Since leaving Lorain to study at the University of Michigan, Ron has lived in Michigan, Kentucky, and Virginia. He produced jazz concerts and special events for the Detroit Recreation Department while working on public history projects that chronicled Detroit’s auto and labor history. He’s served as a grant officer at the University of Kentucky and consultant to non-profit organizations. His wife, Pamela Knapp, is the Chair of the Department of anatomy at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine. They have two children, Anna (a New York University Law student) and Ben (a data analyst for a firm that manages high occupancy vehicle lanes on Washington DC expressways).

Gary studied Graphic Design at the University of Cincinnati and after working in Sacramento CA, Chicago and Cincinnati, he decided to advance his studies at the School of Design in Basel, Switzerland, where he lives today. For over 40 years, he has pursued a career in Communications and Package Design, both in the USA and Switzerland. He and his late wife, Claudia, had a son, Sean, who is studying photography. Sean and Gary live with Olga Schwarz, an IT specialist and her two children Nadia and Anthony.

REFLECTIONS
Eunice and Sol’s views on religious practices were in keeping with the Reform tradition. Although hey did not attend services as regularly as some, in many ways, ABI was the center of their lives. Both faithfully served the congregation in multiple capacities over the years. Eunice was active in Sisterhood, Hadassah, the Board of Education, as well as the Catering Committee. Sol was its Treasurer and a member of the Board of Trustees in addition to being a B’nai Brith President.

It was not until this past year when discussions began with the Western Reserve Historical Society that I began to review the 1969 ABI Dedication book that Eunice had dutifully saved. Only then did I realize that my parents, the Fields and Wexlers had served as its editors.
April 30, 1999

Mr. Ted Jacobs
3031 E. Erie Ave.
Lorain, Ohio 44052

Dear Ted,

I am so sorry that Linda and I can't be with you and everyone else to celebrate 30 years since our "GRAND OPENING in May of 1969".

This was a most exciting time in the long history of A.B.I. and I remember everything regardless if it actually happened or not. It was exciting because with few exceptions everyone was involved.

Members used to campaign to be elected to the Board or as an Officer. Linda at 27 came in as the new and youngest President of sisterhood, who along with others started the Temple Sisterhood Catering Committee and it was an amazing thing to behold. Can you imagine getting invited to a big wedding or Bar-Mitzvah and seeing people like the Alpers, Fields, Weingartens, Jacobs, Donerkiels, Goldbergs, Kesslers, Kleins, Goldsteins, Goldbergers, Wexlers and many many more who not only cooked and catered the meal but served it, picked up, cleaned up etc... All wearing dark pants or skirts with white shirts and blouses. We raised a fortune for Sisterhood who donated it to our Temple. Visitors couldn't get over it.

A.B.I. started an exciting new Couples Club, and also a Bowling League. The Temple was built and grew and prospered thanks to the great and dedicated leadership, and the active involvement of hundreds of every age group and that's what made it so exciting to see everyone involved and working together.

But tonight if my old boss, Ted Jacobs will let me, I'd like to talk about a quiet mover and shaker who never could stand the spotlight but one who played a most major role, my dear friend, of blessed memory, Mr. Robert Fields. Let me tell you what actually happened and is confirmed in the Temple history that our beloved Fannie Friedman wrote in the Dedication book from 1969. In fact, Bob & Fran Fields, Sol & Eunie Alpern and us served as editors of that book. Anyone who walks in the front door can look to the left and see the officers of the Building Fund Committee who raised over 1 million dollars to build our new "home" with no mortgage. Ed Gould was Chairman. You and Leo Weingarten served as vice Chairman, Goldye Jacoby Sect., and a very young Ed Wexler as Treasurer. You can also see the Temple Building Committee as well as the Temple Officers. All on the Plaque just outside these doors.

About 35-36 years ago, Lew Jacoby, the 1st Building Fund Chairman had passed away and the drive was stalled and had been so for several years.
In 1963 at an Annual Temple meeting held in the basement of 9th & Reid, I as a young father of 2, and about 25 years old with the clear, yes & no, black & white, right & wrong knowledge of youth got up and dared to criticize the Temple elders for lack of progress on our 9 year old building fund, this was on a Sunday. On Monday morning, a fellow I barely knew, Bob Fields called and asked if he could come over and talk to me. He came and told me he was very disturbed about my remarks on Sunday because he was afraid I might be right.

Bob told me, talking and speeches wouldn’t do anything. He said with my youth and his knowledge of the Lorain Community we might be able to do something about it. We set to go and “try”. He was to pick me up on Wednesday. He came and gave me a check to pay up his original pledge and signed a generous new pledge. We then spent two solid days going to about 60 members. We picked up, according to Fannie’s history over $50,000.00 in cash and over $100,000.00 in new pledges. We went to Ted Jacobs and Leo Weingarten for help and they jumped on board. This was the new and final Temple Building Fund Committee, we surged ahead and never stopped. You can see all our names on the Board outside but not Bob Fields. He just didn’t work that way. He wanted the job done, not recognition. Bob was so dedicated that at one stop, the gentleman refused to even discuss giving. Bob who was “slight of frame” got so mad he took his jacket off, held up his fists and wanted to go outside and fight. I told Bob, if you want to fight, pick on someone smaller, he’ll kill us both. Bob said let me at him.

Bob Fields was a passionate, dedicated, involved leader who played a very key role in raising the funds necessary for this Temple and we all owe him a long overdue debt of thanks!

Bob was a dear friend and in his memory Linda and I would like to donate the enclosed check to tonight’s donor. With examples like Bob Field’s, you, Leo and many others, may our Temple go and grow from strength to strength. Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

Best Regards,

Edward L. Wexler
I hope that the WRHS-ABI Digital Collection, and these essays in particular, will serve as a means to honor the contributions made by my parents, their peers, and the educators of ABI to my generation’s upbringing.

My parents’ closest friends, Bob & Fran Fields, Ben & Jeanne Sokol, Phil & Kellie Kaplansky, Allan & Sunny Klein, Bob & Lois Freedman, Florence & Hy Frankle, and Leo & Rita Weingarten were all ABI members. Friendships with the Meyer, Goldberger, Goldstein, Chesner, Deutsch, Wexler, Slutzker, Jacobs, and Blumberg families further enriched our lives. This network, anchored at ABI, nurtured professional relationships, cooperative childcare arrangements and carpools. It enlivened bridge and Mah Jongg games, as well as weekly golf outings that lasted decades.

While my parents got along famously with the families of professional colleagues and others in the community, I am hard pressed to recall anyone who regularly visited our home who wasn’t Jewish.

A FAVORITE STORY
Everyone has fond memories of the delicious food that was the signature of the Temple Sisterhood Catering Committee. The Catering Committee represented an innovative way of celebrating many of life’s milestones in a town that lacked a Kosher restaurant. Virtually, the entire ABI community was engaged as you were either celebrating, preparing, or serving. At these events we learned to “pick up from the left and serve from the right”.

One of Eunice’s favorite catering committee stories, however, illustrates ABI’s special charm. At a dinner celebrating a milestone event in the family of one of their close friends, my parents were designated to help “host” important out of town guests.

Modifications in the catering committee’s division of labor allowed Eunice to be relieved of kitchen responsibilities and she joined Sol at the table. When their waiter greeted my folks with gregarious, jovial banter and planted a kiss on Eunice’s cheek, one guest seemed particularly dismayed by this breach in etiquette. My Dad was quick to intervene, offering “Oh, make no mind. Rest assured Charlie is a close friend, his wife Sarah (Chesner) drafted him to help out tonight. Even the County Coroner has to pitch in around here for big events.” Sol then proceeded to explain, as only the Treasurer could do, just how critical the work of the Catering Committee was to raising funds for the Meister Road synagogue.

In conclusion, I salute the special Lorain Jewish community spirit that meant so much to our family over the years.

Ed Wexler’s letter to Ted Jacobs on the occasion of the Meister Rd. Synagogue 30th anniversary for more on the Temple Sisterhood Catering Committee and the Temple Building Fund Committee follows.

Email him at (smartin@wrhs.org)