

Arnold Milner



Bill Motchan / Dec 12, 2025

For more than a decade, Arnold Milner has spent countless hours organizing Holocaust Remembrance Day programs in Lorain County. Milner considers this his most important volunteer effort. He has educated tens of thousands of people about the horrors of the Holocaust. When asked about what motivated him to devote his time and efforts to the event, Milner offered several possibilities.

“Either G-d has chosen me or my first wife (Barbara Friedman), who passed away young and was heavily involved in the community, put her hand on my shoulder,” Milner said. “My third answer is a Holocaust survivor named Erwin Froman. He was probably the greatest person I’ve ever met in my life. He was the Elie Weisel of Lorain. I know he had an influence on me.”

Froman, who died in 2020, immigrated to America in 1949 and became a kosher butcher in Lorain. When Milner retired in 2014, he and Froman had a weekly ritual on Thursday afternoons. It started with Froman giving him a Hebrew lesson, followed by the pair drinking a shot of whiskey, then conversation and finally dinner. Milner cherishes the time he spent with his friend. He is a good listener and empathizes with people going through difficult times. That quality has been especially beneficial in his role as president of Lorain Jewish Cemetery.

“One of my greatest honors is helping someone in their greatest hour of need,” Milner said. “We recently had someone who passed away, and I spent two solid days with the family, helping them prepare for the funeral. I got satisfaction from helping them.”

Milner isn’t aware of any of his family members who died or survived the Holocaust, but Froman was like family to him. That close relationship had a real impact on him, as did attending his synagogue’s Yom Hashoah program.

“One day after the program, I thought, ‘You know, the Holocaust was an attack on the Jewish people, but it was really an attack on all of humanity and maybe the community should be a little more involved,’” he said.

About Arnold

Age: 72

Residence: Lorain

Synagogue: Agudath B’nai Israel Synagogue

Occupation: Retired Podiatrist

Education: The Ohio State University and Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine

Current board service/organization involvement: Board President of Agudath B’nai Israel Synagogue and President of Lorain Jewish Cemetery

What is your most meaningful Jewish family tradition: Family gathering on the first night of Passover

What is a hobby you are passionate about: Walking a golf course for as long as I can

What was your first paying job: Busboy at age 15

What’s the most valuable lesson you’ve learned: Try to get along with everybody

That motivated him to expand the Yom Hashoah ceremony to include the entire community. In 2015, Milner began that journey by hiring actors to portray two deceased Holocaust survivors who were Agudath B'nai Israel Synagogue congregants. The program was memorable and compelling enough to attract 250 attendees. The following year, on the advice from Froman, Milner began having living survivors speak, including Froman, who spoke in 2016.

“I got 600 people to come to the synagogue to hear him,” Milner said. “I realized I had outgrown the synagogue, so the next year I rented an auditorium in a high school, and I got 800 people to come. It just keeps growing.”

Eventually, through Milner's perseverance (he was rejected by schools for three years), he convinced schools to send their students to the programs. Last year, 1,000 middle and high school students heard survivor Rose Gelbart speak. The following week, 1,300 students heard survivor Erika Gold speak. Later that evening, over 1,000 adults from the community heard survivor Arthur Gelbart speak.

“I do it because I owe it to the 6 million Jews who died,” he said. “I owe it to the survivors who are alive. It's everybody's responsibility to make sure this part of history never happens again.”