

# THIS IS US

Each month, we introduce two members of Women of Mishkan Or. We'd like you to meet Beverley Jacobs and Renee Brodsky.

## Beverley Jacobs



I was born into an average White middle class family in South Africa. Actually, my family was not that average since Mom worked full-time as a nurse and Dad was the stay-at-home parent, a disabled veteran of World War II. My parents always stressed the importance of a good education. Dad strongly encouraged me to become a pharmacist. I worked for three years as a hospital pharmacist. Then, at age 23, I set off to explore the world for a year. My funds ran low after six months so I applied to be a kibbutz volunteer in Israel. During my six months in Israel, I learned so much about Judaism, including the holidays and some Hebrew phrases. I reluctantly returned to South Africa with a new realization of my "white" privilege.

With opportunities to work as a pharmacist either at the Windhoek Hospital in Namibia or at Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town, I chose the latter. Within a few months of moving to Cape Town, I met my future husband, Barry Jacobs. His family had already emigrated to Cleveland. We joined them about eight months later. Barry and I began "An introduction to Judaism" with Rabbi Bruce Abrams at the College of Jewish Studies. After the class, I made the decision to become a Jew by choice. A few months later Rabbi Abrams officiated at our Jewish wedding.

I worked as a pharmacy technician for four years until I met the requirements to register as a pharmacist in the U.S. I held various staff pharmacist positions over the course of 36 years until retirement in 2023. During that time, Barry and I raised our four children, Ashley, Liam, Matthew, and Aaron. Ashley and Matthew are both married and live locally. Each has blessed us with two grandchildren, Philip, Grant, Sean and Eliana. Liam lives nearby with his Yorkiepoop. Aaron ensures that we don't have "empty nest syndrome"!

Upon retiring from Hillcrest Hospital, I immediately became involved with the Women of Fairmount Temple. This aided my sense of purpose and opened the door to many new friendships. It also eased the transition when our congregation merged with The Temple Tifereth Israel. I am very grateful to our WMO leadership for growing our organization with sincerity and intention. Being a member of the WMO board and the responsibility of being corresponding secretary is definitely an honor and a privilege. I look forward to continuing to grow personally through all the wonderful programs and opportunities that WMO provides.

## Renee Brodsky



My husband, our 14-year-old daughter Marissa, and I moved to Cleveland about three years ago from Baltimore, Maryland. Marissa recently started high school, and we're navigating that new chapter together.

For 25 years, I've been an attorney. I now work part-time teaching and training public defenders across the country, which I love. It's rewarding to connect with people who share my passion for justice.

A friend suggested I get involved with WMO, and I'm so glad I did. It's been a wonderful way to meet new people, get involved in the community, and find my place in Jewish Cleveland.

My favorite WMO event so far was the closing reception this past June. Not only did I have the pleasure of co-chairing it, but it also gave me a chance to truly appreciate the talented and generous women who dedicate their time and energy to WMO. Now, I love seeing friends I've made through WMO whenever I'm at Temple.

Looking ahead, I'm excited to meet new members and watch the organization grow. I'm especially enthusiastic about the work of the Social Justice Committee.

In my free time, I enjoy reading, baking (especially the challah we made with WMO!), knitting, mahjong, tending to my plants, spending time with family and friends, and traveling to new places.