

Dear Members,

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Dr. Rolf Lederer, a pivotal figure in the founding of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Toronto and a cherished member of our community. Rolf passed away on 22 July 2024. Burial will be held in Israel.

Born in Hamburg, Germany, in 1934, Rolf's journey took him to South Africa, where he earned his medical degree from Cape Town University. After completing his psychiatric training in Edinburgh and Boston, he settled in Toronto in 1968, where he established a private practice as a general psychiatrist.

Rolf's dedication to our community was unwavering. He co-founded the Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada, as it was then known, in 1985 and served as its president from 1987 to 1991. Under his leadership, the Society grew from a small group of avid genealogists into a thriving organization dedicated to exploring and preserving Jewish heritage. His efforts laid the foundation for the rich resources and vibrant community we enjoy today.

Rolf's vision for the Society was expansive. He was instrumental in acquiring charitable status for the Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada, ensuring that we could further our mission with greater support and recognition. Rolf also successfully applied for our membership in the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS), broadening our reach and connecting us with a global network of genealogical researchers.

He believed in the power of community and worked tirelessly to expand our membership and increase awareness of Jewish genealogy. Rolf also facilitated our

membership in the Canadian Jewish Congress, adding another layer of support and recognition for our Society. One of his key goals during his presidency was to host events and build a strong, engaged membership base, a vision he realized with great success.

Rolf initiated the quarterly journal known as Shem Tov, with Peter Cullman as the first editor, followed by Henry Wellisch. This publication has been a cornerstone of our Society, providing valuable insights and information to our members.

One memorable moment in Rolf's journey was his visit to Dr. Henry Goldenberg, who held the Goldenberg Scrolls. Dr. Goldenberg documented his patients' family trees on the exam table paper rolls. Rolf was fascinated by these scrolls, noting their resemblance to Torah Scrolls and the significance they held, and these form the basis of our Toronto Jewish Families History project.

Rolf's legacy in genealogical research and his passion for connecting people with their ancestral roots will be remembered and cherished by all who knew him. His leadership, wisdom, and kindness have left an indelible mark on our Society and the broader Jewish community.

Rolf's words from the June 1985 issue of Shem Tov still resonate today: "I envisage the society serving as a vehicle to provide guidelines for individuals researching their own families, as well as fulfilling an educational role." His vision continues to guide us as we honour his memory and continue the work he started.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family and friends during this difficult time. May his memory be a blessing.