A MAN OF MITZVAH

By Luke Munchrath (Tarleton State 17)

When Glen Mutchnick (Auburn 78) arrived at Auburn University in 1978, he planned to follow in his father's footsteps and study mechanical engineering. What unfolded over the next four decades was a life shaped by leadership, education and a deep commitment to serving others.

Raised in Mobile, Alabama, Mutchnick brought with him to college a strong sense of identity and purpose. While attending Auburn, he founded Hillel, a Jewish student organization to help create space for connection, reflection and tradition. He also organized campus-wide Sabbath services at the university's chapel—initiatives that left a lasting impact on student life and inclusivity.

During this time, he made a pivotal choice. Instead of joining a Jewish fraternity, Mutchnick chose to join FarmHouse, drawn to its values and brotherhood. As one of a few non-Christian members in the chapter at the time he was hesitant, but found the members to be welcoming and inclusive. His newfound Fraternity brothers valued his perspectives and encouraged him to participate in Bible studies and discussions. FarmHouse's emphasis on faith, morality and service deeply resonated with him and helped shape his future.

"In FarmHouse, we didn't just talk about values—we lived them," he said. "Whether it was praying before meals or volunteering in the community, there was a shared understanding we were there to grow into better men."

Mutchnick's time in the chapter was marked by camaraderie and character-building moments. The friendships he formed became lifelong, and the lessons he learned carried into every stage of his professional journey.

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After earning a degree in mechanical engineering, Mutchnick worked alongside his father for 13 years before discovering a new calling: education.

At age 35, he returned to school to pursue teaching full time. Over the next 30 years, he taught AP physics, chemistry and biology and served as an adjunct professor. Known for his passion and high standards, he mentored hundreds of students, many of whom went on to successful careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields.

Even after retiring, Mutchnick couldn't stay away from the classroom. Just four hours into retirement, he was invited to teach part-time at a college prep school—and he eagerly accepted. His dedication to learning and mentorship have remained central to his identity.

Throughout his life, Mutchnick also gave generously of his time to his community. He served on his synagogue's board of trustees and later as a director,

led local service initiatives and supported philanthropic causes that aligned with his values. He embraced the mindset that giving back should be selfless and service is a lifelong responsibility.

One of his most impactful lessons came from a rabbi who taught him the concept of anonymous giving–a value he knew well from FarmHouse.

"In Judaism, we're commanded by God to do good deeds–not for rewards, but because it's the right thing to do," he said. "FarmHouse had the same mindset. We didn't stop to pat ourselves on the back; we just did it because it was expected of us as FarmHouse brothers."

Looking back, Mutchnick credits his time at Auburn and in FarmHouse for helping shape his principles and preparing him for a life rooted in service, leadership and integrity.

He later captured many of his life's lessons in his book, "Everybody's Got Tzuris," which reflects on his experiences with teaching, having cancer and persevering during challenging times. In his memoir, he shares stories not only of hardship, but of resilience, hope and the power of human connection.

Today, Mutchnick's story stands as a testament to the impact one person can make through education, service and authenticity. Whether in the classroom, the community or the chapter house, he has remained committed to building up others–quietly and purposefully–while leading with conviction. ★



Glen Mutchnick (Auburn 78) continues to embody a spirit of faith, leadership and service.

HILLEL JEWISH STUDENT ORGANIZATION

Hillel, under president Glen Mutchnick and advisors Dr. and Mrs. Leo Hirth, has been very active on the Auburn campus, as in the Auburn community, after reopening the doors of Hillel in the fall of 1977. Hillel, as campus Jewish organization has been active this year. In the fall of this year, Hillel conducted the first Jewish services ever held in Auburn. These included Rosh Hashana (Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (day of atonement). Hillel sponsored its annual Hannukkah party for Jewish faculty, students and members of the community with about 100 in attendance.

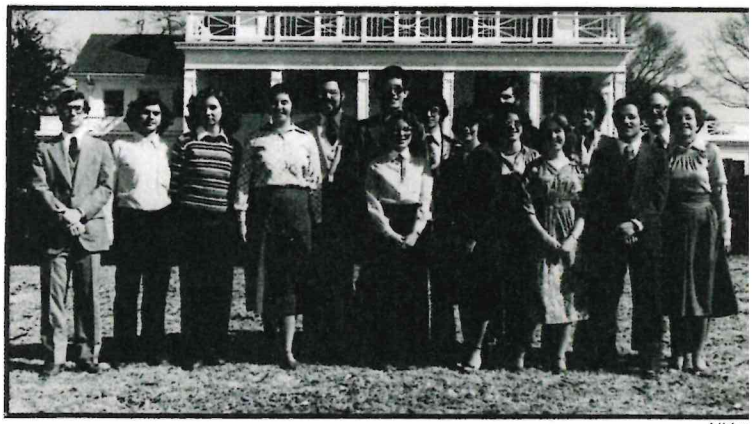
Later in winter quarter, Hillel held Sabbath Services in the Auburn University Chapel, followed by a pizza party. Hillel also played a basketball game, held bowling parties and sent a representative to the Zionist Leadership Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Hillel sponsored the movie "Night and Fog" for A.U. students and faculty. The movie dealt with the Nazi Era during World War II.

During the spring, Hillel sponsored a joint Hillel overnight campout with the University of Alabama Hillel.

Hillel here at Auburn has grown much in the last two years and with an active group next year, we hope to grow and plan even more activities and Hillel sponsored events.



Glen Mutchnick (below, left) led efforts to establish Auburn University's Hillel chapter, organizing the first Jewish services on campus.



First row: Glen Mutchnick — Pres., Bruce Buchman, Debbie Buchman, Leslie Weller, Mark Bucnick, Robin Feldman, Stacey Hader, Lynn Barashick — Vice-Pres., Cathy Greenfield — Vice-Pres., Henry Hene, Marge Hirth — Advisor. Second row: Larry Duwell, Leslie Capouya, Kenneth Oser, David Greenfield, Dr. Leo Hirth — Advisor.

The Hillel Jewish Student Organization, a national Jewish Campus Foundation, has been on the Auburn University campus for over ten years. In the last few years Hillel has become active in the Auburn community, serving as the religious, cultural, and social organization for the Jewish students at Auburn. Under the leadership of Glen Mutchnik (President), Lynn Barashick (Vice-Pres.), Benson Krovtin, and Gary Heiman, along with our faculty advisors, Dr. and Mrs. Leo Hirth, and our new Rabbinical advisor, Rabbi Theodore Feldman of Columbus, Ga., Hillel has planned its annual events such as a Hannukkah party, Rosh Hahana service, our Passover Sedar, monthly Sabbath services, Yom Kippur services, and many others. Along with many special events, guest speakers and community charity work, we have planned activities throughout the year for the campus Jewish community.



Hillel Executive Board — Mrs. Marge Hirth, D. Leo Hirth, Glen Mutchnick Lynn Barashick, Gary Heiman.