



For Fran Russell z”l, Life and Legacy Initiative ‘felt right’ to help future generations. Just months before she died, Temple Israel member Fran Russell chose to donate the funds in her RRIF to the Life and Legacy program, signing a Letter of Intent. Fran Ariel Russell passed away on May 5, 2021.

Temple Israel was a very important part of Fran’s life, and after converting to Judaism with Rabbi Steven Garten in 1998, she embraced her Judaism in many ways.

As an active member, Fran was a regular Shabbat worshipper and attended Torah study and Talmud classes weekly. A long-time member of the liturgical choir, Fran was a regular at Friday night services where her voice rang out from her usual seat. She loved children, watching the Temple children fondly, with a grandmother’s heart.

Fran shared her opinions freely and was always interested in having a conversation. She and Margo Rosen, chair of the Life and Legacy Committee, had many conversations via telephone and e-mail. “Fran attended the first parlor meeting held in February,” recalled Margo, “She said that she had been trying to figure out how to support Temple – and that the Life and Legacy initiative ‘felt right.’”

“The Temple choir was her spiritual home,” said Rabbi Daniel Mikelberg. “When word spread that she was not well, the choir rushed to complete their recent virtual piece, Yevarechecha. They hoped that it would give Fran peace in this difficult time. It was no easy feat to prepare, but every effort was made. When presented to her, she was overwhelmed. She described it as a ‘beautiful hug in a desperate time.’ Fran has provided us with so much love over the years, how blessed that we could provide this blessing to her.”

“I am so glad I will have the opportunity to do this,” Fran continued in her e-mail. “It is with much gratitude that I do this, for Rabbi Garten in particular, who has been my kind of rock since the beginning.”

Fran hoped others would “come knocking on our (Temple’s) door and find this treasure too.” She wanted them to experience “this religious practice in all its beauty and in such a great community filled with so many inspiring people.”

Thank you to Fran and all the individuals and couples who, during the past year wrote Temple Israel into their “Book of Life” with a designated gift to the Temple Israel Life and Legacy Fund.