

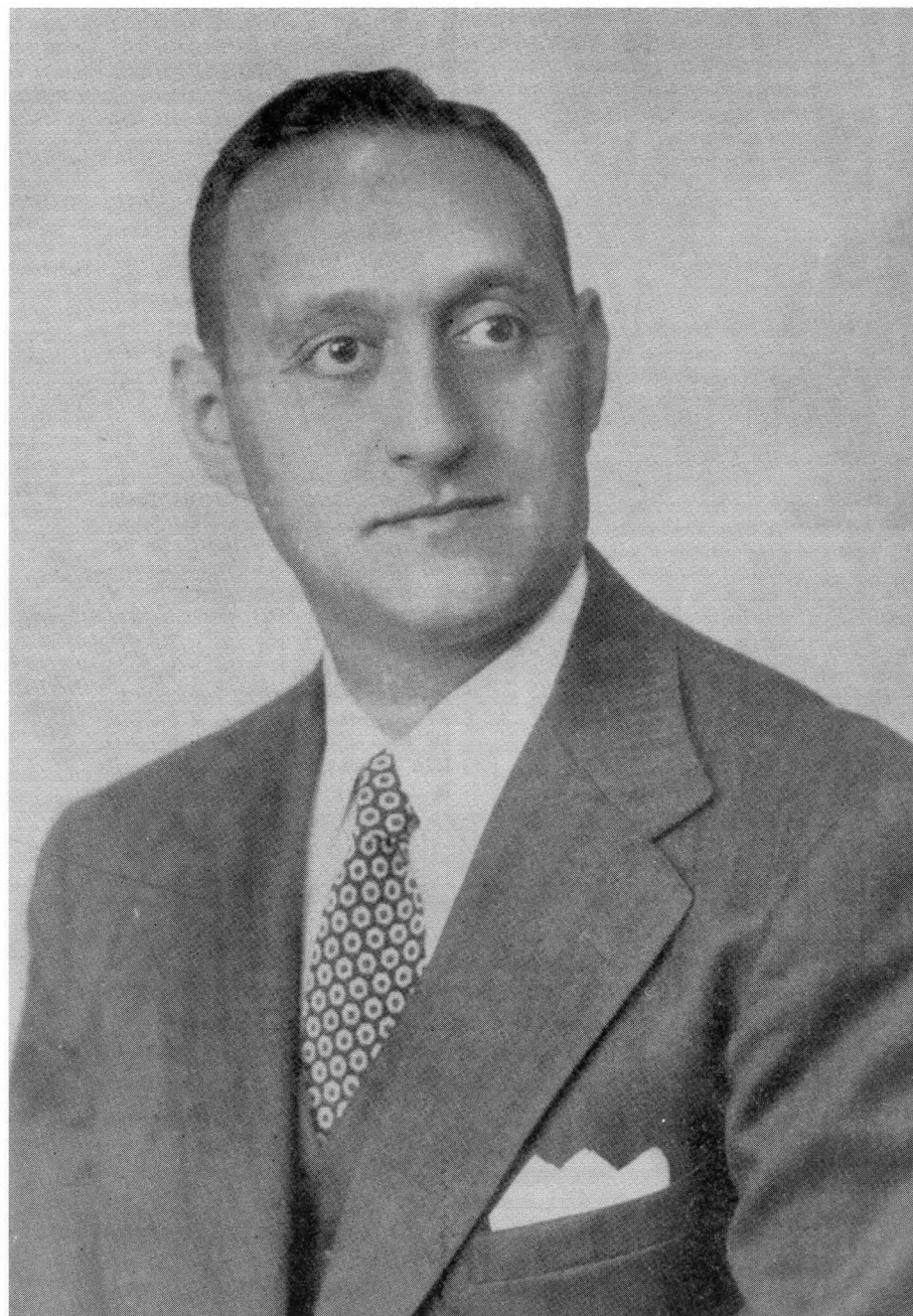
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CENTER BULLETIN
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PORTLAND, MAINE



NORMAN I. GODFREY
JUNE 6, 1910—JANUARY 24, 1947

TRIBUTES

CENTER BULLETIN

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This special issue of the Bulletin is under the joint editorship of Israel Bernstein, Harry VanDermoot, and Mrs. William Slade.

THE SPIRIT OF NORMAN GODFREY

Is Norman Godfrey dead? Yes, in the sense that his days and months of intensely agonizing pain and suffering are at long last ended.

Is Norman Godfrey dead? Yes, in the sense that at his funeral services hundreds upon hundreds of persons, of all ages, all walks, and all faiths laid a tribute of tears upon the plain, white pine coffin.

Is Norman Godfrey dead? Yes, in the sense that in the city of his birth there is a fresh mound of earth under which lies all that remains of his once magnificent body.

Is Norman Godfrey really dead? No, not really. Not as long as the red brick, five-storied building shall stand, that building over whose portals are inscribed in bronze the three simple words, "Jewish Community Center". He came to us on the eve of its purchase and he took the brick and the concrete and the steel and poured into them his life's blood. He gave it warmth and feeling, life and spirit and communal service. When he came here, he found a community

NORMAN I. GODFREY

June 6, 1910 — January 24, 1947

Norman I. Godfrey, beloved director of the Jewish Community Center, died January 24, 1947, after a long illness.

With his death, the Portland Jewish community suffered an irreparable loss. His life was short, a bare 36 years, but it was filled with unselfish service.

Norman was born at New Haven, Conn., June 6, 1910, the eldest child of David and Helen Godfrey. He attended New Haven schools, was a graduate of Arnold College in New Haven and received his Master of Arts degree from New York University.

From his youngest days, Norman began preparing himself for a life of community service that was to reach its culmination at the Community Center in Portland.

After his graduation from college, the opportunity was presented to him by the Stamford, Conn., Jewish Community to become physical director of its newly-created Center. While there, he organized and directed the summer camp known as "Jaysee" and also other groups for the physical and cultural development of the Youth of Stamford.

Because of his success with these organizations, he was asked by the Jewish Welfare Board to become assistant director of its summer camp, Camp Welmet, at Lake Tiorati, N. Y., which was operated for the Jewish children of New York City. Throughout his life, Norman maintained his early interest in the welfare and development of youth and built on the youth of the community for the future of Jewish community life.

While in Stamford, he organized many Jewish Youth groups, among them the Sofrats and Tel Hai. He was a member of the City Probation Board for Boys, the Stamford Community Chest, and the mayor's Sports and Recreation Committee. At the request of the School Board, he did substitute teaching in sciences in the Stamford school system.

Norman's early impulses were directed in the field of medicine with a view of

disjointed and disparate and, by the magnetism of his personality, he drew the different segments into the building where he gave them a program suited to the needs, the vital needs, of all. To-day that building is a living monument to Norman Godfrey.

No; of course, Norman Godfrey is not really dead. Certainly not to the children who loved him with a devotion that only children possess. Certainly not to the boys and girls to whom he never talked down but whom he guided with firm gentleness. Certainly not to the men and women who looked to him for guidance and fol-

lowed his lead with appreciation. To further his desire, he took courses in physical education and did therapeutic work with crippled children of New Haven at Grace Hospital. While in Stamford, however, he became interested in the Jewish Center movement and decided to make this his life's work.

Because his religion always was evident in his daily life, he wished to transmit to Jewish youth the significance and appreciation of the ideals of his people, both spiritually and culturally.

Norman began his duties at the Community Center in Portland August 10, 1938, as first executive director. His work since then is well-known to every one who ever came in contact with the Portland Center.

The Center was started as a hope, but Norman Godfrey made it a living force in the community, a force that will continue to live and perpetuate his memory as long as there is a Jewish person left in the city.

He was a member of the following organizations: the Association of Jewish Center Workers of New England, serving as President; the National Association of Jewish Center Executives; the Portland Council of Jewish Agencies and Social Worker's Club; the U. S. O.; Enlisted Men's Club of Portland Harbor Defenses, serving as Advisor; the Jewish Federation of Portland, serving as Executive Secretary; Gov. Sumner Sewall's Committee for Civilian Defense of the State of Maine; American Red Cross; The Shaarey Tphiloh Synagogue; the Zionist Organization of America; B'nai B'rith; the Jewish Home for Aged in Portland; the Jewish War Veterans; the Army and Navy Committee of the Jewish Welfare Board and the Brandeis Club of Stamford. He was instrumental in developing interest in Camp Lown and became its advisor.

Social service was his avocation as well as his vocation.

lowed his lead with appreciation. Certainly not to the officers and directors of the Center with whom he worked so loyally, so understandingly, and so enthusiastically that as problems arise in the future, their first question will be, "What would Norman have advised under these circumstances?"

So, if at this time we say to Norman, Boruch Ato B'tzesecho—Blessed art thou upon thy going, let us add in reverent memory, Boruch Ato B'voacho—Blessed art thou upon thy coming. More than once, Norman will come back to us.

Israel Bernstein

NORMAN'S SALUTATORY

When the Jewish Community Center opened its doors on November 15, 1938, Norman expressed his views in a Greeting which was printed in the Dedication Program. We can do no better than let his voice speak to us by the reprint of that Greeting.

"Behold! How good and pleasant it is when brethren dwell together in unity."

Truly, it is a blessing to be privileged to share with you, the joy and happiness of this significant occasion, the Dedication of the Jewish Community Center. Humbly, gratefully, and ever mindful of the task entrusted to me, I acknowledge the great debt I owe to all of you, whose unselfish devotion, unflinching loyalty, and inexhaustible patience have served as a beacon light guiding and encouraging me through the past several months of adjustment and adaptation to a new community.

This day marks the fulfillment of a dream and the realization of an ideal which motivated the Jewry of Portland to make untold sacrifices in order that this building and all that it symbolizes might become a living monument to the courage and perseverance which have characterized our people throughout the centuries, in their struggle to bring light, truth, and justice to all mankind.

Consecrated to the noble purpose of perpetuating and developing Jewish life upon the highest possible plane, in consonance with the traditions and ideals of the founding fathers of our great democracy, the Jewish Community Center enters now upon its course of service devoted to the enrichment of the individual personality and enhancement of the group life of American Jewry.

To serve you; to bring to young and old wholesome experiences—social, cultural, and recreational; to make the Center in reality a Jewish home for all; these are the purposes to which I dedicate my service. Proudly, we stand upon the threshold of a new community life in Portland.

The doors are open — We bid you welcome!

NORMAN I. GODFREY.

NORMAN

He walked with death
But knew it not.
Yet me thinks in his
Conscious mind this thought lurked.
Hiding from those he
Loved best this threatening
Imminence of his early parting,
With quiet dignity he strode forth.
Too early in the morn
Of life this noble
Soul is visited. His
Work and dreams unfinished.
Yet in the span
Of a few short years
The imprint of his
Mind and spirit are indelible.
True to the best
Traditions of his people,
Deep seated faith and
Humanity flowed forth from him.
LOUIS M. ALTMAN.

TRIBUTES

From Our First President

NORMAN GODFREY AND HIS CENTER

When one reads the history of the founding, dedication, growth, and present standing in the field of community service of our Jewish Community Center there he will find countless accounts of and references to the outstanding work of Norman I. Godfrey.

From the day the committee singled him out as the first executive director to the day the Omnipotent Father took him unto Himself, Norman Godfrey was wrapped up in the work of our Community Center. He never knew the meaning of a time clock. Time meant nothing as long as there was work to be done. Many of you recall the number of times we sent him home after a very long day's work. Many of you, however, do not know that his day's work did not end when he left for home for there over the kitchen table or in front of the fireplace he discussed the problems of the day with his loyal and devoted wife, Ethel. We were the recipients of the benefits derived from those long unseem hours.

His loyalty and devotion to his life-time's work was the inspiration which attracted so many to enlist in our cause. He was the principal factor in cementing all elements and factions into one happy family. He was loved by all who came in contact with him. No man endeared himself to an entire community in such a short period of time.

The glint in his eye, the warmth of his handshake, the cordiality of his smile are cherished memories.

It was a privilege to have met him, a pleasure to have worked with him, and a delight to have known him.

I feel certain that I express the sentiment of our entire membership when I say that to his memory we dedicate ourselves to carry on the Center movement which was so close and dear to the heart of our departed friend and servant.

LOUIS BERNSTEIN.

From New England Association, Jewish Center Workers

The news of Norman's death affected us like a bombshell. We who knew him will mourn the loss of a sincere professional colleague and a fine personal friend.

As director of the Portland Jewish Community Center, and as former president of the New England Association of Jewish Center Workers, Norman set a high standard and made a place for himself in the hearts and minds of all the members of our association. His loyalty and service to the Jewish Center field, his inherent respect and understanding of the problems we face, and his well deserved popularity will always serve as a beacon for our younger and newer workers to cherish and follow.

DAVID M. KLEINSTEIN,
President.

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

In the building which Norman Godfrey loved so much and in the presence of his cherished work, a saddened community paused to pay its respect and to express its heartfelt sorrow at the loss of a dear friend, a great leader, and a true son of Israel. It was fitting that we, whom Norman served so faithfully and so well, should gather together in the Center to pay homage to the man whose life was an inspiration to all of us.

Sacrificing his personal comforts and needs for the benefit of our community, Norman devoted himself, with his amazing zeal and energy, towards the welfare of his people. In so doing, he endeared himself forever to all who had the privilege of knowing and working with him.

Norman loved the Center and its people with a love that was reflected in his every movement, and we, all of us, loved Norman. Time, as such, was meaningless to him. What was important to Norman was that each succeeding day should see the Center extending its usefulness to his people and to his community.

Norman showed us a way of living, and our greatest monument to him will be to continue to live up to the ideals of his life. A loving husband, a devoted father, his personal and communal life was a model which each one of us could accept as a challenge. Ethel, Sandra, Bonnie and Ellen will always be justified in the pride which must be theirs in having Norman as a husband and father.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow must have been thinking of him when he wrote:

"Lines of great men oft remind us
We can make our lives sublime
And departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time"

Yes, Norman left an indelible imprint on the hearts, the minds, and the characters of all of us. We and the community are far richer for having known and lived with him.

In the words of the Psalms, the Lord was his shepherd, even as Norman was ours.

Barnett I. Shur

FROM OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RESOLUTION

At a regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Jewish Community Center of Portland, Maine, on Wednesday, January 29th, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Be it resolved that:

That the Board of Directors of the Jewish Community Center record their deep sorrow at the untimely passing of Norman I. Godfrey, our Executive Director, on Friday, January 24th, 1947.

We, the members of the Board of Directors, voice the sentiment of all that we have, indeed, lost not only a conscientious and tireless worker, but also a devoted and loyal friend. His indispensability and constructive labors over eight long years resulted in a better Center and better community. The work that he so self-effacingly began, we, in fullest appreciation of his ceaseless efforts, will continue as a perpetual memorial to him in the finest and noblest traditions of Israel.

He now may take his well deserved rest in the comforting embrace and divine compassion of our Almighty Father.

From Our Second President

It has been said "Whom the Gods love dies young". So may it be said of Norman Godfrey. As I sit here writing these words a feeling of emptiness surrounds me. A wife has lost a good husband; children have lost a loving father; I have lost a good friend; the Community has lost a man.

To say of Norman that he was good, kind, gentle, helpful, sincere, are but words—words merely descriptive of the qualities of his character and characteristics. How simple it is to say "There was a man."

I remember his first visit to Portland: his flashing eyes; his sweet smile; his infectious laugh; his boundless enthusiasm; his limitless energy. I remember his dauntless courage during the trying days when the Center, emerging from its infancy, found itself beset with its many problems, which he referred to as growing pains.

I remember the occasions when other communities beckoned to him with tempting offers. All of them he turned aside. "Portland", he said, "is my home. The Center is my life." And indeed it was.

The Community has been enriched by his having been here. It has become impoverished by his passing. So long, Norm, thanks for having known you.

EDWARD J. BERMAN.

From Maine Jewish Council

Maine Jewry has sustained an irreparable loss with the untimely passing of Norman Godfrey, the Executive Director of the Portland Jewish Community Center. His self-sacrificing devotion, his genuine sincerity, and his ready offer of time, efforts, and energy to further worthy projects were not confined only to the boundaries of Portland but extended to all state-wide Jewish activities. He manifested a keen interest in the objectives of the Maine Jewish Council and he frequently participated in our deliberations.

His great enthusiasm for the establishment of a summer camp was a source of inspiration to all of us. He took a leading part in the selection of a camp site and in the formulation of its general policies. He loved the camp dearly because he clearly envisioned in it a program for a wholesome Jewish way of life of which his own was a shining example. His fate, unfortunately, may be compared with that of Moses by being deprived of seeing the place of his dreams.

Personally, I had the privilege of working with Norman on many occasions and I learned to respect and admire him for his fine character, personality, and, devotion to duty. I shall miss him greatly.

Norman Godfrey is gone but his spirit will live in our memory.

PHILIP W. LOWN,
President.

TRIBUTES

From Center Women's Club

Center Women's Club joins the community in mourning the passing of our esteemed Executive Director, Norman Godfrey. Mere words become inadequate to pay proper tribute to his memory or to express the impact of his loss to his friends and the community.

To know Norman was to respect and admire him. His unselfish devotion to duty, his kind deeds and his ingratiating personality will always be remembered and cherished by his legion of friends. Always true to the highest ideals of manhood and Judaism, he was an inspiration to all who made his acquaintance.

Portland was privileged to have him as a leader, and all of us were privileged to have him as a friend.

Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to his wife and family whose loss cannot be measured. May they derive some comfort from the fact that their loss and sorrow is shared by many.

ANNABELLE SHUR POLLARD,
President.

From Portland Jewish Federation

Honest, natural, clean in mind and body, unaffected, always ready to serve—that was Norman Godfrey.

In the early days of the Center my duties as Social Chairman brought me in constant association with Norman. The work of that committee was devoted mainly to money raising events to keep the Center going. Those who worked on the Committee well remember how the enthusiasm, boundless energy and blithe spirit of Norman turned drudgery into play.

He was not only Center Director. His interest was apparent in every phase of community activity. The unity that Portland enjoyed is a direct result of his untiring effort.

It was therefore a natural sequence of that interest that he gave so much of himself to the Federation. The successful Federation campaign, he helped prepare the year books that gained national recognition are all a tribute to Norman's tireless energy and talent.

Federation missed Norman sorely last year and will forever cherish his memory.

SAUL G. CHASON,
President.

From Associated Jewish Philanthropies Boston, Mass.

Saddened by the loss of personal friend in passing of Norman Godfrey. I know that Portland will miss his inspiring leadership. My sincerest sympathy to his family.

SIDNEY S. COHEN,
Executive Director.

From Center Youth

We, of Center Youth, consider ourselves very fortunate to have been so closely associated with Norman Godfrey. We looked up to him not only as our leading advisor, but as a wonderfully kind, fair, and enthusiastic person to whom we could unhesitatingly turn in both personal problems, and those of the club as a whole. He was in a great measure responsible for the success of our beginning, and his interest in our progress never slackened. His faith in us as future citizens was more than steadfast; it was inspirational.

He always treated us as his equal, and not once did he let us down in crusading our cause, or in advancing our prestige. It is seldom that an elder has earned from a youth group the love and respect that we so sincerely felt for Norman Godfrey. His absence has left a great gap in our activities, and he will be sorely missed by us all.

The part he played in striving for the happiness and betterment of the Jewish high school youth of Portland will never be forgotten.

HELEN BARBARA BERNSTEIN,
GERALD COPE,
Co-Presidents.

FROM ALL OUR INSTITUTIONS

We express our profound sorrow at the untimely passing of Norman Godfrey. Our interests and our cares were close to his heart. He served us with devotion. His guiding spirit shall always remain with us. Peace and Honor to his memory.

Anshe Sphaard Synagogue
Anshe Sphaard Sisterhood
Etz Chaim Synagogue
Etz Chaim Sisterhood
Shaarey Tphiloh Synagogue
Shaarey Tphiloh Sisterhood
Jewish Education Council
Jewish Home for Aged
Jewish Home for Aged Auxiliary
Portland Hebrew School
Portland Hebrew School Auxiliary
United Hebrew Charities
American Jewish Congress
B'nai Brith
B'nai Brith Auxiliary
Council of Jewish Women
Degel Zoin Camp
Hadassah
Jewish National Fund Council
Jewish War Veterans
Jewish War Veterans Auxiliary
Junior Hadassah
Mizrachi
Mizrachi Auxiliary
Pioneer Women's Organization
Poale Zion
Portland Zionist District
Zionist Youth Commission
Alpha Tau
Boy Scouts
Delta Kappa
Iota Phi
Phi Delta Mu
Young Judea

From Center Girls Club

It is with deep sorrow that we, the Center Girls Club, mourn the passing of Norman Godfrey. Our heartfelt sympathy is extended to his family.

Since he first came to Portland, eight years ago, we have gained much from his guidance for he was never too busy to attend our meetings, listen to our problems, and assist in planning our affairs. Much of our program that is traditional with the Center Girls Club was first suggested by Norman Godfrey.

A number of our members have made their start in the business world in positions that he secured for them in times that vacancies were very few.

Words cannot express how deeply moved we are by his untimely passing—Portland Jewry alone do not mourn but all who had the good fortune to know him whether Jew or Gentile. Norman Godfrey will be missed, not alone in his official capacity as Executive Director but as our friend.

ETHEL COMERAS, President.

From Center Club

The young men of the community were profoundly disheartened when the sorrowful news was released that our beloved community leader, Norman Godfrey, had gone to his eternal rest and on behalf of "The Center Club", I want to express our heartfelt sympathies to Mrs. Godfrey and family.

It is not often that one comes into a community even though for a comparative short period and bestows upon a people so rich a heritage. Norman chartered a course for our young people, illuminating the way with guide posts that are a prerequisite to a purposeful life. He taught us to be intensely Jewish, to embrace fine, ethical standards, to manifest tolerance, good will, and amity towards our own people and those of other faiths. To be in his presence was to be exhilarated. He commanded our confidence and respect because he himself personified the virtues he endeavored to inculcate in us.

Although, he has departed from our midst, we will seek loftier ideals because of the influence he exerted and the inspiration he provided. Norman practiced self effacement, devoting himself zealously and unselfishly in behalf of others, an attribute associated with genuine leadership. His philosophy was not provincial. He endeared himself to our christian brethren dignifying every man, woman, and child of our Jewish community.

The most sincere and enduring tribute that we can give to the memory of our cherished leader is to exemplify in our lives those virtues which Norman incorporated in his relations with us that are conducive to the development of our character.

Norman Godfrey was a golden thread in the fabric of our community that will glow brightly as the years go on when in reflection we can better evaluate his contribution to our well being.

LINWOOD PINANSKY,
President.

From Center Men's Club

At a time like this, I think that anyone would find it difficult to express in words the extent of the loss to Norman's many friends. However, I find it particularly difficult, due to the fact that during Norman's first five years in Portland I had occasion to spend a great deal of time with him, both in organizational work and socially.

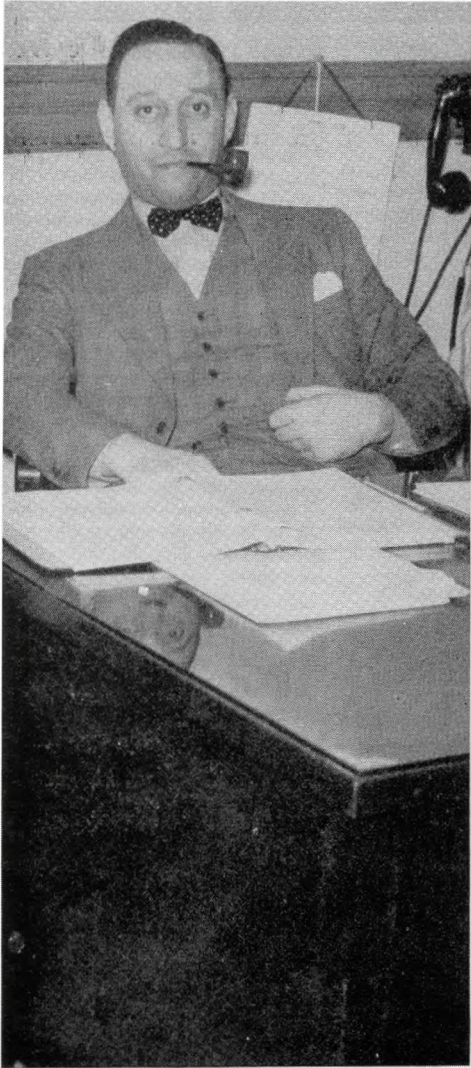
I recall when Norman first came to Portland, and undertook his first position as an Executive Director of a Center. He was more or less of a newcomer to the job, and definitely a newcomer to the Community, but he immediately took hold and before very long, everyone was convinced that the rapid progress made by the Center in its new building was due almost entirely to the efforts of Norman Godfrey. I believe that it is very unusual, in referring to any man serving in the capacity of Executive Director of a community organization, to be able to truthfully say that I have never heard a serious complaint of any nature in connection with any of the varied phases of his duties as Director. He knew the workings of a Center; he was qualified to handle and supervise its program in all fields, whether it be social, educational, or athletic; he took over supervision of the Center Bulletin, and not only kept after leaders of the various organizations, telling them what they should do to publicize their affairs, but in most cases he actually wrote the articles; and he was endowed with that happy faculty, so important to anyone dealing with the general public, of being able to get along with everyone and he admired and respected by all, regardless of their age group, or the particular group, or faction to which they belonged.

No one can deny that Norman Godfrey did a great deal for the Jewish Community in Portland. He was successful not only in the progress of the Center and the various other Jewish organizations, but he did so much to improve relations between the Members of the Jewish Community and the City at large. I have heard many comments made by various Members of the Community Chest, Council of Social Agencies, and other similar organizations, and based upon the remarks made, I am certain that the Jewish Community never had such an ambassador of good will in the City of Portland.

Norman Godfrey was active in the Center Men's Club from its inception, and did a great deal to help make the Club possible. As in many other organizations, he went out of his way to help its officers in planning functions and in solving its many problems.

On behalf of the Members of the Center Men's Club, I offer condolences to his family, and would like to add my personal comment in expressing sorrow at the loss suffered by all who knew him. To Ethel Godfrey I express my sincere admiration for the manner in which she has borne herself during Norman's long illness, and the spirit in

Continued on page six



TRIBUTES

From Maine Jewish Council

When I met Norman Godfrey in the spring of 1945 in Portland, on my first visit to Maine, I immediately felt that I had come into contact with a warm-hearted person, with deep-rooted loyalty to his people and a great capacity for intimate friendship. Later in the summer, we met again at Camp Welmet, where we attended a Summer Institute of the Jewish Welfare Board. He was in an exuberant, playful mood when he took part in a game on the baseball diamond, and serious in thought and expression when he joined in a discussion at a lecture session. It is this quality of combining gaiety and seriousness that made Norman beloved among his friends.

At a meeting of the Maine Jewish Council, later in the fall, the chief topic on the agenda was then the establishment of Camp Lown. Norman was elated — the idea that he had fathered was being realized. His concern was as much for the children of the entire State as for those of his community—Portland. He felt for all of them, how much they needed a summer camp for the enjoyment of Jewish living.

In the Synagogue at a Sukkot Service, Norm was given the honor of taking the Torah scroll out of the Ark. He stood on the Bimah with the Torah in his arms, his face expressing the deep reverence that was always in his heart for the sanctities of his people.

These are a few of the impressive moments I have been with Norman since I came to the State of Maine. His long fatal illness deprived me of the opportunity further to cultivate his friendship, which I had cherished personally and which, I had hoped, would be of great value to my work with the communities in this State. I shall remember Norman as I knew him in his moments of exultation.

ALEXANDER S. KOHANSKI,
Executive Director.

From National Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds

Everyone in the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds across the country who had the privilege of knowing and working with Norman Godfrey mourns his passing as a personal as well as a professional loss. No one was more beloved by his associates. He was an example of devotion to his profession, his community and to his people. We share with the Jewish community and Jewish Federation of Portland the great sadness of this hour, and extend our deep sympathy to his family.

H. L. LURIE,
Executive Director.

From Center Men's Club

Continued from page four which she has accepted his death, particularly her faith in believing that "such is God's Will".

MORRIS COX, President.

From Personnel Dept. National Jewish Welfare Board

In the moment of great shock and sorrow at the passing of an intimate friend, memories of past associations come alive and sweep all daily affairs from mind. Such was my immediate response upon learning of the death of Norman Godfrey — at the instant, bewilderment, and then relationships of the past many years pyramided one upon the other until a full picture of the man and his accomplishments were before me.

Norm and I first met over twelve years ago, while he was serving as Health Education Director at the Stamford, Conn., Jewish Community Center. There he impressed me as a progressive Center worker, with outstanding professional ability and potentiality. There he impressed me as a man with exemplary character and merit.

It was my privilege to be closely associated with him from the moment he came into Portland until the end. My memory is vivid of his interview for the position of Executive Director of the Center, of his intelligent adjustment to a new position and a new community, and of his years of fruitful leadership and achievement.

The Portland Jewish Community and Norm quickly developed an ideal partnership. Norm and Ethel loved the work, the Center Jewish life, and the people who constituted the community. In that setting he found it possible to be his most productive self—and his contributions are too numerous to recount. His human qualities, his dedication to Judaism, his sense of responsibility as an American citizen, his great capacity for work, his loyalty, idealism and inspiration will leave their mark on Portland. Well known to me is the depth of Portland's love and admiration and respect for Norm. He was not an adopted son; he was a vital member of the family.

We, of the profession of Center work, humbly join with Portland in mourning his loss. He was a colleague who brought strength and dignity to our service. He was a forthright, intellectually honest, deeply religious fellow-worker. His technical ability and his professional skill placed him high in the ranks of competent Center Executives. Our great respect and sincere affection for Norman Godfrey as a man and as an associate are stamped in our memory—to serve as a monument to keep alive his place among us.

SAMUEL JOSLOWITZ, Director.

From National Association Jewish Center Workers

The National Association of Jewish Center Workers records with great sorrow the passing of its esteemed member and colleague Norman Godfrey. His was a rare soul with a genius for service and love for his fellow human beings. He will be sorely missed from our ranks.

GRANIUM BERGER, President.

From New England Section, National Jewish Welfare Board

The officers, board and staff of the New England Section—Jewish Welfare Board join in mourning the untimely passing of Norman Godfrey. His going will ever be keenly felt by all who had the privilege of working with him.

Norman Godfrey exemplified the finest traits of a Jewish communal worker. His leadership was at once of the highest inspiration and of the deepest humility. To the youth he was a teacher by loving example. To the lay leaders he was known to possess the genuine art of leadership. To his professional colleagues, he was considered a social worker's social worker. No one ever talked with Norman who was not influenced to deeds above his best intentions by his words of friendly, warm encouragement.

It is given to the very few to leave behind a contribution of lasting value. Norman Godfrey's best memorial will always be found in the good works of the communities he served for he fashioned lovingly and lastingly.

To family, friends and colleagues he leaves behind a motto which was ever his trade mark: "Be humble in spirit and noble in service." A loyal community servant has gone to his rest. He will always be missed and always remembered.

With deepest sorrow,
ABRAHAM H. MARKLE,
President.
HERBERT MILLMAN,
Field Secretary.

From Regional Division Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds

It is with deep sorrow that I learned of the untimely passing of my friend and colleague, Norman Godfrey, and extend my heartfelt sympathy to his family. He gave unselfishly of himself to promote the well-being of the people of Portland and of Jews everywhere. His sincerity, devotion and contribution to Jewish communal work was respected by all who knew him and we mourn his passing as a personal and professional loss.

ROBERT FITTERMAN,
Regional Director.

From Jewish Center Division, National Jewish Welfare Board

We deeply regret the passing of Norman Godfrey. He devoted himself unselfishly and unstintingly to our efforts in behalf of the Jewish community. His accomplishments in Portland will serve as a perpetual symbol of his untiring efforts and devotion to the Jewish Center movement.

PHILIP M. KLUTZNICK,
Chairman.

From Portland Council of Social Agencies

It is with the deepest and most sincere regret that the Council of Social Agencies learns of the death of Norman Godfrey.

A firm believer in co-operative activity, in individuals and agencies working things out together, Norman Godfrey contributed immeasurably to the committees and groups in the Council of which he was a member. Often he would sit quietly through the early part of a discussion assimilating the material, and then, when he was ready to speak, his proposal was always clear and sound, based on both practical thinking and idealism.

In the Group Work Division, on Special Committees and in the larger Council itself, Norman Godfrey was outstanding for his warmth and friendliness, his genuine interest in all people, and for his constant striving for the best.

He will be sorely missed and he will be long remembered.

MRS. THEODORE B. FOBES,
President.

From Portland U.S.O. Council

The passing of Norman Godfrey brings a deep sense of personal loss to me as an individual. It has been my privilege to work with him in many community and national projects during the past six years. I had continually been impressed by his great zeal for any task he undertook; for his loyalty to our community and his country. I had come to regard him as a true friend.

Norman was a true gentleman and a good citizen, one we can ill afford to lose and one who will be extremely difficult to replace in our community life.

WILLIAM W. BANTON,
Chairman.

From Greater Portland Community Chest

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Portland Community Chest we note with deep regret the passing of Norman Godfrey. In a community recognized for the ability, skill, and cooperative spirit of its agency executives, Norman Godfrey was outstanding. He was ever ready to give wise counsel, or cheerfully assume a difficult task.

To his friends and associates we extend our deepest sympathy.

WILLIAM W. BANTON, President.

From New York Metropolitan Section National Jewish Welfare Board

The substance that was within Norman Godfrey will never pass away. He left parts of himself within the hearts of all who knew him, to be passed on to others and help make a kinder and more beautiful world. I am grateful to have been a friend of his.

MATTHEW ELSON, Field Secretary.

TRIBUTES

THE FAREWELL

On Saturday evening, January 25th, at 7:00 P.M., in the building which was Norman's life, the Portland Community assembled to conduct memorial services.

The gymnasium of the Center had been transformed for the occasion into a large auditorium. It was draped in mourning. Filled to capacity with the hosts of Norman's friends, associates and admirers, the hall was nevertheless quiet. A mood of sorrow and sober reflection pervaded.

Rabbi David Berent opened the service with a traditional prayer. There followed a heartfelt statement by the President of the Center, Barnett I. Shur, expressing the realization of the Jewish Community of Portland that Norman had been the bulwark of our Jewish Community life.

Rabbi Berent then recited appropriate prayers and gave voice to the deep mourning of the entire Jewish Community of the State of Maine. In a tribute which was inspired by the self-sacrifice and sincerity of Norman's life, Rabbi Berent offered consolation for the great loss of our beloved friend and emphasized that he had achieved immortality by his work and by the memory that he had left with all who knew him and associated with him.

Cantor Samuel Zimmelman chanted the traditional prayers of departure and the service was concluded by Rabbi Berent who recited a final prayer.

The memorial service was of exceeding beauty. It will be remembered in Portland as long as will Norman Godfrey. It was a true reflection of his spirit.

Shortly after the completion of the memorial service in Portland, a group of Portland citizens left with the family to attend the funeral services in New Haven, Connecticut. The Portland delegation consisted of Edward J. Berman, Louis Bernstein, B. James Cohen, Sidney Davidson, Sumner Goffin, Leo Golo-detz, Arnold Goodman, Albert Issokson, Joseph LaReis, Harold P. Nelson, David Novick, Irving Rothstein, Maurice Ross, Edward Shapiro, Barnett I. Shur, Victor Taylor, Sidney W. Wernick, and Lester Willis.

At one o'clock on Sunday, the 26th day of January, memorial services for Norman were conducted at the Weller Funeral Home in New Haven. A large gathering of people was present, including, among others, representatives from Portland, from Stamford, from New York City, indeed from many other cities where Norman was known and loved.

Words of sorrow and consolation in English and Yiddish were uttered by three Rabbis of the New Haven Community who knew Norman and his family intimately.

On behalf of the Jewish Community of Portland, to whom so much of Norman's life had been devoted, if not in years at least in accomplishment, a memorial message was given by Louis

From Portland Council of Social Agencies

I liked Norman Godfrey for his friendliness to all people, for his ability to take the tenseness out of a group with some human or humorous remark, for his willingness to give his time to problems that concerned the whole community, and not just himself or his agency.

He stood for all that is good in the Social Work field—high professional standards, the serious, but not too serious outlook, steady growth on the job, and true concern for the welfare of all people.

He gave to all of us who knew him two things particularly—the example of fine living by a real and good philosophy of life, and constant encouragement in the belief that the best is actually attainable.

RUTH F. FENNESSEY,
Executive Secretary.

From Executive Director National Jewish Welfare Board

Frank Weil, president of J.W.B., joins me in expressing the deep sense of loss of the National Organization in the untimely death of Norman Godfrey. I knew and admired him for the devoted and effective service he rendered throughout his career. He rose from the ranks through courageous application of sterling qualities of heart and mind. He had the affection of all who worked with him. We shall miss him in our movement. To his family we extend our deepest sympathy.

LOUIS KRAFT.

Bernstein, the first President of the Jewish Community Center of Portland and with whom Norman was so closely associated in overcoming the difficult problems of the Center's early days. He stressed the enormity of the contribution that Norman had made to the Jewish Community of Portland at the sacrifice of himself and of personal comforts and conveniences. He hailed Norman with a departing salutation, than which there can be none more noble "well done good and faithful servant".

At the conclusion of the memorial, burial services were conducted at the Jewish Cemetery in New Haven. The active pallbearers were Edward J. Berman, Louis Bernstein, David Novick, Barnett I. Shur, Sidney W. Wernick and Lester Willis, all of Portland. The rest of the Portland delegation acted as honorary pallbearers.

At the burial ground, the traditional prayers were offered.

Our beloved friend, Norman Godfrey, had been sent to his eternal rest in the bosom of God.

From the Communities of New Haven and of Portland he had received his farewells — farewells of everlasting memory and enduring love.

A REPRINT

By request, the Open Letter to Norman, which appeared in the Bulletin of November 9, 1945, is reprinted. A footnote on how it came to be written may be of interest.

When the news came to me in confidence that Norman was suffering from an incurable ailment, and that his days were numbered, I was sick at heart. For a time I could not, because I would not, believe that this person, unusually attractive physically and spiritually, was to be taken from our midst. When the inevitable finally dawned upon me, I wanted to go to him, to talk to him, and to let him know how close and dear he was to all of us; but I was afraid lest by act, if not by word, I might convey to him the impending doom. Yet he had to be told, before it was too late, what a valuable contribution he had made to the life, Jewish and non-Jewish, of the community. Then I hit upon the open letter, which was to be fresh, flip-pant, and funny. Never had I shed more tears nor cried more bitterly at the injustice of it all than when I wrote this "humorous" piece. The day after its publication Norman telephoned to thank me as though I had done something for him.

An Open Letter to NORMAN GODFREY

Dear Norman:

The news of your illness is distressing to all of us. A guy like you, who works sixteen hours a day at his job, ransacks the ice-box every midnight, supervises a hundred and one different activities at the Center, and keeps every one happy and free from irritation, without lighting an Old Gold, has no right, morally, contractually, or physically, to be sick.

There are other aspects of your sickness that do not appeal to me in the least, Norman. You are taxing the financial resources of this community to the breaking point. The number of bouquets of flowers, packages of candy, books, and cigarettes, to mention only the more conventional tokens, which you have received in the past few weeks, amount, I happen to know, to a considerable sum of money. Do you expect us to build up your personal library or to provide you with enough smokes to last you for several years? And what, may I ask, have you done for Portland to deserve such an amazing outpouring of tribute? I have known you, Norman, from the first day you came here seven years ago and I am sorry to say — I must speak truthfully — that you have done only four things: you have caused every youngster to love you; you have made every older person respect and admire you; you have established a friendly and wholesome relationship between Jew and non-Jew by your interpretation of Jewish life and by your cooperative community effort; and you have brought our Center up to such a high plane that it has become the envy of all New England. Do you call that much of an accomplishment?

From First President Portland Jewish Federation

Of all the monuments man leaves behind him, the only enduring one is the pillar of love he builds in the hearts of his family and friends. All else is worthless.

During his brief span of life, Norman Godfrey built for himself a monument of love and affection that will live as long as those who knew him remain on earth.

None of the ravages of time will dim the flame that says: "Norman Godfrey lives within my heart as surely as though his body still were here to walk hand and hand with me through life."

By his complete unselfishness, charity and good fellowship, Norman won a place in the hearts of his fellow men that is afforded to few persons. We will miss him sorely. But, we thank God for having given him to us, even for so short a time.

Always, may we remember to be better men because of his example. And, may the undying soul of our beloved friend find the peace and comfort he so justly deserves.

ABRAHAM S. LEVEY.

Besides, Norman, you are sapping our strength. At last Wednesday night's meeting of the Board of Directors of the Center I listened to the reports of the Chairmen of seven different Committees and as each one recited what the members of his or her particular committee were doing to carry on your work I noted with pencil upon paper the number of persons busy about the Center in your absence. By actual count, nine junior boys and girls, 13 members of the Center Women's Club, 14 from the Center Business Girls, and 16 from the Center Men's Club are working for you. In a word, 52 men, women and children are doing what you normally would do alone. And I make no mention of our President, Barney, who has practically given up his law practice. Can't you see, Norman, how you are taxing the energy of our members and how you are wearing us all out prematurely?

As if all this were not enough, you would have our blood. Yes, I said, our blood. In your veins now courses some of the best blood in the community. Some of it, to be sure, may not be so hot; but on the whole it's good body-building stuff. I hope for your sake that there is nothing in the alchemy of blood plasma that will change your appearance to that of those who made the contributions. That would be terrible, indeed, wouldn't it? You know, of course, that you have none of mine. I did not want you to freeze to death.

Now, Norman, you have taken our money, spent our energies, and absorbed our blood. What else do you want? Come, come, Norman; get onto yourself. Get back to your job and damn quick, if you know what is good for US.

Sincerely,
ISRAEL BERNSTEIN.

The Jewish Center as already operating in numerous American communities is based upon the fundamental proposition that Jewish life and Americanism are compatible and mutually complementary. Many Jews have misinterpreted both Judaism and Americanism and have thus come to the conclusion that a strengthening of one means the weakening of the other, that the acceptance of the latter implies the abandonment of the former. In seeking to become part and parcel of the American way our youth in particular have forsaken the way of their elders and have thereby jeopardized the future vitality of American Judaism. The task of the Center is to demonstrate the fallacy of this viewpoint by the actual harmonization in its program of these two factors in our heritage and environment. It seeks to interpret correctly and clearly to our youth the values of the Jewish tradition and the American tradition so that they can understand the many points of contact between them and appreciate the distinct contributions of each to a mature and healthy way of life.

There is hardly a field of cultural endeavor, a subject of Jewish interest, a form of physical recreation, a sharing in group activity of opportunity for communal participation, that does not find expression in some phase of the program of the Jewish Center. Life in the Center has for many thousands of children, young people and adults, become a rich experience in the unfoldment of personality and a valuable training for purposeful living.