



Jack Lapin

January 15, 1931 - August 20, 2019

Jack Lapin, 88, loving husband, extraordinary father, loving "Poppi", and devoted friend, died on August 20, 2019, surrounded by the love and presence of Susan and his family.

Jack's remarkable life story in so many ways mirrored the American dream. Jack was born on January 15, 1931 in Grodno, Poland as the eldest son to Hyman and Reba Lapin, of blessed memory. Seven years later as the dark cloud of Nazism was descending upon Europe, Jack's parents made the courageous decision to leave the comfort of family in Poland and to bring Jack and younger brother, Herman, to the United States where they settled in Houston thanks to Jack's Aunt Bertha who had emigrated to Houston years earlier. The family initially settled into a small duplex on Chenevert St., across from Elizabeth Baldwin Park, in a neighborhood inhabited primarily by immigrants, lower middle-class Jews and blue collar workers.

Not long thereafter, the family moved a few blocks to Dennis St. where Jack's parents owned and operated a tiny delicatessen - the only delicatessen in Houston at the time - which they ran throughout World War II. Seven days a week, excepting only the Jewish holidays, the entire family worked in the delicatessen, with Jack going to work there immediately after school each day. Their small delicatessen became a meeting ground for Houston's Jews from all walks of life and it was there that Jack overheard members of the

Jewish community frequently discussing how to rescue family members or how to help members of the community overcome one or more financial or other crises. Surely, it was in this social incubator that Jack's lifelong commitment to help better the community which had embraced his family was born.

Jack attended Allen Elementary, Johnston Junior High School and San Jacinto High School. Because his parents owned no car and because most of what his family needed was within walking distance of their home, Jack rarely left the neighborhood in which he was raised. The lone exception was his weekly adventure on the bus to the Houston Public Library downtown where, starting at age 13, he obtained a treasured library card and began a lifelong adoration of books and learning. This love of learning continued through his years at Rice University, from which he graduated Phi Beta Kappa, and through his subsequent three years at the University of Texas Law School, where he finished near the top of his class and qualified for the National Moot Court competition with his dear friend and later distinguished U.S. District Judge, Norman Black.

Following graduation from law school, Jack entered the U.S. Army where he proudly served for two years and during which he married his partner for the next 63 years, Susan Kaufman.

Upon his return from the Army, Jack began what became a distinguished and successful career as a real estate and finance lawyer, ultimately joining with Clarence Mayer and Jon Tutz to form Lapin, Tutz & Mayer, the law firm which brought him such happiness, professional satisfaction and success for so many years. The firm merged into Butler & Binion in 1986 and, several years later, Jack completed his legal career in an of counsel position with Schlanger, Silver, Barg & Paine, where he relished the opportunity to practice alongside so many respected peers and colleagues.

Throughout his professional career, Jack always made it a priority to devote a substantial amount of his and Susan's time, energies and resources to the community institutions which had so enriched their lives. In that regard, he exhibited the rare combination of good judgment, wisdom and vision to make his leadership sought after in whatever community endeavor he selected. Thus, Jack's distinguished record of community service locally included service as President of the Boards of Trustees of the Jewish Community Center, the Houston Chapter of the American Jewish Committee and Congregation Beth Israel where, in one of his proudest accomplishments, he worked with Rabbi Samuel Karff to establish the Shlenker School, which his grandchildren later attended. Nationally, Jack and Susan devoted much of their adult community time to the American Jewish Committee, where Jack proudly served as Chair of AJC's National Board of Governors. Throughout his years of community service, Jack was honored with awards and recognition on numerous occasions and, in each such instance, never once failed to express his gratitude for the country and community which gave him the opportunity to give back.

As satisfying as Jack's professional and community volunteer lives were to him, nothing in his life provided him with as much joy and happiness as his 63-year partnership with Susan. Together, they traveled life's pathways as parents and grandparents and they traveled the world as lifelong learners. Jack was, always, a present and devoted father to David, Bobby and Richard and, later on, generously shared that same love and support when his sons brought their spouses, Carol, Eve and Jim, into his life. Similarly, his years as a grandfather to Lindsey, Lara, Oliver, Elliott and Alec provided him with countless opportunities for fun, laughter and love which he treasured immensely.

Jack will be remembered by those who knew and loved him as a lifelong learner, a voracious reader, a devoted community leader and, above, all, a generous and loving man whose own life's journey taught him never to take anything for granted and to celebrate life's happy moments whenever they occurred.

Jack was predeceased by his parents, Hyman and Reba Lapin and by his grandson, Oliver Lapin, each of blessed memory. He is survived by his wife, Susan, and his three children and spouses, David and Carol Lapin, Bobby and Eve Lapin, and Richard Lapin and Jim Nelson. He also leaves to cherish his memory four loving grandchildren: Lindsey Lapin (and her fiancé, Andrew Phillips), Lara Lapin, Elliott Lapin and Alec Lapin. He also leaves behind his brother and sister-in-law, Herman and Maxine Lapin, his brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Stephen and Ann Kaufman, and many nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made either to the Oliver Lapin Children's Book Fair Fund at the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center or to Houston Hospice.

May Jack's memory forever endure as an abiding blessing to those whose lives he touched.

Tribute Wall

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“*Susan, I send you my deepest sympathy in the loss of your precious Jack. It is so hard to lose your sweetheart and your best friend. I just wanted you to know that I am thinking of you and your family at this time of sadness.*”

Dodie Gaber - August 24, 2019 at 08:32 PM