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Demant's home in Huntington Woods

Still Giving

JFS to benefit from the sale of bequeathed Demant home.



DEBBIE FEIT SPECIAL TO THE JEWISH NEWS

When Jewish Family Service learned of philanthropist Margaret Demant's passing in May, the agency also learned it was the recipient of her final act of generosity; the long-time supporter of JFS had left her home to the local nonprofit.

Seasoned Realtors Dana Cooper and Laurie Glass of Cooper Glass Homes were chosen to handle the sale of the Huntington Woods home.

"We are so honored that JFS chose us to help make this amazing woman's last wishes a reality," Cooper and Glass said. "What an amazing privilege to be selling her family home to honor an organization she so dearly loved."

Margaret served on the board of directors of Resettlement Service and then JFS in the early 1990s through the early 2000s, bringing a passion for issues such as mental health and substance abuse. An avid art collector and supporter of the Detroit Institute of the Arts for more than 50 years, she received the museum's Lifetime Service Award in 2004.

Born Margaret Herz, she grew up in Berlin. After Kristallnacht, she and her sister, Ellen, left for England on the Kindertransport. Her parents joined them, and thanks to family

connections, they were able to obtain visas to the United States; they settled in Detroit to be near relatives.

She began working with her

father in his textiles and interiors business after graduating high school. In 1947, she married Henry, who also joined her father's business and, together, they built Walter Herz Interiors into a prominent interior design firm.

"Margaret was a force and she did wonderful things," said Ellen Kahn, Margaret's sister. "She just loved the work that

Jewish Family Service was doing, and she especially found the agency's work with women, children and immigration to be very important."

Perry Ohren, JFS CEO, said, "Margaret's gift to JFS is just one of the many ways in which she made a positive impact on our community, and it will undoubtedly go a long way in helping many people in need. We are so proud to be part of her legacy."

"Some of these dollars will most likely be used to cover a probable shortfall in financial assistance that we foresee for next year," he said. "Further, we will try to figure out how to keep Margaret's legacy alive and use this resource for topics she was passionate about, for example, mental health." □



Margaret Demant