

My Maccabi Legacy

Marilyn Glaser



Hometown: Poinciana (Kissimmee), Florida

Profession: Registered Nurse, Education

Involvement: 11 Maccabiah Games, 4 Pan Am Games

Maccabi USA has changed my life, and been my life, since 1981. I was the President of my synagogue in Laurel, Maryland, when I first got involved. I had vacationed in Israel once and fell in love with the country. The opportunity to go there regularly led to Aliyah in 2005, when I retired from work. I lived in Israel for 6 years before returning and retiring to Florida. The people I've met and the friends I've made are part of my existence, particularly my life partner, Lazar Lowinger, who was a Maccabiah Masters Tennis champion. When I was approached to be a part of the Legacy Program, it was a no-brainer. It was the obvious thing for me to do, to keep my beloved Maccabiah existing in perpetuity, far beyond my own lifetime. It is a privilege.

In 1989, at the 13th Maccabiah, we had an impromptu B'Nai Mitzvah ceremony in the ancient synagogue on top of Masada. I had never been to one before and decided this was the perfect place and time for me. The scene is forever etched in my memory: Sitting on the ancient stones, looking out over the Judaeen desert, I became a Bat Mitzvah in a ceremony led by a coach who also happened to be a rabbi. It was transformational in terms of my Judaism and my commitment to Maccabi. I told my mom this story when I returned from the Games, and the following Chanukah, she sent a gift of a beautiful Tallit that I will wear the rest of my life to commemorate the occasion. Since then, what is now known as the Phyllis Magerman B'Nai Mitzvah Ceremony (endowed through a Legacy gift), is an integral part of every athlete's Maccabiah experience.