

Remembering JOE



05/03/1944

20/03/2009

Remembering Joe: 25th March 2009

Good afternoon everybody

My name is Tammy Meinstein and I am Joe's step-daughter. On behalf of my mother, Karen, and my two brothers: Darren, who is here, and Gary, who is in Toronto, and myself, we would like to thank you all for coming.

It is difficult for me to speak about Joe's academic achievements in a knowledgeable way so I hope you will forgive me if I confine myself to what my brothers and I remember of the 25 years that Joe was part of our lives.

In Judaism, we try to measure someone's accomplishments in life by what they leave the world when they pass away.

Joe was an extraordinary man: a scholar whose subjects included Dr Johnson, Shakespeare, Bashevis Singer and Yiddish writers from across the Globe, while he also ensured that the tragedy of the Holocaust should never be forgotten.

Joe dedicated his life to fighting Anti-Semitism and when people will pick up a book and read about the struggle and

anguish of the Jewish people that Joe has so vividly documented, the knowledge gained will be in Joe's honour. Who could ask for a greater legacy?

As a personality, Joe could be funny and profound in the same moment. The stories he told, whether about people he knew or great literary figures, reflected his deep sensitivity to humanity. He also relished the guilty pleasure of a good nugget of gossip and made good sport of skewering and lampooning, usually in colourful but creative language and directed at a deserving target. Even when you disagreed with him you had to laugh.

As much as Joe was dedicated to Jewish survival and educating, even during the last 15 weeks of his terrible illness, he never lost his devotion to my mother. Spending the past 10 years in a foreign country together and only having themselves to rely on, leads to a very tight bond: a bond that simply cannot be destroyed by leaving this world.

It is touchingly symbolic that Joe's passing on the eve of Shabbat coincided with the completion of the reading of the book

*of Exodus. To acknowledge the completion of one of the books of the Torah, it is a tradition to stand up and chant **Chazak! Chazak! Venischazeik!** Which means **Be strong! Be strong! May we all be strengthened!** May we all remember the good and blessings given in our natural lives to propel us to move forward.*

Joe, may you rest in peace. You and your legacy will not be forgotten. We will not allow it.

Shalom Chevra