

Martin Freeman and his wife Joanne Burgess joined Temple Israel around the late 1980s, when their oldest son was starting the Temple religious school.

“It’s my connection to Judaism and Jewish life,” says Martin, who is among the Temple members who have signed a Letter of Intent for Temple’s Life and Legacy program.

Now retired, Martin was a lawyer with the Department of Justice. Joanne is a history professor, researching 19th century Montreal, at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), a French-language university.

Martin joined the Life and Legacy committee at the suggestion of Temple president Margot Montgomery, and liked what he heard about the legacy program.

“It’s a relatively painless way to make a contribution to Jewish life in the community,” he says, “to make a promise to contribute some of your estate to Temple at a future date. If we want a viable synagogue going forward, we need a financial basis for that, and this is an easy and sensible way to do that.”

A program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, Life & Legacy assists communities across North America, through partnerships with Jewish Federations and Foundations, to promote after-lifetime giving to build endowments that will provide financial stability to Jewish day schools, synagogues, social service organizations, and other Jewish entities. Through training, support and monetary incentives, this four-year partnership program motivates Jewish organizations to secure legacy gifts, steward donors, and integrate legacy giving into the philanthropic culture of the Jewish community.