury 11 to 1 and the case was dismissed. When she later asked the judge why he picked her, he said "Because you are a Socialist and I knew I would get a fair hearing." In the end, my father gave up his interest in Armstrong/KoverKwik for a 1/3 interest in Penn Overall.

My father's great personality and integrity inspired confidence and good will. Fortunately, his optimism and faith in human nature was eventually justified. People appeared at appropriate times to manifest friendship, signing notes at the bank to enable him to obtain significant ownership.

In 1940, Louis Caplan persuaded Leon Falk and Hyman Rogal to co-sign a \$40,000 note for my dad so he could obtain his interest in Penn Overall. This is why I have always gone out of my way to help friends start up their own businesses. As we know, enabling someone to become financially independent is the highest form of Tzedakah.

I went to work for my father for \$25 a week in 1940 when I returned from my honeymoon. Our entire business career seemed like a contest. I always felt that he was suspicious of me, but I never understood why. I wish he had told me. I haven't figured it out to this day.

By 1946, my dad had gained total control of the business. He was the vice president and I was the sales manager. In 1950 he let me become the president. Father encouraged us to experiment and to try new ideas. Our employees created the nylon sling now used in all modern laundries. This sling replaced the aluminum baskets in the centrifuge that extracted water from the materials before they were dried.

We boys had wide latitude to experiment and improve production, and we had opportunities to pioneer several significant innovations that are now commonplace. In the 50's and 60's we pioneered water reclamation processes and helped develop heat exchangers. We also pioneered overhead loading of washers and the use of fire-retardant cotton garments as a substitute for aluminized asbestos. We eventually had 400 employees and an annual volume of \$7 million.

(Penn Overall Supply Company, 1950-1973, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

REPAIRING THE WORLD - *TIKKUN OLAM*

Big Brothers

Sometime between 1947 and 1950 Kenny Ross came to Pittsburgh to take over Donaldson's Motors, Pittsburgh's largest Chevrolet dealership, and we became friends. I learned that Kenny was one of the first Jews in the United States to be allowed to have a Chevrolet dealership. It took General Motors considerably longer to allow Jews to own a Cadillac agency. They had a philosophy that the Jews were not going to be automotive dealers. Ironically Ford was better for the Jews in this respect, in spite of the fact that Henry Ford, in 1927, sponsored the publication of "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" and was a reputed anti-Semite.

Kenny had met Harry Vaughn in the service. After the war, Vaughn became Harry Truman's "go-fer" and he "advised" General Motors that Kenny should become a new car dealer.

In the mid 1960's Kenny called me and suggested that we initiate Big Brothers in Pittsburgh. It seems that, many years before, Kenny was arrested in South Philadelphia for shooting craps with his Bar Mitzvah money. The judge assigned him to a Jewish dentist on North Broad Street as part of the Big Brothers program. Kenny was saved.

Kenny and I pulled together seventeen guys we thought might be interested in helping us start a Big Brother/Big Sister program in Pittsburgh. We told the guys that we would have to pay the costs for a couple of years until we could get a charter and funding from the United Way. Kenny started it off by pledging \$500 to fund the charter. I pledged \$100 but not another one of those men would give even \$50. It was a heart-breaking experience, but Big Brothers went forward anyway and got into the United Way funding stream a couple of years later. Today the program is thriving in Allegheny County.

United Jewish Federation

In 1963 and 1964, I was responsible for the United Jewish Fund campaign, although I didn't have the title. Joe Katz, a friend since 1951 through the Young Presidents' Organization, was the Chairman of the communal campaign, but he relied on me to do the scut work.

Joe loved to tell the story of the first time my father solicited him for the United Jewish Fund. Joe had a small business on lower Centre Avenue, newly married and earning a few hundred a week. My father came to him and told him he thought he should give \$5000. He was so flattered that my father thought he could give that kind of money, that he said yes even though he didn't have it to give. Joe credits my father with teaching him that it was his responsibility. By 1963, his business was doing well and he was giving \$175,000 a year.

In 1968 I won the Specter Award, the most prestigious volunteer award in the community. Nevertheless, after 33 years of fundraising and three years as chair of the campaign, I was not advanced to President of the Federation, as other campaign chairs had been. I always believed that this was because my philosophy did not parallel that of the people in power. I did have strong opinions on organized religion in general, and Judaism in particular.

Federation leadership was made up of people whose interests revolved around the same "trinity" I had experienced when I went to Allderdice: Rodef Shalom, Concordia Club, and Westmoreland Country Club. They didn't seem to share my interest in music, or in other community services that I deemed important. To this day I remain out of step with those people, even though interest in the arts has become more universal.

Except for Herman Fineberg, the Federation had no president who was not a member of Rodef Shalom until the 1980's when Donald Robinson became president. I was the youngest member of the Federation Board in 1943 when I was 25. I was also the youngest member of the Montefiore Board where I served from 1958 to 1972. In those days, only the Jewish Home and Hospital for the Aged and Hebrew Free Loan (HFL) didn't ask what church you belonged to, and my father and brother became presidents of HFL.

(United Jewish Federation, 1965-1990, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

Play School

In 1948 Betty Rockwell Raphael, Bill Elkind and I established a play school on the corner of Wightman and Hobart Streets. Although the school is no longer in business, the zoning we got for that location enabled the Yeshiva to be located where it is today. We were fortunate in hiring Elsa Ehrlich to be our educator. The play school ultimately did much good for several hundred families long before public schools could afford to experiment with pre-school concepts.

University of Pittsburgh

Joe Katz told me that he wanted to have some non-Jewish "credits" on his "dossier," so I suggested the board of the Pittsburgh Symphony, which at that time cost \$5000 a year. He liked that idea, so I called my friends at the symphony and they put him on the board where he served with distinction until he died. He contributed more than money and really enjoyed this responsibility.

When Joe told me he'd love to be on the University of Pittsburgh Board of Trustees, I suggested that it might be worked out if I could promise them a portion of his beautiful art collection when he was gone. The collection was worth millions of dollars and represented both established artists and those artists Joe discovered when seeking new designs for the famous Christmas wrapping sold at his business, Papercraft. Joe had been in the class of 1937 at Pitt, but couldn't pay the tuition for the last semester and was forced to drop out before he graduated.

I called Dr. Charlie Peake, who at that time was the provost, and explained the situation. I told him that Joe had a fabulous art collection worth millions, and that he could do a great deal for the university down the road. Joe served on the board of the University of Pittsburgh from 1965 to 1990.

The \$10 million he and Agnes gave twenty-five years later, to name the Joseph Katz Graduate School of Business, was the largest gift in the 200-year history of the University. Joe called me on the day of the public announcement and said "I'm calling to let you know I kept my promise." It's pretty exciting to think that I had a role in making that match.

UJF Young Leadership Award

Olga and I both knew that the future of our Jewish community depended on attracting new young leadership. In 1960, Lester Hamburg decided he would underwrite a young leadership award at the Federation, but after two years he lost interest. Olga and I decided we would keep it going. We thought that encouraging young leaders to rededicate themselves to a higher level of commitment to community service carried out the Jewish philosophy in a beautiful way.

Here, some 35 years later, the William and Olga Stark Young Leadership Award has encouraged a goodly number of young men and women to make a lifetime commitment to accepting responsibility in many community organizations. It has been a thrill to witness so many competent young people step forward to lead our community and continue a lifetime of service.

I've been asked why we have our names on the Young Leadership Award at the Federation, since it seems so self-serving. After Olga and I put our names on the teen leadership award at the Jewish Community Center, Rogal and Ruslander established another award. Then other awards were established, and eventually there were 18 or 20 awards given at the annual meeting. For every kid who got an award, the parents came to the meeting and heard about the philosophy of the Jewish Center movement, which is so important to me. Today they are coming back as professionals in centers around the country.

The message was passed by example. Other non-profit groups found areas in which to reward outstanding volunteers, and the entire community has been enriched.

(William and Olga Stark Endowment Fund, 1974-1994, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

Drug Rehabilitation

My friend Dr. Emil Trellis is a beautiful man who practiced psychiatry on the staff at St. Francis Hospital for almost 30 years. When Emil came from his military service as a doctor at the federal drug control and federal penitentiary hospital in Lexington, I was involved with the Governor's Conference on Employment of the Handicapped.

I was making a speech at the convention of the Governor's Conference on Employment of the Handicapped where the principle speaker was a famous doctor, Howard Rusk. Emil was sitting in the first row and he came up to me after I made my remarks. He introduced himself and told me he wanted to get involved locally with the rehabilitation of drug addicts. He said he needed help with getting jobs and had been told I could help. This was right up my alley.

Emil and I paired up. He would get drug addicts started on the rehab program and I would find them jobs. I had a couple of successes, but the recidivism rate was 95%. Emil and I became close friends and we still are today.

It was great to help get the drug rehab program started. It gave me a chance to work with Frank Lucchino when he was first struggling. We did some civic work together in the Hazelwood and Greenfield areas. Frank was trying to set up the Greenfield Organization. As a sitting member of Health and Welfare at that time, I was able to convince the United Way to allocate money. The YMCA to come out with a program that to this day has a special Hazelwood component.

(Western Pennsylvania Council on Drug Abuse, 1964-1970, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

City of Hope

City of Hope started in 1913 with two tents in the desert 22 miles outside downtown Los Angeles. It was started by the Jewish Needle Trades people in California. They had seen the success of the New York Needle Trades people who had taken their consumptives up to Saratoga for fresh air and milk to treat their tuberculosis, so they duplicated this process in Duarte, California.

My parents were in the Needles Trades in their teens. My mother was an organizer for the Neckwear Makers' Union and my father worked part-time as an organizer for the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. In 1948, my father, who had supported the City of Hope for almost 35 years, had a chance to visit there when he was in California at a national conference. He decided to give them \$600 for a golf cart to aid people in getting around the 93-acre grounds. Father had me pay the \$600 with partnership funds and we became actively involved. In 1975, I was asked to join the board of directors and I served for over 15 years.

As a Vice President of the City of Hope I had the opportunity to travel coast to coast making speeches to help raise the \$175 million annual budget needed to keep it going. Today, there are many thousands of people lending annual support and raising over \$200 million annually. City of Hope invented Humulin, a synthetic substitute for insulin. It continues to receive increasing support from the National Institutes of Health for its basic research successes.

As of 1952, City of Hope had become a research hospital with 215 beds, 110 Ph.D.'s, 95 M.D.'s and 1,500 scientific personnel. It now has over 2,000 medical innovations to its credit. It has also done some very important initial research in a number of areas, including gene biology as early as the 70's.

City of Hope physicians were among the first to research AIDS; they have the world's largest compendium of knowledge on Sickle Cell Anemia; they run an annual program with the Pittsburgh Veteran's Hospital on pulmonary problems; they have pioneered bone marrow transplants; and they present papers all over the world, sharing their knowledge. Many of their innovations have become standard today.

City of Hope specializes in catastrophic diseases and no patient pays if he cannot. Every room at the City of Hope looks out onto a garden. What a thrill it is to have played a part in this amazing organization.

(City of Hope, 1971-1992, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

Montefiore Hospital

As a trustee at Montefiore from 1958 to 1972, I served on the Nursing Committee that oversaw the operations of the Nursing School. To satisfy the "bottom liners" we decided at that time to close the Nursing School. This left a deep void in the hospital's operations and in my opinion played a significant role in the demise of Montefiore.

Nursing schools had provided important manpower to operations, but the Nurse's Union wanted to move toward academic medical practice. The union did get nurses their intellectual recognition. They are now assistant M.D.'s. But the operation of hospital beds still required important "hands-on" attention to patients, and there was no need to destroy what met this practical human need.

American Wind Symphony

Robert Austin Beaudreau, son of a French-Canadian father and a Jewish mother, came to Pittsburgh with the incredible idea of putting together the American Wind Symphony. It would bring together 30 wind musicians from all over the world and play the inland waterways of the United States, starting in Pittsburgh and going down the Ohio River to Louisville and Cincinnati for eight weeks in the summer. Beaudreau was an extremely imaginative person.

He received incredible corporate support and for \$800,000 built the barge Point Counterpoint, designed by a world-famous architect Louis Kahn. He took it to Europe and traveled the inland waterways of Belgium, Holland and France. It was in New York harbor for the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America, and it was in Barcelona for the Olympics. Over 200 original works were premiered by the orchestra which also brought some famous names to the United States to perform. I served as treasurer for years and helped to raise thousand of dollars annually. The orchestra performed for over 40 years until it disbanded in 1998.

Small Business Administration

I was the Western Pennsylvania member of the Small Business Administration National Advisory Board. As a group we had the opportunity to impact government policy before and after the White House National Meeting. I chaired a section, and one of our recommendations became approved, amended government policy. During my six-year tenure we only met once or twice, but I really saw government policy change. The SBA continues to thrive today, and to have an impact on the economy.

Jobs for the Handicapped

From 1946 to 1972, I had the pleasure of serving on the Governor's Conference on Employment of the Handicapped. We saw a vast set of changes that culminated in federal legislation. My functions were finding jobs for handicapped people and making speeches to groups from Western Pennsylvania to Bethlehem, PA.

My family had a long history of significant commitment to the employment of the handicapped in our business, Penn Overall Supply Company. They contributed \$25,000 to the original Vocational Rehabilitation Center on Forbes Avenue that had started out in the early 1930's as a program of the National Council of Jewish Women.

We pioneered the hiring of deaf people to do certain jobs at Penn Overall. We also had some successes with recovering female drug addicts, recovering alcoholics and physically handicapped employees. As president of our national trade association, I helped establish similar programs in other industrial laundries across the country.

The program creates taxpayers by training, housing and finding jobs for mentally and physically handicapped adults. After many years, the United Way took a supportive role. To this day, hundreds of private companies keep the program going. Vocational Rehabilitation Center is one of the most successful programs in the country.

Super Cheep

Super Cheep was a clever concept that I heard about from a young man who had successfully employed it in St. Louis. I was taken by the idea and agreed to help him raise the several hundred thousand dollars needed to open stores in Sharon and Uniontown, Pennsylvania, and at Penn and Shady Avenues in Pittsburgh.

The concept was a super market where prices were kept low by leaving the food in the shipping cartons and having the customers take it out themselves. Ours was the first market in the region to use generic brands and self-service open cases with no shelves. Unfortunately, the project died for the wrong reasons. We were in the wrong location and undercapitalized, and the huge chains were not about to let us survive.

However, we had a lasting impact that paid off for the local consumer. Our effort spawned the use of generic brands in Giant Eagle and the other large supermarket chains in Western Pennsylvania.

National Conference of Christians and Jews

For two years I served as the Jewish chair of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. I was one of three such co-chairmen. We met bi-monthly and had an annual fundraising dinner. I had the privilege of knowing Bishop John Wright, bishop of the Pittsburgh diocese, who later became one of the first American cardinals. The three co-chairs served as an advisory group to the professional who ran the Pittsburgh office. We created intergroup training programs for police in Western Pennsylvania. I resigned from the NCCJ when I believed that the organization had outlived its usefulness and that others were doing a better job fulfilling its mission.

Civic Light Opera

The Civic Light Opera was started in 1946 when City Councilman Abraham Wolk went to Edgar Kaufmann. It's another example of the effective Public/Private Partnerships that have worked so well in Pittsburgh. Besides Kaufmann, the original board included Arthur Braun, the president of Farmers Bank and the Chairman of the Board of the Pennsylvania College for Women (now Chatham College), and General Brehan Sommerville, who had come to Pittsburgh to be the president of Koppers, having been general of the Seabees in World War II.

These men launched the project. It was kept going by a group of young men from a Junior Chamber of Commerce that is known today as Vectors. I was the Vice President of Fundraising for the Civic Light Opera for 20 years. My function for many years was to raise the \$110,000 annually to fund the deficit.

In its early years, the CLO played in Pitt Stadium - - outside, under the stars. When it rained, the concert was over. We eventually moved into the Civic Arena, built specifically to accommodate summer operettas and winter hockey and basketball. Edgar Kaufmann decided that he would contribute \$1 million for a retractable roof so operettas could be under the stars on a beautiful night. The roof was the first of its kind in the country, but it turned out that it cost \$1200 to open and close, and our budget couldn't handle that.

Today, the CLO is more than 50 years old. It's a strong part of Pittsburgh's cultural life and a lynchpin of Pittsburgh's summer cultural calendar.

(Civic Light Opera, 1973-1997, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

Task Force on Youth

I was involved with the United Way as early as 1936 as a fundraiser, and through the years I had many opportunities to take interesting positions which impacted United Way allocations. One such opportunity was the invitation to join the Strike Force on Youth that Dick Thornburgh chaired. This was before he served as governor of Pennsylvania and before his becoming U.S. Attorney General.

The Task Force attempted to understand the special problems of young people in the 1960's and 1970's and brain-stormed significant new directions which the United Way subsequently adopted. We addressed the specific needs of the kids and the status of drug abuse and teen pregnancy, all of which served as the foundation for United Way programming for at least two decades.

On this task force, there were about 20 of us from various parts of the community. There were a significant number of youngsters from the Catholic Youth Organization and some interesting social worker types. When Thornburgh went off to become Governor, I was given the privilege of being Chairman of a Task Force on Youth designed to implement the suggestions. We set standards that were adopted by United Way as it started to spend its "youth" money. Some are still in the process of being implemented today.

United Way

I had 15 exciting years in the United Way at a time when very few Jewish people were involved. For many years only Bill Block from the Post-Gazette and Aaron Levinson had United Way roles. Milton Porter of the L. B. Foster Company did some important work in the Health and Welfare section. But generally, there was little Jewish leadership until the 1970's.

Bidwell Cultural and Training Center

In the early 1970's, I read in the paper that the Presbytery was attempting to give the Reverend Jimmy Joe Robinson \$600,000 to build a new church on the North Side in the Manchester area. Jimmy Joe thought that the idea would be a terrible waste of money and that he could do much more good if he used the money to create a community development program instead.

I went to see Jimmy Joe and told him I wanted to help him implement his idea. I offered to bring him six sewing machines. If he found six black women to be trained to use them, I would find jobs for them, and he could then bring in six more women to train. For each six women training on the sewing machines, we would hire a seventh woman to watch their children while they were being trained. In this way, we would be taking people off Welfare and giving them a chance to be productive taxpayers, 25 years ahead of the 1998 welfare reforms.

About a year before this conversation took place, Herman Fineberg and I were literally stuck with a laundry building at the corner of Bidwell and Pennsylvania Avenue. We had given it to the United Jewish Federation for an \$80,000 tax credit. The building could not have been replaced for less than a half million.

I asked the UJF if I could invite Jimmy Joe Robinson to open his program in this building. They agreed. I told Jimmy Joe that it would cost him \$8,000 a year in rent, but that he could buy the building at any time for \$80,000.

In the meantime, Jimmy Joe was going after state and federal funds. The first thing they wanted to see were his assets, besides the money he'd received from the Presbytery. He realized the advantage of having this \$250,000 building on his books, especially since it would only cost him \$80,000. He bought it.

Jimmy Joe put together a board of directors on which I was the only white person. We met every Monday night and helped Jimmy Joe launch the program. We went to Dravo and got some people to come in and teach welding.

We were going to start training tractor operators and blade men, but simultaneously the famous Nate Smith decided to compete with us by starting "Operation Dig." Operation Dig "broke" the union's "white men only" on large earth-moving equipment. The impact of this was equivalent to that made by Jackie Robinson in baseball.

By that time Jimmy Joe had involved Westinghouse, Mellon Bank, and a few of the other big corporations in Pittsburgh. The board of directors really started to develop some character. Westinghouse even leant an administrator to give Jimmy Joe some support. The North Side Development Council also came on board.

Jimmy Joe and his wife had started a cultural program even before we added the training phase. This Bidwell Cultural Center still exists today in a beautiful building where "latch-key" kids from the North Side can go and study after school. The center still does an excellent music program and it encourages kids to take an interest in the community. In 1998, it became a charter school in Manchester headed by Mrs. Robinson.

When the Bidwell Cultural and Training Program got too big for one man to handle, Jimmy Joe hired a fellow named Bill Strickland. Strickland moved the training to a new building on Beaver Avenue and expanded the program at a time of massive lay-offs and "downsizing." This program has grown to not only fulfill my original dreams, but to exceed them.

(Bidwell Cultural Training Center, 1970-1989, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

Israel Heritage Room

I am still the treasurer of the Israel Heritage Room of the Nationality Rooms Program at Pitt. It took us from 1971 to 1991 to complete the room. The university strictures stipulated that the rooms had to date from a period after 1787, when the University of Pittsburgh was founded, and were not allowed to be political. Since the Jews dated from more than 5000 years ago, we had to agree on how we would bring the room into the 1787 or later time frame.

Dr. Freehof gave us tremendous help, including coming up with the Israel Heritage Room concept that the community had been struggling with for years. In the meantime, Joe Katz went to Israel and brought back a synagogue floor from the first century. The night we met at the Concordia Club there were about 30 people in the room and Joe started the pledging off with \$25,000. We raised \$152,000 in less than 45 minutes. It was an incredible show of interest in this project, and everybody eventually paid his pledge. I oversaw the collections of the monies pledged and helped raise additional money by selling, for \$2000 each, the extra pieces of historical earthenware Joe had contracted for in Israel and for which no space existed.

I have since been successful in helping set up an endowment fund in the University Finance Department. Hopefully it will be used to create academic programs of excellence in Jewish studies for the University. We now have resources for annual stipends for two students to study in Israel each summer. A couple of our "candidates" are now Ph.D. professors of Judaism at Bethany College and the University of Tennessee.

(Israel Heritage Room, 1987-1990, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

Point Park College

Arthur Blum, an extremely creative and imaginative man, was president of Point Park College in the late 60's. He was a son-in-law of Dorothy Finkelhor, the founder of Business Training College when it became a junior college in 1963. In 1964 it became Point Park College, a 4-year school, and I have been on the board since that time.

Point Park started in the Woodwell Wholesale Hardware building at the corner of Wood Street and the Boulevard of the Allies. It subsequently acquired the old Keystone Hotel, which had been the Keystone Athletic Club, and built a bridge across Wood Street to connect the hotel to the 28-story building used for a dormitory, dance studio, and classrooms. It also had bowling alleys and a bookstore in the basement.

Arthur Blum met Mrs. Falk and together they set up, on the first floor of the building, a magnificent ballet studio that is still used today. In the 70's, 80's and 90's, Point Park has had 180 candidates for the Baccalaureate degree in Theater and Dance.

By 1973, Point Park had purchased the Pittsburgh Playhouse, with my signature as Board Treasurer and Blum's as President. It took us years to pay off what was borrowed for this purchase, but it was a critical move to assure the growth of the school.

Working with Arthur Blum, Mrs. Lottie Falk helped create a significant academic/dance program, the first of its kind in Pittsburgh and perhaps in the whole country. It combined academics with professional ballet instruction and performance.

In 1973, a Pittsburgh Press reporter did a story about Point Park. He decided to slant the story in a way that made Blum look like a crook who was doing things that were not appropriate. It was all untrue, but it nearly destroyed the school because it drove away the supporters.

Unfortunately, when the newspaper story came out, Mrs. Falk thought we were going to go bankrupt, so she moved her ballet theater across the street and told her students not to use Point Park. She hired her own conductor and left us with the salary for Petroff, our conductor/director, as well as with the debt for having created the facility.

We were badly hurt financially and struggled for two decades to undo the harm done by the Press reporter. As treasurer of the Board at that time, I worked with Arthur and my contacts in the Democratic state administration to renegotiate the terms of the Pennsylvania Higher Education bonds, recast the repayment schedules, and secure moratoriums and repayment extensions, thereby avoiding bankruptcy.

Over the years, I continually pleaded against the vociferous "bottom line" members of the Board of Trustees who argued to "sell the Playhouse and retire the debt." Today we have 180 candidates for the B.A. in Theater and Dance and have gained preeminence through owning and utilizing the Playhouse. We do some 20 student performances of Nutcracker every year at the Playhouse and we turn out well-trained people. We also have dozens of high school students come to the Playhouse every summer for a summer theatre program.

Point Park is important because it gives the average student a chance. We have a ratio of only 15 students to every teacher. Even though 10% of our freshman class graduated in the upper quarter, we take C students and give them a chance. Hundreds of Point Park grads have gone on to perform on Broadway. Point Park students are at every television and radio station in the city, and several are in Hollywood. They are successful in every level of society and my pride is unbounded.

(Point Park College, 1976-1997, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

Sidney and Sadie Stark Spoken Record Library

When you enter the Hillman Library on the University of Pittsburgh campus from the park entrance and walk up the stairs, on the left-hand side is a rather sizable room named the Stark Listening Center. The room contains well over 3,000 titles of the spoken record as a teaching tool. It started with my asking my brothers Karl and Sidney, Jr. to join me in putting \$500 a year into a pot until we had the \$10,000 to endow a Spoken Record Collection.

Back in the early 1950's my father had established two funds at the Pittsburgh Foundation. One, for ophthalmologic research at Montefiore Hospital, was established in honor of Dr. Harvey Thorpe, a world-renowned ophthalmologist who saved my right eye when I had choroidoretinitis over 40 years ago. When Montefiore affiliated with the University of Pittsburgh Medical School, he asked that the money be directed to the University of Pittsburgh Library. So \$7,500 was added to the fund. He had established another fund to support the YMHA. When that merged with the Irene Kaufmann Settlement, he asked that this money also go to the Pitt Library, and another \$15,000 was added. My brothers and I kept putting money in. Today the endowment is over \$200,000 from my original gift of \$17.

Institute for Industrial Launderers

I served for 20 years on the board of the Institute for Industrial Launderers and became president for the years 1965 to 1967. I presided at quarterly board meetings and at the annual conventions. During my term we launched what has become a four-year program at the University of Maryland designed to upgrade the education of the managers of our companies. Our family had a significant impact on the founding and strengthening of this important trade organization in an industry that now serves hundreds of thousands of people in every known business.

Yiddish Books

Back in the 1940's my father directed us to send \$24 a year to the Yiddish Scientific Institute. He believed that Yiddish was going to make a comeback and be an important factor in the survival of Jews around the world. Today we have Russians emigrating to Pittsburgh. Yiddish is a critical link in their communicating with the Pittsburgh Jewish community.

From 1987 to 1989, a fellow named Aaron Lansky managed to salvage a million volumes of Yiddish and collect them in a facility in Amherst, Massachusetts. In 1990, he won a MacArthur Fellowship. Lansky bought a van, took 8000 volumes by ship to Poland and Russia, and went from small town to small town distributing these 8000 Yiddish books to the little shtetls where they still speak Yiddish.

The Yiddish Scientific Institute, YIVO, was in Vilna. Half of their books made it to New York where my father and I had been supporting them since the 40's. The other half was still in Lithuania.

YIVO is now part of the American Jewish Cultural Center in a block-long building between 16th and 17th Streets in New York City. It shares a building with the American Jewish Historical Society, Yeshiva's Yiddish Library and Leo Baeck's library holdings. In an exciting fulfillment of my father's prediction, the Ph.D. in Yiddish is offered in 16 universities in the United States today!

Senior Citizens Service Corps

When I retired in 1972 at the age of 55, I decided that one of the unmet needs of the community was the availability of part-time jobs for older people. Some of these people had economic needs, some had the psychological need to get out of the house to avoid driving a spouse crazy. I started an organization called the Senior Citizens Service Corporation. Within two years I was able, with the help of a director and two secretaries, to find several hundred jobs for people over 65 without charging a fee.

We ended up being subsidized by the Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging. In our second year we created \$300,000 in taxable payroll. On December 15th of that year they told us we were out of business. I couldn't help but think of the Jewish man who had lost his job at 60 or 61, and who was happy to take two buses each way so he could work for six hours at a job near Northway Mall. It was 20 years before the Area Association on Aging got around to seeking part-time jobs for senior citizens. It was heart-breaking to witness bureaucracy destroying a good idea, a sound organization and an important public service.

(Senior Citizens Service Corps, 1984, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

Young Presidents Organization

Around 1950, when Ray Hickock was about 25 or 26 years old, his father, who manufactured belts in New York State, died and left him with a big business. Ray wanted help in understanding his responsibilities. He tried to make some connections to other young people who were also heading up companies, and he started the Young Presidents Organization in 1950. Among the Pittsburghers he contacted were Al Rockwell, who at that time was president of Rockwell Manufacturing (which became North American Rockwell), and S. Murray Rust, the president of Rust Engineering. At that time, they were all contemporaries in their thirties.

The Young President's Organization now has over 2000 members and 3000 alumni. I was privileged to have been a member in its very first year in Pittsburgh. It was an exciting organization because many of us had similar problems, having a domineering father and suddenly having to run a business at a very young age because of a death or change of circumstance. One third of us were in family-owned businesses, one third had started their own businesses, and one third had married the boss' daughter. We were all groping for a maturing process, so we taught and supported each other.

The Young Presidents' national meeting featured speakers like Margaret Mead and Carl Menninger. To become a member, one had to become president, before turning 38, of a company doing two million dollars in volume and having 50 or more employees. One could remain a member only until age 49. It was a great comfort to me to be able to leave my family and find kindred souls in Aaron Levinson, Joe Katz, Ray Rackoff, Al Rockwell, Murray Rust, Dick Wright, and other young men I would otherwise never have met. Over the years we were able to do community projects together at the Playhouse, the Civic Light Opera, the Pittsburgh Symphony and others. Everyone benefitted, and the organization thrives today, still emphasizing mutual help and formal education.

Harmarville Rehabilitation Institute

I was the only Jewish board member on the Harmarville Board. About 1984 or 1985, as a member of the board, it struck me that there should be some coordination of the resources of the Rehabilitation Institute, St. Francis, Harmarville and D. T. Watson. I visited the heads of these four agencies to determine what could be done to avoid duplication of services, include vocational rehabilitation, and cover the geographic area efficiently. I also wanted to create an income stream through the sale of prosthetic devices that each might develop or create.

It was difficult to seek out common areas among these competitors, but I had some success in bringing them to the table. We held two meetings to discuss what prosthetic devices could be developed and marketed by these agencies.

Then the Hospital Planning Association decided that I wasn't qualified to convene the third meeting, and asked Sigo Falk to take my place. He held one meeting and destroyed the idea. Private companies exploit innovative prostheses and Harmarville is now owned by a conglomerate.

It was a heart-warming experience to participate in creating Harmarville's present modern facility in O'Hara Township. I was also privileged to serve as the chairman of the committee that created their pension system for employees.

(Harmarville Rehabilitation Center, 1984, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

Ursiline Center/Family House

In 1981, Barbara Shore, who was a professor in the graduate School of Social Work at the University of Pittsburgh, invited me to sit on the board of directors of the Ursiline Center. Ursiline nuns from Kentucky were building a home for people who were temporarily in Pittsburgh while members of their families were receiving treatment for cancer, transplants or other critical care.

The Ursiline Center at South Windville Street was converting a former home for resident nuns into what is now called Family House. Barbara asked me to see if I could help. My job was to find furniture and help build financial support. It was a lovely experience working with Sister Elaine Eckart who was a very bright woman. We built a facility with 20 beds for \$150,000. In the same year, the University of Pittsburgh built a 35 to 40 bed Family House for \$2.5 million on McKee Place. We subsequently disbanded when the Ursiline Sisters left Pittsburgh.

Drum Corps

For over 20 years, I've tried to help finance a drum corps, a very highly disciplined form of music training for young people. A junior drum corps called the Enforcers had been initiated by the Police Athletic League. Mayor Caliguiri had helped us by providing the insurance on the instruments, on the vehicle that transported the kids, and on anyone who might have been hurt. City support was lost when Caliguiri died. We were in limbo.

We were able to get started again with support from Wendy's and with transportation provided by Richard Talarico and Yellow Cab. The program is designed to take 300 kids off the streets and to train them in drum corps. The top 60 are picked to be in an "A Corps" to compete and earn money by top finishes in the national competitions. The kids sell hoagies to help pay the costs; the parents are involved; and the kids learn both musical and physical discipline. I had arranged with Dean Michael Kumer that the best of the students could earn music scholarships to Duquesne. This project fights the drug problem by involving young people in wholesome group activities with parental support.

I met with City Attorney Joseph Sabino Mistick to try to get the city to pay for the insurance out of the Parks and Recreation budget. I also wanted to practice at Schenley Oval because there was a federal lunch program that fed kids down by the Panther Hollow every day of the summer. Recruiting would be easy if we could offer a free lunch. In the school system these kids get lunch every day, but in the summer, if their parents don't have money, they go hungry. Giant Eagle repaired our vehicle and donated food when we went to march in parades or on the road for competitions. Over the years, some good kids have been helped along to successful lives.

(Drum and Bugle Corps, Inc., 1982-1997, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

Hill City

I first came to the Hill District in 1931. I was 14 years old. Our business was on LaPlace Street from 1931 to 1972. Directly across the street was a series of wooden shacks where they housed horses. Amid the shacks was a pond where we ice skated. Across the street was an old Jewish-owned cigar-making factory; next door was a whore house; up the street was a joint. It was a very colorful place.

Around 1940, Howard McKinney, a black social worker, started a small neighborhood children's program called Hill City. McKinney went off to China, Burma, and India during the war. When he came back he organized an institution call Hill City Youth Municipality with Fred McKee, the bachelor owner of National Casket Company, as his "angel."

It started with a crime-prevention club in the five Hill District elementary schools; Miller, Vann, Letche, McKelvy and Weil. When a young person joined one of these clubs, he automatically became part of the Hill City Youth Municipality that was initially housed on the top floor of the Granada Theater on Wylie Avenue. This was where some of the greatest jazz bands of the 30's and 40's performed.

Hill City eventually ended up with 2000 kids involved in the program. I served as vice president, and it was my job to raise the \$43,000 a year it took to pay the five staff people. At that time, the United Way was giving \$400,000 to the Irene Kaufmann Center that was serving only 400 kids.

Hill City was based on a fascinating concept. If a kid broke a window, or in some other way violated the law, instead of being sent to juvenile court he would be sent to Hill City. At Hill City we had a "district attorney," a "defense attorney" and a "judge," elected by their peers. The idea was to teach the kids about the criminal justice system.

If a kid was found guilty, the punishment was to come to Hill City every night for six weeks to learn how to play a clarinet or to learn how to make a piano stool. We had a staff of dedicated people, but I couldn't get a nickel out of all those Jewish businessmen in the Hill District. When the burnings took place in 1968, they got a message.

One Hill City success story was a young man who became a staff member for Ralph Bunche, the U.N. Secretary General. Many years later, when Howard McKinney died, we had to merge with a United Way group. Social workers decided it was not appropriate for teens to judge their peers and they killed the idea. When the Hill City Board built a building for social workers instead of one for programs and recreation for kids, I resigned. Our original building at Bedford Avenue and Erin Street now serves as a senior citizen center.

We really made a difference in hundreds of lives. Between 1938 and 1960, there were no false fire alarms between Schenley High School and the Civic Arena. Our Board even met in the office of the Director of Public Safety in the City-County Building! The housing patterns are changing and the schools in the Hill District continue to thrive. A community strives to improve itself and another generation is enabled to improve their community. We tried to help.

New Airport

I had the pleasure of being on the Allegheny County Airport Development Committee in 1990 and 1991. My sub-committee was on transportation. It was thrilling to help plan the road system that would serve the new airport for the next 20 or 30 years. The Southern Expressway, which was to be the main entrance to the airport, was being planned to connect the airport to Monroeville through Mt. Lebanon and southern Allegheny County. We were instrumental in starting the program that will eventually create a busway from downtown, as well as a road between Robinson Town Center and the new bridge across the Ohio River that will bring traffic into Pittsburgh from the North Side.

We worked with technical leadership from the Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Development and PennDOT to lay out a road that will bypass Mt. Lebanon, go across to Homestead, Duquesne and McKeesport, and join the Pennsylvania Turnpike in Monroeville. Here was professional leadership at its best, working with elected politicians for a far-reaching result. What a thrill it was to be part of such a historical "happening."

(Southwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission, 1989-1990, William Stark Papers, Rauh Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

MY CHILDREN - MY LEGACY

My daughter Sally was born in 1943 and my daughter Hillary, whom we call Lorrie, in 1946. I was expected to be disappointed about the fact that they were girls rather than boys, but I was thrilled to have them. We had a marvelous time because I always loved children.

I take great pride in the fact that both my daughters studied in fields in which they make a living helping others. Sally went to Syracuse and majored in Speech Therapy. She was president of her sorority. She married Fred Rock whom she met at a Passover seder. He was president of his fraternity. He has wonderful parents who live in Rochester, New York. Fred and Sally have been married for more than 30 years and have two children.

Sally and Fred's daughter Wendy graduated from Miami University of Ohio with a Bachelor of Science in Finance and four years of Japanese. She spent two summers in Spain and celebrated her Bat Mitzvah in Israel. She is fluent in Spanish and Hebrew and has studied in Japan. Wendy is a real achiever. She recently married Adam Greco, a Knowledge Management Project Manager who has also studied in Spain and Italy.

Sally and Fred's son, Steve, graduated from Penn State where he was president of his fraternity. His fraternity "hazes" freshman by having them go "canning" in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh to raise money for cancer research. He has an M.B.A. with a concentration in Marketing and Strategic Planning from the Katz Graduate School of Business at Pitt.

Lorrie started out at Kent State and graduated from Duquesne University with a B.A. in History. After graduation she went to work in the Hill District as a home-care person. Both my daughters were "color blind," so Lorrie's volunteering in the Hill didn't surprise me.

Lorrie married Howard Pasekoff, an endodontist, and they have two children. Their older daughter Lauren is a Speech Language Pathologist with a B.S. in Business from the University of Maryland and an M.S. in Communication Science and Disorders from Pitt. She is married to Daniel Russ, a postdoctoral candidate at Carnegie Mellon University with a Ph.D. in Nuclear Chemistry.

Their youngest, Meredith, has a B.S. in Health Administration from Indiana, Bloomington and is working on a dual Masters degree in Business Administration and Health Services Administration at Arizona State University.

The Pasekoffs live in Boca Raton, Florida. Howard has a Endodontist practice and Lorrie is a travel agent.

IN CONCLUSION

Steve, Lauren, Wendy, and Meredith,

Well, that's my story. I thought it contained elements worthy of recording. I hope it suggests an idea or two that one of you might pursue. I thought if you knew how relatively little time and effort is required to do some lasting good for your community, you might be encouraged to make community involvement an on-going part of your lives. You can make a lasting impact while fulfilling your own dreams.

The offspring of Morris and Leah Abramowitz now number over 100 people. I hope you find a kindred soul among them and share my pride in a family in which many individuals tried to make a difference in our world.

You make me proud.

Gramps