

People

Partners Delicatessen Marilynn Cass, human rights advocate Yude Henteleff recognized for lifetime achievement

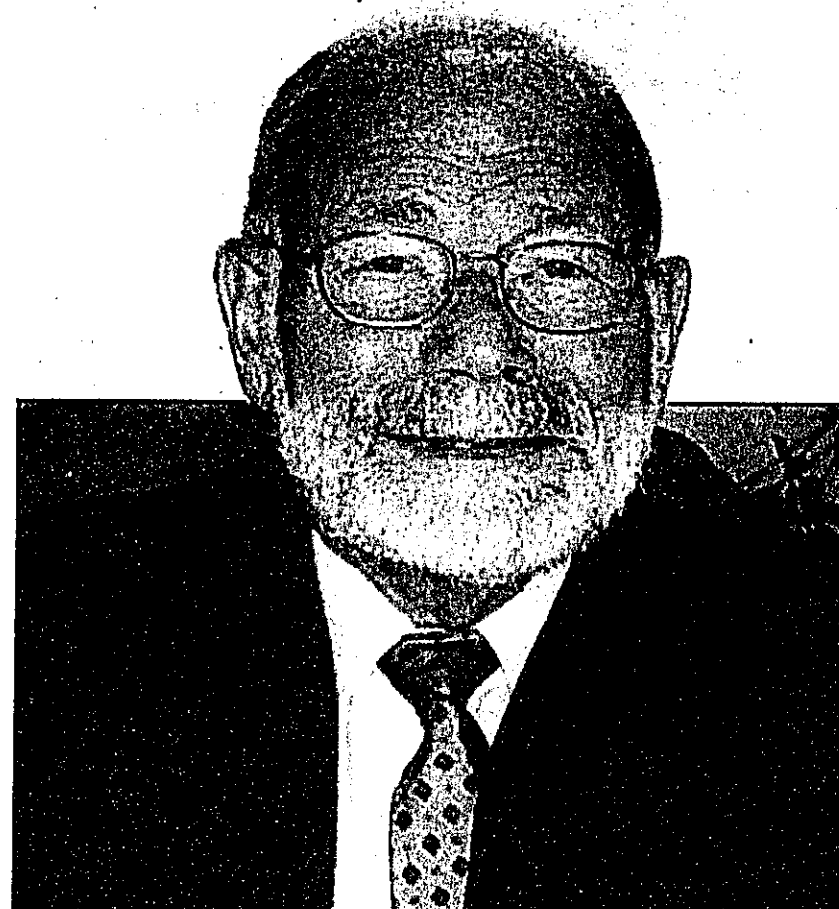
Henteleff receives honorary doctorate from U of M

Yude Henteleff is a member of the community who is undoubtedly well known to most readers of this column. Henteleff is best known for his efforts on behalf of special needs chil-

OUR LITTLE SHTETL



By MYRON LOVE



YUDE HENTELEFF: "Israel lags far behind other Western countries in providing adequate resources and living conditions for the disabled."

dren and his advocacy of human rights. He is also one of the founders of the Manitoba Children's Museum, Prairie Theatre Exchange and the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba, to cite some of his other contributions to the community.

On Wednesday, May 31, at convocation, the University of Manitoba awarded Yude Henteleff an honorary doctorate in recognition of his achievements.

Henteleff's efforts lately have been focused largely on human rights training in South American and central Asian countries and improving living and learning conditions for the disabled in Israel. In Israel, he has been working in conjunction with the Centre for Disability Studies, which is associated with the Faculty of Law at Bar Ilan University, and he has been assisting an organization called "Bizchut", an umbrella organization for disabled groups in the country.

"One major issue is that most mentally challenged Israelis are still housed in institutions," Henteleff says. "They should be in group homes in the community. I have provided Canadian legal decisions, regulations and case studies for those organizations fighting the government on this matter."

Then there is the situation where special needs children attend special schools. Parent groups in Israel are struggling to get the government to provide support for parents who want to enroll their special needs children in the regular public school system. Once again, Henteleff has provided Canadian case studies.

"Israel lags far behind other Western countries in providing adequate resources and living conditions for the disabled," Henteleff says. "There

has been some improvement in the last few years, mainly as a result of legal challenges. But the government has to be dragged into the courts before it does what needs to be done. It's the same in most other places as well."

Henteleff adds that disabled groups in Israel also don't receive their fair share of assistance from Jewish communities in the Diaspora.

In his remarks to the graduating students, he noted that although we in Canada may be proud of our human rights record, there is considerable room for improvement. He cited among our deficiencies the deplorable living conditions in many Aboriginal communities, the high rate of child poverty in Canada and the relatively small amount of money we provide in foreign aid.

"Ten years ago," he noted, "the government promised to boost foreign aid from 3.8 per cent of GDP to seven per cent. Today, the amount of foreign aid we distribute is less than 3.8 per cent of GDP."

He also spoke of the importance of the proposed Canadian Museum for Human Rights to be built in Winnipeg. And he told the students that he hoped that they would do a better job of taking care of the world than their parents' generation has done.

"It was quite exciting to have received a Honorary Doctorate," Henteleff says.



MARILYNN CASS, owner of Partners Delicatessen: Lifetime Achievement Award at the Manitoba Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Awards evening.

Marilynn Cass has also racked up an impressive list of achievements in her business career, her personal life and as a community volunteer. Thus, it is fitting that the owner of Partners Delicatessen should be recognized with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the most recent at the Manitoba Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Awards evening in mid-May.

Originally from Toronto, Cass grew up in the restaurant business. Her father and several uncles owned restaurants and she recalls working Saturdays from an early age in her father's establishment.

Early in life, Cass demonstrated the leadership abilities, capacity for hard work and determination that has been the hallmarks of her success in life. At the age of 12, she became the youngest person to swim across Lake Simcoe.

"From that experience, I learned the importance of perseverance and also that if you can make it to the halfway mark, the rest of the strug-

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Nazi-hunter pays tribute to mentor Simon Wiesenthal

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access to the books. When they got to the castle and found the books, they discovered that one was a siddur (prayer book) with an inscription written by the sister of one of the rabbis which was a plea that she and her parents and their murderers not be forgotten.

"Simon Wiesenthal never forget that message," Zuroff said. "Even though he could have made a comfortable living as an architect, he chose to dedicate his life to fighting for justice for the victims of the Shoah."

Shortly after that incident, he set up an office in Linz in Austria, and began collecting the testimonies of survivors. It soon became clear, though, that the victorious Allies weren't interested in trying Nazi war criminals. They were more concerned about building up west Germany as a bulwark against the new Communist threat.

Zuroff notes that Wiesenthal got a lead on the whereabouts of Adolph Eichmann in 1953 - the principal architect of the Final Solution - but he lacked the funds to investigate further. He couldn't even find any Jewish organizations to support



EFRAIM ZUROFF speaking at the Hotel Fort Garry: Simon Wiesenthal, his mentor, pursued "justice rather than revenge." Photo by Myron Love.

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I have applied to my business and my daily life."

In her teen years, she served as the first teenage president of ORT, and was appointed to oversee a volunteer program in a Toronto hospital involving delivering meals to patients. From those experiences, she says, she learned the importance of reliability, commitment and taking pride in one's accomplishments.

Following a stint as a bookkeeper and accountant in public practice, she married and ended up moving to Winnipeg where she started her family. She served as president of the Talmud Torah-Joseph Wolinsky Collegiate Parent Teacher Association (where her children attended school), and also spearheaded a campaign to get a lottery license for the school.

"We were the first private school with a lottery license," she says. "We were able to raise a lot of money through the lottery."

Cass originally went into business in part due to the urging of friends. In December, 1980, she and two partners (one of whom was living in Toronto) opened Fruitree, a fruit and nut outlet, at the Garden City Shopping Centre. While pre-Christmas sales were brisk, business dropped off considerably after the holiday rush. Cass saw the need to expand the menu. She and her partners renegotiated their lease, and introduced bagels and fillings and salads.

"At the same time, I developed my own recipe for caesar salad dressing in consultation with my brother who was a chef," she says. "The dressing was an instant hit."

In 1985, Garden City Shopping Centre's management redesigned the food court. At that point, Cass and her partner in Winnipeg bought out their partner in Toronto, and changed the name of their business to Partners Delicatessen.

The business was doing so well that other shopping centre managers came calling. As a result, the partners opened a second outlet in Portage Place (1987), and a third location at Kildonan Place (1989).

In 1998, Cass bought out her remaining partner. That same year, she received a Manitoba Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Innovator Award.

And Cass built her business over the years while also raising two children and two step-children, and caring for her ailing mother and

gle becomes a little easier," she says. "These are lessons that

later, her ailing husband (both of whom have passed away), and still later spending several years going frequently to Toronto and back to see her younger brother who was sick (and has also since passed away).

(She is currently engaged to Sid Kimmel from Toronto, a childhood sweetheart with whom she reconnected three years ago.)

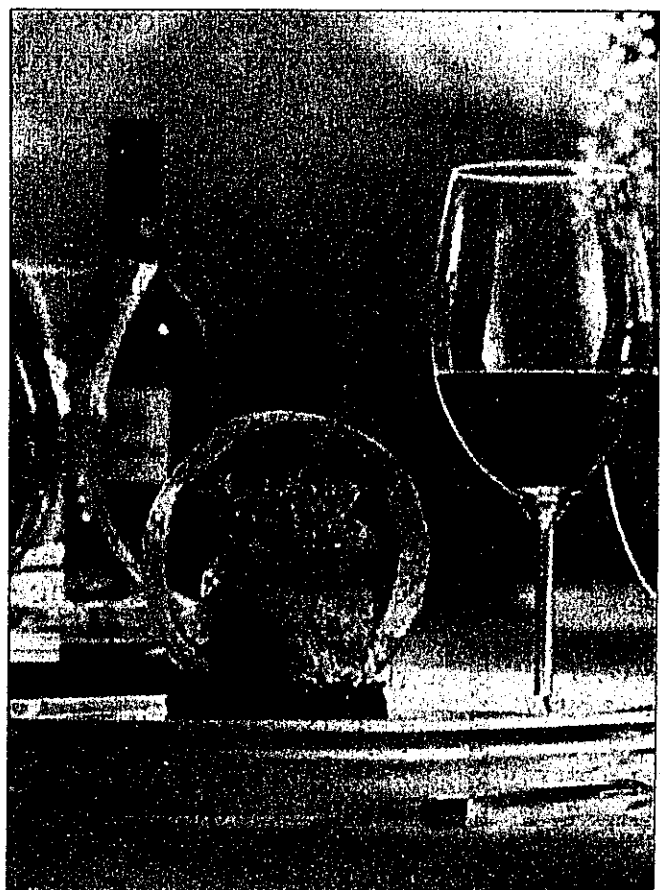
Partners Delicatessen currently has six locations including outlets at City Hall (2004), the pavillion at Kildonan Park (2005), the CBC Building (1995) and the University of Winnipeg Faculty and Staff Club (1992). (Cass closed the Kildonan Place location because of a dispute between the shopping centre management and the franchisees.)

Her future plans for Partners Delicatessen include more franchised outlets, mass merchandising her own line of salad dressings, marinades, sauces, dips, coleslaw, potato salad and pasta salad, and expanding her catering. Cass envisions turning the pavillion in the park into a year-round banquet and dining facility.

Cass prides herself on using only the best quality ingredients in her culinary offerings. "My father taught me that the real secret to success in the restaurant business is to serve a great cup of coffee," she says. "When we first opened, I spent hours blending different coffee beans until I found the right mix. That's the blend we still use."

The writer is a Jewish Winnipeg freelancer.

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