



B'NOT MITZVAH



הידי גאנץ

HEIDI GANZ

דבורה שוהנפלד

DEBORAH SCHOENFELD

קלאדיא לובין-עספוזיטו

CLAUDIA LUBIN-ESPOSITO

ג'ניפער קאופמן

JENNIFER KAUFMAN

לורי טובין

LORI TOBIN

ברנדה פסקין

BRENDA PISKIN

IF I AM NOT FOR MYSELF

WHO WILL BE FOR ME?

IF I AM ONLY FOR MYSELF

WHAT AM I?

AND IF NOT NOW

WHEN?

W elcome to our B'not Mitzvah!

We are all pleased and honored to have you join us as we stand here at Temple Beth El and read from the Torah. This has been an amazing journey for all of us, and by extension for our friends and family. So it is only fitting that we celebrate this day surrounded by people whom we love and everyone who has touched our lives.

"TRUST YOURSELF. CREATE THE KIND OF SELF THAT YOU WILL BE
HAPPY TO LIVE WITH ALL YOUR LIFE. MAKE THE MOST OF YOURSELF
BY FANNING THE TINY, INNER SPARKS OF POSSIBILITY INTO
FLAMES OF ACHIEVEMENT." ---GOLDA MEIR

Thank you to Rabbi Hammerman and Cantor Littman who have taught us and encouraged us through every step of this often difficult passage. Without their support and friendship this wouldn't have been possible, or as enjoyable.

We do this as individuals, as women and as a community. We do this for all the women who are unable.

Jennifer Kaufman

Brenda Piskit

Orin J. Cohen

Alondra L. Caposito

Deborah Achenfeld

Heidi Ganz

B'NOT MITZVAH HONORS

OPENING AND CLOSING OF THE ARK FOR REMOVAL OF THE TORAH

Andrew DiFiore

Barry Esposito

Harrison Ganz

Joel Schoenfeld

Bruce Tobin

TORAH SERVICE

	<i>Aliyot</i>	<i>Reading</i>
Kohen.....	Todd Piskin.....	Evan Ganz
		Alex Rosenberg
		Andrew Tobin
		Jonathan Rosenberg
		Brad Tobin
		Craig Tobin
Levi.....	Brenda Piskin.....	Brenda Piskin
Sh'lshi.....	Claudia Lubin-Esposito.....	Claudia Lubin-Esposito
R'vi'i.....	Heidi Ganz.....	Heidi Ganz
Chamishi.....	Lori Tobin.....	Lori Tobin
Shishi.....	Jennifer Kaufman.....	Jennifer Kaufman
Sh'vi'i.....	Deborah Schoenfeld.....	Deborah Schoenfeld
Maftir.....	Joel Schoenfeld.....	Deborah Schoenfeld

HAGBAH AND G'LILAH — RAISING AND DRESSING THE TORAH

Jason Piskin and Samantha Tobin

HOLDING THE TORAH

Bailee Esposito

READING

Bruce Tobin

OPENING AND CLOSING OF THE ARK FOR RETURN OF THE TORAH

Pamela & Stanley Kon

Seth Lubin

Beth Miller

Scott & Michele Piskin

Barbara Schwartz

Amos Zeichner

PARENTS' BLESSING

Hedda & Calvin Batwin

Millie Hershkowitz

Carol & Stanley Kaufman

Ira & Edith Lubin

Hannah & Arnold Piskin

Marcia & Norman Smith

EYN KEYLOHEYNU & ADON OLAM

Bailee Esposito

Isabella Esposito

Jordan Ganz

Julie Piskin

Elise Schoenfeld

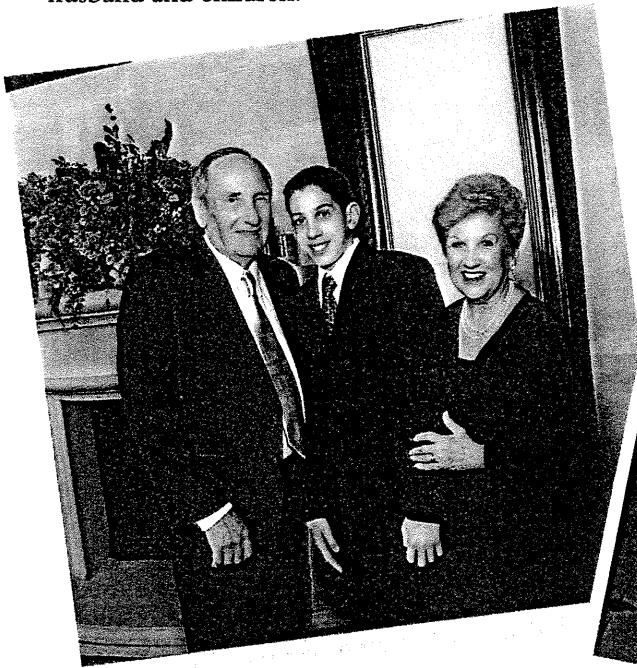
Jessica Schoenfeld

At this time in my life, I was ready to take on a new challenge. I chose to make a commitment to learn Hebrew and learn more about Jewish history and traditions. Studying for my Bat Mitzvah has taken tremendous dedication, a lot of time and great effort. I have always enjoyed going to Synagogue, listening to the music and prayers, but I always knew I wanted to go further, so I would have a higher comfort level at services.

"THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE..."

My oldest son, Evan is now eighteen years old. When Evan was preparing for his Bar Mitzvah, his hard work and dedication resulted in a beautiful and memorable occasion that gave me the inspiration to follow in his path. I also realized that for my younger son Jordan's Bar Mitzvah in 2009, I wanted to be able to fully understand Hebrew and actively participate in the services. My sons have given me tremendous pride and pleasure in their accomplishments. I want to instill in Evan and Jordan that learning is an ongoing process.

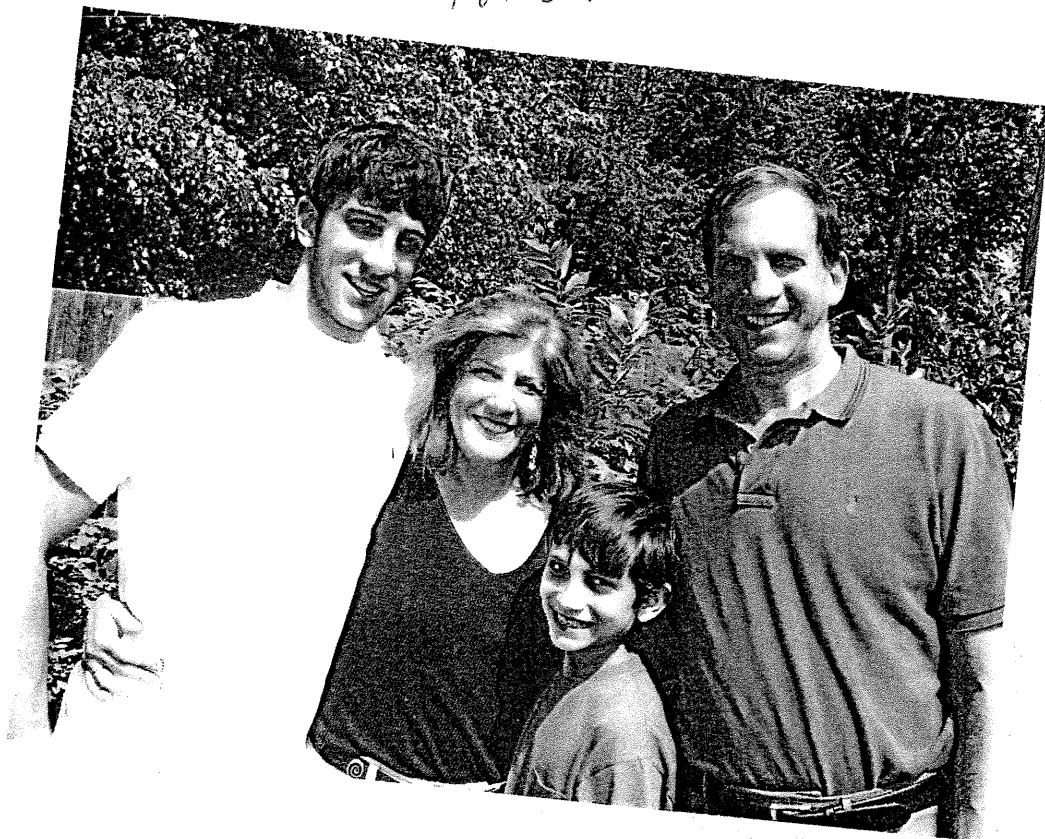
I have wonderful memories of growing up in a traditional Jewish home and celebrating the holidays with family and friends and of course delicious food. These are traditions that I have tried to follow with my husband and children.



I began this journey with five other women who became another family for me with their support, guidance and understanding. I'm grateful for our classes that have brought us together and given us a common bond. Temple Beth El has been such a warm and supportive environment where learning is so rewarding.

I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to Cantor Rachael and Rabbi Hammerman for their dedication, patience and guidance. Your classes were such an inspiration to me.

Heidi



...IN THE BEAUTY OF THEIR DREAMS."

Thank you to Harrison, Evan and Jordan for all of your patience and encouragement.

Thank you to my parents for all the years of love and support.

I look forward to continuing my path of learning and succeeding in all my future endeavors.

Why did I decide to do this now? That is the question I got most frequently when I told people I was studying for my Bat Mitzvah. And the answer I gave most frequently was that it is something that I have always wanted to do and I promised my boys that one day I would. That is the only part of the answer through. The rest lies in the following quote...

"The tragedy of life is not that it ends so soon, but that we wait so long to begin it."

What was I waiting for?



Jennifer

“WHEN YOU COME TO THE EDGE OF ALL THE LIGHT YOU KNOW
AND ARE ABOUT TO STEP OFF INTO THE DARKNESS OF THE UNKNOWN,
FAITH IS KNOWING ONE OF TWO THINGS WILL HAPPEN...”

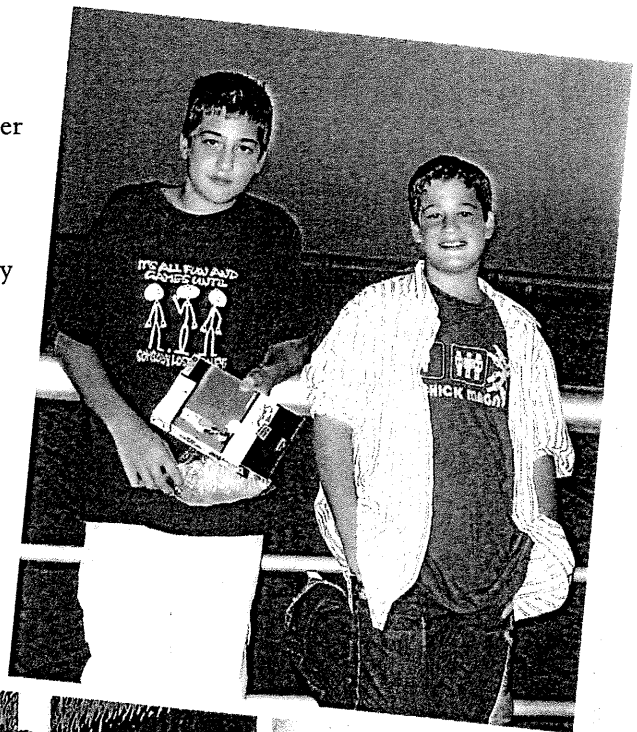
I began this process around the same time as my youngest son began really studying for his Bar Mitzvah. He said that if he had to do this than I should also. And I figured that now is as good a time as any. So the journey began.

...THERE WILL BE SOMETHING SOLID TO STAND ON
OR YOU WILL BE TAUGHT TO FLY.”

When I was growing up I never felt comfortable in Synagogue. Even as an adult it felt foreign to me. Not until I had children and we began attending services and they began Hebrew school did I gain some familiarity and comfort. However, I was always envious of my boys—that they felt so at home and accepted in temple. I wanted that. And I feel that this process has helped me at least begin to get there.

I also did this to prove that I could—both to me and my boys. I want them to know that you are never too old to do what you truly want to. And that once you decide to do something, you should do it to the best of your ability. I hope I have shown them that by my example. As Gandhi said, “*My life is my message.*”

I have worked hard and I am almost as proud of myself as I was of Jonathan and Alex on their Bar Mitzvah days, and as I am of the five other women that are doing this with me. It truly has been an amazing journey that I hope never ends.



I dedicate this day to my mother, my grandmothers and my daughters. To all the women in my life who have inspired me to be the proud, strong, independent Jewish woman that I am. I embarked on this journey as a way of supporting my daughters' Jewish education and commitment to their heritage. But, instead I have found my own.

"REMEMBER, GINGER RODGERS DID EVERYTHING FRED ASTAIRE DID..."

As a child, growing up in Great Neck, an overwhelmingly Jewish community, we were members of the Orthodox Synagogue. Though we were "traditionally" observant at home, we were not shoma Shabbos. We celebrated all the holidays and followed all the traditions, but not the daily rituals. My brother was Bar Mitzvah'd but there was never talk about my sisters or my Bat Mitzvah, it was just not considered. I grew up feeling rich in my heritage and traditions, but weak in my Jewish knowledge.

Now as an adult and as a parent, I feel more then ever a need and desire to know more about my Judaism and to be able to participate in services. I want to stand and be counted.

This journey has been long, challenging and inspiring. I have met some incredible women, made wonderful new friendships and have learned about my religion in a deeper and more personal way.

My mother and grandmothers, who are no longer here to see my achievement today, inspired me to persevere and become a Jewish 'Woman of Valor', Eshet Chayil, as they were. They each would be proud of me for my commitment, dedication and inspiration to others. My mother believed that you could do what ever you wanted, there were no limits to what you could do or be, if you tried. I instill that thinking in my girls and try to be a role model for them, as my mother was for me. It is exactly eighteen years since my mother left us, and I miss her more each day that passes. I dedicate this day especially to her.

My Grandmother Bessie was my best friend. She used her Judaism as her guide through life, demonstrating it through her love and commitment to her family, her friends and tzedukah. She was a role model of a true Jewish Woman and I loved her so. I miss our long talks, card games and her stories of her younger years, which even at the age of 106, never wavered or changed. She would be most proud of me on this day.





My Grandmother Pearl, believed that family and education were the most important components in the development of you as a person. I have stressed these beliefs in my own daughters and have instilled in them a love of family, tradition and knowledge, as my Grandmother did in us. I can still taste her wonderful kreplach and mandelbrot



and see her radiant smile. She would marvel at our accomplishments today and wish she were one of us.

This day is the culmination of so much and the beginning of a whole new world for me. A special place in time where I can pray with my daughters, my mother and my grandmothers by my side. Thank you for joining me here today as my witness, my family, and my friends.



Thank you to the Rabbi for your guidance and help, I have enjoyed your classes and believe you are truly an inspiration to us all. Thank you to Cantor Rachael for your patience, guidance and friendship, you have filled our lives in ways you will never know. Thank you to my co-B'nai Mitzvahs for their help, encouragement and friendship along the way, it has been a wonderful ride.

Claudia

Thank you to my Father and my stepmother, Edith, for my beautiful Tallis and clips, assuring my proper attire for this occasion and future Shabbats. Thank you to my Aunt Hedda, Cousins Linda and Donna for your love and encouragement always. Thank you to my sister Pamela, my brother Seth and my brother-in-laws Amos and Stanley, for caring so much about me to travel so far to be here today, it means a great deal to me.

...BUT SHE DID IT BACKWARDS AND IN HIGH HEELS." --FAITH WHITTLESEY

Thank you to my family and friends for traveling near and far to support me, rejoice with me and be proud of me. Thank you to my beautiful girls, Isabella and Bailee for their encouragement, coaching and love, I could not live without you. And most of all thank you to my husband, Barry for his love, support, encouragement and for watching the girls every Sunday so I could attend class, and become a B'nai Mitzvah today.



I will celebrate my Bas
Mitzvah on Friday evening,
April 26th at 8 o'clock at the
Madison Avenue Temple, Scranton,
Pa.

My parents and I would be
honored to have you worship
with us on this occasion and join
us for luncheon on Saturday April
27th at 1 o'clock at the Castle
Restaurant, 1522 No. Main Ave,
Scranton Pa.

Love,
Brenda

Brenda



Why Again?

On April 27, 1968 I became a Bas Mitzvah in Scanton, PA at the Madison Avenue Temple. It was a Friday night, no Torah, and a Reform congregation, where I was truly blessed (given my off key voice) to only have to read the Haftarah instead of chanting.

So why almost 40 years later, become a woman again? Why after chanting a torah portion at my nephew Jason's Bar Mitzvah would I ever want to do this again?

Becoming a Bat Mitzvah is another step along my life's journey. I look forward to continuing my journey of learning, growing, sharing and laughing with those I am blessed to have in my life and those I am fortunate to meet along the way.

"I AM STILL LEARNING" --MICHELANGELO'S FAVORITE SAYING

Ahava to Andrew, my family, and friends (especially Jennifer, Lori, Claudia, Heidi, Debbie, and Rachael) for their encouragement during this part of the journey.

BRENDA'S TOP 10 REASONS

- 10 *Joined the "Adult Bimah 101" thinking I would learn about the conservative Shabbat service but ended up on the Bimah.*
- 9 *All the cool kids were doing "trope"...but didn't expect to learn it along the way, let alone for both Torah and Haftarah. Now I'm ready for Julie's Bat Mitzvah.*
- 8 *Add a Kiddush cup to the candlesticks I received the first time around.*
- 7 *Refresh my Hebrew since studying at a Tel Aviv Ulpan 20 years ago.*
- 6 *Spend time with my niece on Sunday mornings and make new friends.*
- 5 *Andrew has been to more B'nai Mitzvahs than he ever dreamed of before meeting me, but never mine.*
- 4 *To improve my singing...
NOT another opportunity to sing.*
- 3 *Exercise my brain.*
- 2 *Jennifer said it's a great way to meet men.*
- 1 *Continue my Jewish journey with a tremendous group of women.*



Why have I pursued becoming a Bat Mitzvah? Well, I was sitting in the synagogue one day, when I said to myself, *"I don't really know what is going on here. I need to understand the prayers and the service better than I do now."* Then I saw that Rabbi Hammerman offered a course entitled: *"Judaism for Dummies, Smarties...and Those Who Don't Know How to Ask."* This was just what I needed! As the course began, the Rabbi announced that this was the first requirement of two years of study to become an adult B'nai Mitzvah. Was anyone interested? I was, indeed, along with my five b'not mitzvah colleagues. And, thus, here we are, and here am I.

BEHOLD! A GOOD BOOK HAS BEEN GIVEN YOU. ITS WAYS ARE WAYS OF PLEASANTNESS, AND ALL ITS PATHS ARE PEACE...

When my husband, Joel, and I prepared to be married, the rabbi handed me a book on Judaism. In this book was the verse: *"Know before Whom you stand."* I was particularly struck by this admonishment. It was intriguing, compelling, and a challenge. It became



the beginning building block of my formal Jewish education. My informal education had begun years before, with my first taste of bagels and lox in my freshman college dormitory!

From both beginnings, I have been drawn towards and into an admiration and love of Judaism—of the people, of my people, of the culture and civilization, and of Torah.

There is such a trove of riches for the heart and mind.

I love the Jewish way of learning, thinking, and acting, the Jewish way of kindness and community and compassion. I love the Jewish veneration of life, the pursuit of justice, and the need to know *"Before Whom we stand."* Thus, my bat mitzvah study is another building block of my Jewish edifice, another step along the way of my Jewish learning.

Deborah



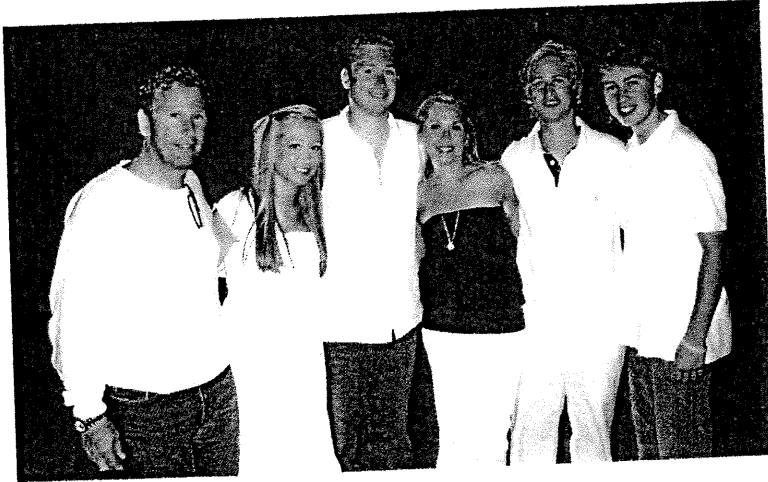
I thank my parents and family for my home and upbringing, and for their constant love, respect, and openness of heart and mind. I thank Joel's family for their welcoming and inclusive love, their friendship, and their pursuit of a happy, fulfilling, Jewish family-life, of which I am a full, participating beneficiary! I thank my husband, Joel, for his constant love, support, and for being the epitome of a loving Jewish husband, father, and mensch. I especially thank my daughters, Jessica and Elise, for putting up with my many absences as I headed off to class. I want to thank all my Jewish teachers, especially Cantor Littman, Rabbi Hammerman, and Eran Vaisben, the one who finally made Hebrew "*click*" for me.

...IT IS A TREE OF LIFE TO THOSE WHO CLING TO IT AND HAPPY ARE
THEY WHO HOLD IT FAST. —THE SIDDUR

Last, but not least, I want to acknowledge my fellow B'not Mitzvah classmates, whose work ethic, perseverance, confidence, and quiet support truly exemplifies them as being Daughters of the Torah.

F inally A Woman

Life is, very often, backward and some of our knowledge and wisdom is, unfortunately, wasted on those too old to benefit from it. We seem to frequently find ourselves developing an appreciation for something long after the opportunity has passed and rarely do we have the chance to go *"back to the future"*. So, last year seeing the apple in front of me again, I grabbed it to take a second bite.



When I was growing up religion was always present in my house. My mother kept a traditional Jewish home and we celebrated all of the holidays. My dad always found solace and spirituality in the synagogue and my older brother, of course went to Hebrew School and became a bar mitzvah. However, as was the case with many Jewish families at the time, the females of the household only played a supporting role when it came to religion. Hebrew School was an elective for my sister, Barbara, and me. Barbara gave it a try but quit after coming home crying everyday she went. So, with all the wisdom of a seven year old, my decision was a no brainer. To the extent I remember, it was the school part I wanted no part of. In fact, going to temple was okay and I remember fondly receiving my father's beaming approval as I sat with him, all dressed up, in shul for the holidays.

"YESTERDAY IS BUT A DREAM, AND TOMORROW IS ONLY A VISION..."

Notwithstanding the absence of any formal Jewish education, I always felt connected. And when it came to my own children, there were no choices. Everyone went to Hebrew school and became a B'nai Mitzvah. By that time, as we all know, girls had equal roles in the service and could read torah.

I was 40 when I had my first thoughts about becoming a Bat Mitzvah. In that year, my friend Karen Feinberg first read from the torah. She was my first inspiration, but she could read Hebrew prior to her bat mitzvah lessons and I knew it would be more difficult for me. With the support of my friends and family, I gave it a try but quickly became overwhelmed and dropped out.

...BUT TODAY WE'VE LIVED MAKES EVERY YESTERDAY A DREAM OF
HAPPINESS AND EVERY TOMORROW A VISION OF HOPE."²³ — ANONYMOUS

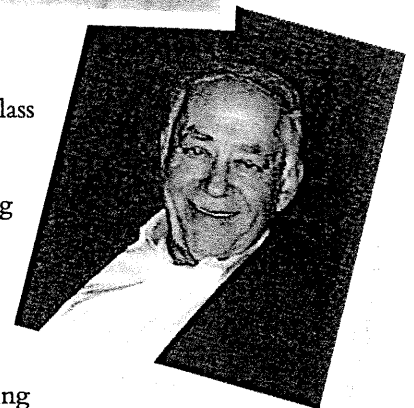
But last year my life changed. I lost my dear friend Bruce Feinberg and then ten days later my father died. I was empty and lost. Both of these wonderful men were strong believers in the teachings of Judaism and in the strength that prayer gave to them. I started going to daily minyan and it gave me some comfort but I could only read the English translations and when it came to the Mourner's Kaddish, the transliteration. So, with my dad on my mind and searching for the comfort he always found in Temple, I decided to try to learn Hebrew again.

Our Hebrew school director, Eran Vaisben, was very patient through our six-week course and another student in the class encouraged me to join the adult Bat Mitzvah class. And I have not looked back since.

Classes with Cantor Littman were always challenging and inspiring. Her passion and dedication to all of us has been incredible. The women in the class became my motivators and new friends. With every new letter, line, trope, and prayer I felt a greater sense of accomplishment. And with that my strong bonds to religion became tighter. I know how proud my dad is of me right now; he has watched over and guided me through this process.

My true support from the start and for the last 30 years has been my husband, Bruce. He not only encourages all I do, he instills the true meaning of unconditional love and compassion in all of us. Brad, Andrew, Samantha, and Craig are my lifeline and although they insisted I practice alone in the car, I know that they too are proud of this accomplishment.

I am truly blessed to have you all here to share in this very special day.





“WHEN YOU EDUCATE A MAN, YOU EDUCATE AN INDIVIDUAL.

WHEN YOU EDUCATE A WOMAN, YOU EDUCATE A WHOLE FAMILY.”

WE ARE HONORED TO BE
THE FIRST ADULT B'NAI MITZVAH CLASS
OF CANTOR LITTMAN,
A TRUE WOMAN OF VALOR.

