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Final Address as President to the Congregation by Donald M. Povich

Donald M. Povich

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This will be my final statement as president of Beth Israel Congregation. To say that I have enjoyed these past three years would be an understatement. To say that it has been challenging would be accurate, but it has also been a lot of fun. Whatever has been accomplished was surely not done alone because I owe a great deal to all of those who have helped. Not only helped, but in fact have done most of the work, and I am forever grateful to you all.

Our congregation has a long history from its inception in 1922 to the present. It was founded by a number of large immigrant families some of whose names can still be heard. The Greenblatts, the Browns, the Poviches and some of whom are distant memories, the Cohens, the Cogans, the Levins and the Goldsteins; and some of whom are only names, the Shanbaums, the Macks, the Ariks.

Some of us are old enough to remember when we were the youngest members and others were the elders. Something happened to our town and our congregation, like its members our Congregation simply grew older and we woke up to the stunning fact that one day soon it might die.

Like the Phoenix of old, it rose from the ashes. Like so many miracles it did not rise alone but it was lifted by the efforts of a new group of young people who, though they were few in number, were determined to see that Beth Israel did not die. You know their names; the Weinbergs, the Smiths, the Davidsons *THE TEPELS* and Singers. They started our Hebrew school and they revived our congregation.

I span the gap. I remember those old families. I remember sitting in the "Shul" and being the youngest person there. I saw those families pass away and move away and I saw these new families arrive. It is fitting that I should now pass the torch to a new leadership. A leadership in which I have great faith. I have seen them in action. They are every bit as good as that other generation that founded and nurtured this congregation. They are as good as we who have kept it together.

They will do even greater things in the future.

Thank you all for helping me so much. I'll try to be as much help to you as you have been to me.