

Temple Israel Archives

Interview of Diane Rudner Goldstein

Date Unknown

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[Interview With Diane Rudner Goldstein]

[BACKGROUND DISCUSSION]

I think I was lucky to have spent time with my grandfather, Abe Plough, because he lived to be 92, and during the really developmental years of my life, after college, I was able to spend a lot of personal time with him and get to see the way he worked, the way he really started his philanthropic endeavors, spending more time really with his visions, (stutter) not from business but in terms of his personal giving attitudes and his creation of the Plough Foundation, in 1960. So, I feel that myself and my two older sisters were really lucky to be able to learn a lot from him and our parents, in terms of what they thought was the future of Memphis, both in the community as a whole and the Jewish community.

He felt very strongly that giving should be anonymous, that you do the best good for the most number of people, when the people themselves feel that they have accomplished the most and achieved the most. So, it was very important in his mind to give resources and tools, and not be considered the giver. And, I think that's a major lesson that we have tried to continue in the Foundation, tried to, even though it's a little bit different now because he is not there to provide to provide the impetus. We are trying to force changes in larger systems, such as education, such as homeless delivery services, in larger systems, so that people can learn to help themselves and be prepared to live a life that they feel is useful.

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My grandfather , Abe Plough's legacy, I think, for both our family and our, I think his co-workers and also people at the Foundation, that we felt has been most instrumental to our manner of giving, is that he felt it was very important to give anonymously or if not anonymously, from the point of view, that if you give the resources to the people that need the help the most , and let them feel responsible for changing their own lives or making changes in other people's lives, that your philanthropy will be worthwhile , rather than be the sole sources of their funding. And, that translated in another way, into challenge gifts and I think that's one thing that the Foundation has been successful, in the past, in terms of being an impetus for bringing in larger gifts and having more of an inclusive giving pattern in the community. A challenge gift would be one portion that would be met if the organization would raise funds from other people in the community, or other organizations.

[BACKGROUND DISCUSSION]

My grandfather was born in Tupelo, Mississippi and his family moved to Memphis in the early, I'm sorry, in the late 1800s...

[BACKGROUND DISCUSSION]

My grandfather was born in Tupelo Mississippi and his family moved to Memphis in the late 1800s, where his father started a clothing goods store, downtown Memphis . And, he was quickly bored with that and he borrowed \$125 in 1908, because he found, which is now St. Joseph's Aspirin, a product that he wanted to peddle in the country, on horse

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and buggy. And, from that very beginning, he became very interested in marketing and ended up buying over the next 20 to 30 years, different products in the community and, then outside of Memphis, the household names are Coppertone, Di-Gel, later on, Dr.

Scholl's, Maybelline, and those are products that he really enjoyed marketing in the United States. In 1971, his company merged with Schering Corporation and he remained the Chairman until 1978, and from 1978 on, he devoted his, all his personal life to, the Plough Foundation, which he began.

I think that our family is lucky in that my sisters and my mother had been involved with the Foundation, my mother since its inception and she was the Chairman for the last fifteen years and spent many years, developing her own philosophy and her own spin on the philanthropic scene in Memphis. And, now although we're in the third generation, nine of the ten board members have been on, since my grandfather had identified them and the staff of five now, one was involved with my grandfather when he started the Foundation. So, there's been a lot of continuity over the last 18 years, but I think that because it's more corporate oriented in the sense that there are strict rules and regulations, in terms of procedures and how grants are developed, since it's not just one person, running the Foundation any more, it's run more like a business. So, we need more committees and my sisters are involved in those committees, of the ten board members for, from outside Memphis. But, all of our funds are distributed in Memphis and Shelby County, which was the original intent of my grandfather.

I found, even though I am in my own business during the normal course of a day, this is my major, what I consider volunteer work, since I have moved back to Memphis, seven

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years ago. And, originally I really did not know if I'd feel as comfortable, working with a Foundation that had such a long time history and I had never really been drawn, I had done a lot of volunteer work on my own. I had been on the other side of the table, which was very important in our, our family upbringing. When I got to be a little bit older and started attending the board members, board meetings, I found it fascinating, in terms of the type of work that was being done and especially with some - my background is more in corporate planning and this is some of the work that we've been doing now, trying to develop public/private partnerships, in Memphis. My two sisters live outside Memphis, so it's very hard for them to take an active, day to day role, in the Foundation. And, I have found that the more I get involved, the more I want to do with the Foundation, and I think over, it takes five to ten years to really understand the impact that you're having on the city (Background Noise) and on people, in the city.

[BACKGROUND DISCUSSION]

I think I was very lucky in my upbringing and I really understand that now, having lived in New York City and Tokyo, Japan, because I was blessed with not only a family that was very involved in philanthropy, but did not mandate it. I mean, it was part of their day to day lives, volunteer work was always something that they did and didn't talk about that much. But, also growing up, at Temple Israel, in Memphis, originally with Rabbi Wax, and later on with Rabbi Danziger, it was a close knit community. And, we always felt that we were an important part of both the Jewish and the total community, by the projects that we were - at that time, we weren't mandated to do, like they, today is required, a certain number of community service hours to be confirmed, for example.

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But in, when I grew up at Temple Israel, it was not mandated, it was just something that we did and those were projects and usually those were our social interaction with other religious children in the community. And, I feel I was very lucky that way because since, when I had moved to New York City and then when I moved to Tokyo, Japan, it took me a very long time to ever feel a closeness, especially to the religious communities, in those cities. I think that Memphians have a, are very lucky to be able to have a cohesive group of lay leaders and rabbinical leaders who place great importance on giving, to the community.

I think the biggest challenge to the Memphis Jewish Community is to nurture the continuity of the younger generation, so that they feel as compelled as our predecessors did, to maintain important institutions, maintain important charitable, giving patterns in this community, because our community, while it is quite large for cities our size, it's disjointed like many, like many cities. Many of our relatives are moving to other locations and as time goes on, there's not as much continuity as we would like.

[BACKGROUND DISCUSSION]

I think some of the things that the Foundation has been working on to increase the certainty of continuity, has to do with education, education about giving, education especially about the women's role in giving, both in the family, as a mother, as a sister, as a spouse. Those translate into different programs, such as the Jewish Foundation of Memphis, has been putting together a series of seminars to help women understand their own financial needs and how to package them, in a way that they can also predict and

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plan for the charitable needs. Other ways, educating the Memphis Community is very hard itself, in terms of reform and schools and we feel that this is a very important aspect of the future, in terms of economic viability, in the total Memphis Community, in terms of getting the right education for jobs, and then being able to get the right jobs to be able to raise families and be able to better the community. I think also, I think that every organization in Memphis is trying to figure out the best way to bring in younger and younger members, whether it's in a social atmosphere in the beginning and then an educational and civic activity at the end, or whether it's just a way to make sure that the community is linked together with common goals.

I think that it's very important for every organization to understand that women and men now have different demands than they did in prior years. The men are raising the children and taking more time to be at home with families. The women are working and having to raise the family and I think it's a very important realistic fact that's going to impact almost every organization, but especially civic organizations. I know the Memphis Jewish Federation, we organize of its committee approaches to take advantage of the fact that women have flexible hours that might not be the same, as they were in prior years, and that the programs they put together may have to be more joint programs with family oriented approaches or men and women, (stutter) seminars and series programs that really we never thought about, in the past, and I think most of the successful organizations are doing that today.

My grandfather, Abe Plough, was born in Tupelo, Mississippi, and moved to Memphis in 1908, where he worked with his parents in a retail apparel store, in downtown Memphis.

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And he quickly got bored and decided he wanted to borrow \$125 to peddle a product that now is called St. Joseph Aspirin. Those were in the earlier years and over the next 30 years, he bought brands, such as Coppertone, Di-Gel, Dr. Scholl's, Maybelline, and marketed them into national and international networks, all with his headquarters in Memphis. And, in 1971, the company merged with Schering Corporation, in New Jersey and became the Schering-Plough Corporation. I think that, as he became a world-wide organization, he also decided to invest his interests in the needs of the city and the needs of the religious community, and those are the benefits that I think the Plough Foundation is able to hold today.

Well, my memories of my grandfather's values, I think that he had so many truisms that I think anybody that knew him, (stutter) enjoy to this day, people will still tell me what they remember, his words of wisdom. But, I think in terms of the values that have been so important to me, loyalty was a very key focus from him and knowing where you're from and feeling very secure, in your place as a person and an individual, and always being of service to those people in need. He felt that he was really fortunate in his life and that it was an important mandate that when you had been fortunate in your life, that's important to bring positive experiences into other people's lives. And, I know he did that till the day he died, and I think that we all treasure him for those memories that we have. And, in our own way, we're trying to re-create that vision.

My grandfather had so many sayings that for his 90th birthday, my sisters and my father and my mother, we all had T-shirts made that had a different saying that applied to us, or something that bothered him about one of us. So, we enjoyed celebrating his birthday

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that way. And, then he would think often more sayings. So, for his 91st birthday, we put different sayings on each of us, for the dinner party that night.

[BACKGROUND DISCUSSION]

I think Memphis is a manageable city and I think that you can make a difference in Memphis and I think that my grandfather was proof of that. He built a large business, but in other cities there may be many businesses like that, in an area. In Memphis, he was able to make a big difference, in terms of, creating new organizations or helping build ideas from other cities, into Memphis, and helping, I feel in some of the areas, I think even when we were looking at the hopeless situation, with the foundation and some of the projects, we went to visit other cities. We still could make a difference in Memphis. The problem wasn't so overwhelming that we couldn't, without a lot of hard work, it took three years to put a project together, but it was able to be accomplished. I think that's the same way with crime. We were very instrumental with Guardsmark to put together a crime commission, at least the first three years of its inception and I think that crime can be changed in Memphis, because it's not at the proportions of some other cities that, you know, in the country. So, I think that part of the opportunities that I see in Memphis are that you can make a difference, you can mobilize resources, you can speak to the community and you can speak to the powers that be, and make some big changes that will make a difference.

Well, he was probably an enigma that way. There weren't many Jewish businessmen at the time, I don't believe, because we had a smaller Jewish community then. And, most

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Jewish businessmen had their own businesses that were not part of larger organizations. So, I can't speak to that. I hope that's changed in Memphis and I'm sure that's changed in Memphis, because it's harder and harder to start your own business today. But, I think it's much more of a challenge in Memphis, for Jewish people to be successful. I think they have to work harder, (stutter) it's almost like any minority. I think they have to work harder, just like women do, in the similar jobs as men, in larger companies. I think that they have to make sure that all their I's are dotted and all their T's are crossed, and I think they have to work harder, frankly to make an impact. They're not automatically accepted and their message is not automatically read, (Interviewer's Voice in Background) even today.

[ROOM TONE]

One of my favorite sayings of my grandfather's, even though he had so many different sayings, but the one that I remember the most...

[BACKGROUND DISCUSSION]

My grandfather had many, many sayings that were his favorites and my favorites, but the one that meant the most to me, I think that I recall in important times in my life, is that you are your future, don't forget that. And, I feel that I have thought about that when I've been at, difficult times in my life, or at times where I felt I was going to be, viewed differently, as other people, or at times I had to make a hard decision. And I do sit

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back and say you know, that I am my future, and I have to make sure that I believe in what I'm doing .

[BACKGROUND DISCUSSION]

My grandfather had to borrow money too, when his businesses would have problems and then he'd have to re-generate them over the years, but especially with the New York Stock Exchange and after the collapse. And, he used to have sayings that he'd say and then later with our children or when he'd rock a baby, and it was "Owen Moore came home one day, owing more than Owen Moore could pay. Owen Moore went back one day, owing more."

[END OF TAPE]