

Introduce Yourself: Ken Wolf

What's Your Story?



Hello. My name is Ken Wolf. I was born in Cincinnati, Ohio sometime in the middle of the last century. I was raised in a conservative/orthodox environment in a rather large, extended family. We owned a grocery store and behind the store were two apartments and a separate living area. Since my dad was in the Army in France, my mother and I lived behind the store with my grandparents, my uncle, two aunts and three cousins. So there were always 8-15 of us at Friday night dinners. I can still smell the aromas: chopped liver, chicken soup, brisket, and all the rest plus delicious challah.

I grew up in an area called Bond Hill where we rode our bikes everywhere, no parent ever came to one of our games, and we played stick ball in the street until dark. I went to high school at Walnut Hills, a college-prep public school where 98% of the graduates went on to college. I attended the University of Cincinnati where I lived on campus my junior and senior years. I served as student body president my senior year and even got an invitation to represent UC at a dinner that President Johnson gave at the White House for 200+ student leaders.

Upon graduation I went to Boston where I attended Harvard Law School. My second-year roommate from LA encouraged me to come to LA and become an entertainment lawyer. I arrived in LA for the very first time in the summer of 1967 as a summer clerk with Pacht, Ross, a venerable, primarily Jewish law firm that had just moved to Century City. I received an offer to join as an associate which I accepted much to the disappointment of my mother who always thought I should return home to Cincinnati.

I passed the Bar and initially practiced real estate law, securities and corporate law. In 1973, I moved into the trust and estate area where I have specialized for the past 45 years. In 1980 I left Pacht Ross as a young partner and started my own practice.

I met my wife, Madeline, on a blind date in October 1970. We got engaged in December of that same year and were married at Temple Emanuel on April 4, 1971. Now 48 years later, we are still together, working on the present chapter of our lives. I am still practicing law, back in Century City, "of counsel" to Freeman, Freeman & Smiley. Madeline is a marriage and family therapist with an office in Beverly Hills.

We have two children, a son Michael living in Portland and a daughter Laura, in San Diego and four granddaughters, Kayla (a freshman at Penn), JJ a competitive cheerleader who will be bat mitzvahed this May, Emma an 8-year-old discovering gymnastics and theater, and Jessie, age 5, just discovering life. We wish they lived closer, but we visit as often as we can. I now know how my mother must have felt when I moved to LA.

By the way, my mom will be 102 in February and still lives by herself in Cincinnati. I only wish there would be a ChaiVillageLA there for her as she does not have the same opportunities for activity and involvement as we are all lucky to have here.

Madeline and I were part of a group at Temple Isaiah called "LifeQuesters" which I believe helped form the beginnings of

ChaiVillageLA. We have been members from the inception. Some of our closest and dearest friends at this stage of our lives have come from within our temple and ChaiVillageLA. We have attended many events, including the wonderful Seders where I spent three hours slicing briskets while Madeline created and organized the table decorations. I find myself playing bridge with "the girls" on Mondays and I have started a poker game that is in its early stages. Madeline and I also host a group that is studying the prophets. The opportunities and programs now available through ChaiVillageLA far exceed the early discussions of programming when we started well over two years ago.

My name is Ken Wolf and I am a proud member of ChaiVillageLA.