

Monthly Profile: This month we feature Board Member Shelley Robinson

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Tell us about your family:

1. Where did you grow up? I was born and raised in Atlanta, GA until I ventured off to college at the University of Georgia about an hour outside of Atlanta.

2. Who are/were your siblings, parents, and grandparents and what affect did they have on the person you have become? Thank G-d my parents are still alive and reside in Atlanta in the house I grew up in. My Mom grew up Reform and my Dad's family was Conservative. When they married and had children, they decided that they wanted more than what the reform synagogue had to offer their children, so they joined the traditional synagogue, Shearith Israel, where several of their friends were members. I don't really think they knew what they were getting themselves into. My Mom ended up working at Shearith Israel for 31 years, ultimately serving as Executive Director. I have three siblings, an older brother who lives in Atlanta, an older sister who lives in Alma, Georgia and a brother who passed away when he was five.

3. What was your childhood like? I have very fond memories of my childhood...our life was centered around education and our synagogue and its religious school. Outside of that I danced for eight years until I decided I wanted to play basketball. My siblings and I were all very active in BBYO (B'nai B'rith Youth Organization).

Are there any funny family stories you can share? Being the baby of the family, I was always the one chosen to change the channel on the television (yes, there was a time before remote controls) as well as the one called upon to run upstairs to retrieve whatever was left there. My family made it into a game, called me Speedy Gonzalez, and would time me to see how fast I could run. ;)

4. How did you meet your spouse? Do you have children/grandchildren?

David and I met on a shuttle bus in Phoenix, Arizona, travelling to the same healthcare conference. It wouldn't be until the next year at the same conference in Las Vegas that we would spark a flame. Two years of dating long distance and only missing seeing each other two weekends, I moved to Florida and we began our lives together. We are blessed with two wonderful two-legged children, Jillian (18) and Jarod (13) as well as two fabulous four-legged labradoodles, Paddy and Shammy.



Education – Military Service- Work/Career- Interests

5. If you served in the military, tell us what branch, where, and what your job was.
6. Where did you go to school-college-degree-major? I attended the University of Georgia and received my BBA in marketing as well as SUNY-Albany receiving an MA in Organizational Communication.
7. What is or was your occupation? Currently I serve as the Vice President of Human Resources for our technology companies.
8. What was the most interesting job you ever had....or the most unusual? The most interesting job as well as the most difficult job I have ever had is raising children!!
9. What are your interests and hobbies? My passion first and foremost is tennis. I do enjoy working out, listening to music, going to theater, needlepointing, reading and watching the University of Georgia play football.

What book is on your nightstand right now? On my nightstand currently is “God of Becoming and Relationship: The Dynamic Nature of Process Theology.” I am also reading “Being Mortal.”

On Being Jewish

10. How long have you been a member of Temple Emanuel? I joined Temple Emanuel shortly after I moved to Lakeland...so I would say I have been a member for 21 years. What committees or leadership roles have you had or perhaps would like to have at Temple Emanuel? I have held lots of positions at Temple Emanuel from USY Advisor when I first moved to town to Sunday School teacher and principal to ritual committee to fundraising to Rabbi search committee and now Vice President.
11. What does being Jewish mean to you? To me, being Jewish is the cross-section of faith and culture. It is embracing every facet from the foods we eat to the traditions we keep to the holidays we celebrate to attending services to understanding our history and our culture to helping our community. Being Jewish means l’dor v’dor...from generation to generation, passing down the traditions while keeping religion relevant to our times. For me being Jewish is about the choices we make to stay grounded in who we are while paving the way for future generations.

Reflections

12. Who has been the biggest influence in your life and why? My parents have been the biggest influence in my life. Through tragedy they taught us strength, that love conquers all and life is for the living. Through their actions they taught us the importance of family, to be strong of faith as well as to give back to the community.
13. What is one thing people would be surprised to learn about you? One surprising fact is that I used to follow the Grateful Dead!
14. Is there anything you would do over if you had the chance? No. I truly believe that there were lessons for me to learn from each of my experiences – both good and bad. If I changed my path, I wouldn’t be who I am today.
15. Looking back, what is the best advice you would give your younger self? To quote Matthew McConaughey “You are the author of the book of your life. Turn the page.” If you are stuck in a rut or not happy with the trajectory of your life, make a change. You have the power to make your life what you want it to be.

Thank you so much Shelley for sharing your story with all of us! If anyone reading this would like to be our next profile, please contact irmacole26@gmail.com