

Florida Jewish History Month January 2009

**Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Curriculum and Instruction
Social Sciences**

Background Information

In October of 2003, Governor Jeb Bush signed a historic bill into law designating January of each year as Florida Jewish History Month. The legislation for Florida Jewish History Month was initiated at the Jewish Museum of Florida by Marcia Zerivitz, the Museum's Founding Executive Director and Chief Curator. Ms. Zerivitz and State Senator Gwen Margolis worked closely with legislators to translate the Museum's mission into a statewide observance. It seemed appropriate to honor Jewish contributions to the State, as over 850,000 people of the American Jewish community live in Florida.

Since 1763, when the first Jews settled in Pensacola immediately after the Treaty of Paris ceded Florida to Great Britain from Spain, Jews had come to Florida to escape persecution, for economic opportunity, to join family members already here, for the climate and lifestyle, for their health and to retire. It is a common belief that Florida Jewish history began after World War II, but in actuality, the history of Floridian Jews begins much earlier. The largest number of Jews settled in Florida after World War II, but the Jewish community in Florida reaches much further into the history of this State than simply the last half-century. Jews have actively participated in shaping the destiny of Florida since its inception, but until research of the 1980s, most of the facts were little-known. One such fact is that David Levy Yulee, a Jewish pioneer, brought Florida into statehood in 1845, served as its first U.S. senator and was the first person of Jewish ancestry to serve in the U.S. Congress.

Floridian Jews have contributed greatly to the development of the entire state, but in recent history much of the Jewish community's involvement has been primarily within southeast Florida. The earliest known permanent Jewish settler in Miami was Isidor Cohen, a signatory of the city's charter. He helped found many civic organizations, as well as Jewish organizations. The heartbreak of the Holocaust came close to home for the Jews of Miami Beach, who experienced a feeling of helplessness when the *S.S. St. Louis*, a ship filled with Jews fleeing Hitler and Nazism, was denied permission to anchor there in June 1939. The American government of the time refused to allow the *St. Louis* to land its human cargo on the shores of south Florida. The steamer anchored for two hours within sight of Miami Beach.

The Jewish populace of Miami has worked hard to help develop their community. Today, Miami is the nation's ninth largest Jewish community and continues to grow in population and cohesive strength. Palm Beach County is host to Florida's largest Jewish population in the state, Broward County the second largest and Miami - Dade is third in number.

Throughout the history of the State, and like other groups, Jewish people have actively participated in shaping the destiny and direction of Florida at its roots. In 250 years, the Jewish community of Florida has left their indelible footprints across the entire State. Floridian Jews have served in every U.S. war, and have been prominent in the cattle, citrus, tomato and tobacco industries, to name a few. Diverse cultures have enriched the state of Florida since its earliest days and Florida's Jewish communities have become an integral part of the state and its history.

Jewish History Month is a time to learn about the rich tapestry of Jewish life here. Since 1763, Jews have been involved in enhancing the lives and dreams of *all* Floridians. Florida Jewish History Month celebrates these accomplishments.

Florida Jewish History Month has been so successful since its establishment that it inspired the legislation for Jewish American Heritage Month, which is observed in May with a Proclamation signed by President George W. Bush in April, 2006. The Proclamation states that “The faith and hard work of Jewish Americans have played an integral role in shaping the cultural fabric of America. During Jewish American Heritage Month, we celebrate the vital contributions of Jewish Americans to our Nation. Throughout our history, Jewish Americans have contributed to the strength of our country and the preservation of our values. The talent and imagination of these citizens have helped our Nation prosper.”

TIMELINE AND WHO'S WHO

FLORIDA STATE'S JEWISH PIONEERS AND THEIR HISTORY

Note: The list of Jewish pioneers who contributed to Florida's history is vast. "The contributions made by Jews to the development of Florida are in every sector: retail and wholesale, real estate and development, military and science, education and health, law and medicine, citrus and tobacco, cattle and poultry, politics and government, insurance and banking, as well as the arts." (*Jewish Life in America*, Mosaic, Inc. 1991) The following is just a sampling of those dedicated visionaries who inspired generations to settle in what has become known as the Sunshine State.

In Chronological Order from arrival in Florida or date of Major Contribution (Dates are approximate)

1763

England acquires Florida. It divides the territory into two colonies: East and West Florida. **Joseph D. Palacios, Alexander Solomons and Samuel Israel** were the first Jews to settle in Pensacola in 1763.

Samuel Israel (1763) was one of three documented Jews to arrive in Pensacola, Florida. Israel was a merchant who supplied wood and other goods to the British and traded with Jews in Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia.

Joseph de Palacios (1763) was one of three documented Jews to arrive in Pensacola, Florida. Palacios was a merchant who supplied wood and other goods to the British and traded with Jews in Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia.

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1769

Isaac Monsanto was a businessman who sold family slaves to finance his trip to Pensacola from New Orleans. The Spanish governor expelled Monsanto, saying, "They are [sic] are to leave this province before the end of the next month the Jew Monsanto, for the reason that [he is] undesirable on account of the nature of [his] business and of the religion [he] profess[es]." He outfitted the British Commander of West Florida for an expedition up the Mississippi River.

- 1793** **Isaac Mendes** migrated to West Florida from Jamaica and then moved to Pensacola in 1767. He sold goods for use as “Indian presents” to West Florida Governor Johnstone in 1763.
- 1821** **Moses Elias Levy** moved to Florida in 1821 and brought sugar cane and fruit trees for his plantations. Levy was a St. Thomas lumber merchant, and Cuban businessman who purchased over 50,000 acres in Micanopy in what is now St. Johns, Volusia and Alachua Counties. His family had migrated to Morocco following the Spanish Inquisition where the family name was translated to Ibn Yulee, and in Gibraltar it was changed to Levy. In 1822 he builds “Pilgrimage Plantation,” a refuge for Jews that lasted until 1835. Levy was an early advocate for the abolition of slavery and was a proponent for free education in Florida. He publishes a plan to end slavery and also serves as Florida’s first Education Commissioner.
- Samuel Myers** settles in Pensacola, becomes alderman and an officer in the military. In 1822, he and his wife, Louisa, have Virginia, the first-known Jewish child born in Florida.
- 1835** **Colonel Leon Dyer** served in the Florida Indian Wars (1835-1842, 1855-1858).
- Camden de Leon, David**, an army doctor, served in the Florida Indian Wars (1835-1842, 1855-1858).
- Samuel Noah** was one of the first graduates of West Point, and served in the Florida Indian Wars (1835-1842, 1855-1858).
- 1836** **Abraham C. Myers**, a West Point graduate, was an Army Quartermaster and hero during the Indian Wars. His father-in-law, General David E. Twiggs, the fort commander, named Ft. Myers for him.
- 1837** **Raphael Jacob Moses** opened a store in Tallahassee. He later became a lawyer and practiced in Apalachicola. He was chosen as a delegate from Florida to the 1847 Democratic National Convention.
- 1839** **Emanuel Judah** was an actor who built a theatre in Apalachicola.
- 1841** **David Levy Yulee**, the younger son of Moses Elias Levy, became a lawyer and was instrumental in helping Florida become the twenty-seventh state. He helped write Florida’s Constitution in 1841. Yulee was the first known Jew to serve in the United States Senate (1845-1851; 1855-1861). He represented the views of the Southern agricultural plantation system, first against the Seminole Indians and later against the Union. He was instrumental in helping to build a railroad from Fernandina to Cedar Key, the first to cross the state from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean. In 1853, he organized the Florida Railroad Company. He

and his friends developed an intrastate telegraph line and a fast-mail ship route from Cedar Key to Havana. Yulee City (Nassau County) and Levy County, honor his family's name.

- 1850** **Morris Dzialynski** reached Jacksonville from Prussia along with his father and eight siblings. He opened a store in Bartow with his brother-in-law, Jacob R. Cohen. Later he opened general stores in Fort Meade (1876) and in Tampa (1879). Dzialynski also established a hotel in Fort Meade, invested in citrus groves, and exported alligator skins. This is the longest-continuing Jewish family in Florida. He later served as the mayor of Jacksonville from 1881-1883.
- 1857** The first Jewish cemetery in Florida is established in Jacksonville. The first-known Jewish boy is born in Florida, **George Dzialynski**.
- 1865** **Judah P. Benjamin** from Louisiana serves as Attorney General, Secretary of State and Secretary of War for the Confederacy (1861-1865). At the end of the Civil War, he escapes from the Union Army by hiding in the Gamble mansion (Manatee County).
- Robert Williams** moved to Tallahassee and became a cotton planter, and was active in civic affairs. Often he led prayers on Jewish holidays and is remembered for installing the first street lights in Tallahassee.
- 1867** **Jacob Raphael Cohen** arrived in Jacksonville from Savannah, opened stores throughout Florida in the 1860's and settled in Orlando. Cohen helped write the Orlando City Charter in 1875 and was elected first alderman. He served as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention.
- 1869** **Samuel Fleishman** defended former slaves as free men. The Ku Klux Klan demanded he leave Marianna.
- 1878** Temple Beth El (Pensacola), the oldest congregation in the State, is founded.
- 1879** **Henry Brash** elected Mayor of Marianna, the first-known of more than 150 Jewish mayors in Florida. He served three terms as mayor of Marianna.
- 1882** The Okeechobee Land and Development Company adopts a plan to save Jews in Russia. The Company starts an agricultural colony above the Everglades.
- 1883** **Morris Benjamin**, along with Saul Benjamin, Israel Brown, and William Fox, established an ice factory, using water from Howard Springs.

- 1884** **Joseph Wolfson** was shipwrecked off the coast of Key West on a ship from Romania. He founded a small Jewish community and sent for the rest of his family in Romania to join him.
Simon Benjamin founded the East Florida Ice Manufacturing Company, the first ice-making plant in Florida. In 1892, he and his brother Solomon formed the Silver Springs and Ocala Gulf Railroad.
- 1885** **Abraham Wolkowsky** arrived in Key West from Romania. He began as a peddler but soon opened a clothing store, a change that may have resulted from the anti-peddler tax established in Key West.
- Philip Walter** served as a tax collector in Jacksonville, was chief supervisor of elections and clerk of the United States Court of Florida. In 1885, he represented Duval County in the Florida Constitutional Convention.
- 1886** **Charles and Hannah Peyser** began manufacturing El Tropico cigars.
- 1888** **Herman Glogowski** (1888-1892) served as mayor in Tampa.
- 1890** **Dr. Louis Oppenheimer** of Bartow establishes the local school system.
- Michael Davis** served as mayor of DeLand.
- 1895** Key West Jews raise funds for Cuban revolutionaries fighting for independence from Spain.
- 1896** The first permanent Jewish settlers arrive in the Miami area. **Isadore Cohen** is considered the first permanent Jewish settler in Miami. By 1900, he was one of only two remaining Jewish merchants in Miami. Considered one of the “great pioneers,” Cohen was one of the first signers of the charter to incorporate Miami and was one of the organizers of the Miami Board of Trade, which became the Chamber of Commerce. He and his wife Ida began many philanthropic organizations. In 1921, Cohen was one of the city’s 15-member board that wrote the Miami City Charter.
- 1910** **Henry Seitlin** escaped from Russia and came to Florida. In 1912, he opened the Boston Shoe Store in Miami. The Miami community celebrated its first Jewish wedding when his sister Rose married Max Lehrman of Homestead in 1913.
- 1912** **Saul Snyder**. By the 1950s he owned 5,000 head of cattle and was the founder of the Florida Cattlemen’s Association in 1934. A Russian immigrant, Snyder settled in St. Augustine.

- 1913** **P.G. Blanck** established a popular department store in downtown Miami, near Burdines.
- Alvin Cassel.** His family, in partnership with Daniel Cromer, opened a department store in what is now downtown Miami in 1913. In 1926, they opened the most modern and innovative department store which contained many modern conveniences, including an escalator and a cooling system. Native-Americans visited the store to buy sewing items. He was the co-founder of the Broad and Cassel law firm and one of Miami's earliest native residents.
- Joe Weiss**, with his wife Jennie, established a restaurant in Miami Beach which ultimately became Joe's Famous Stone Crab Restaurant.
- 1920** **Louis Seitlin** came to Florida from Russia in 1920. When his wife died, her death inspired Miami's Jewish community to establish their own congregation and cemetery.
- Max and Jennie Cypen** moved to St. Petersburg and established a meat-producing farm.
- Nathan Stone.** When he and his family were denied rooms at the Roney Plaza, he built the Blackstone Hotel on Miami Beach. This was the first hotel to allow Jewish and Black guests.
- 1923** **David Bilgore** moved to Clearwater to establish groves and open a packing house and cannery.
- 1925** **Mitchell Wolfson** came to Miami from Key West in the 1920's. Wolfson established the Wometco Theater in 1925, and expanded it from one theater to a chain of theaters. He created the Seaquarium, and began WTVJ, Miami's first television station. He became the first Jewish mayor of Miami Beach in 1943.
- 1927** **Simon Rosin** built the Arcadia Post Office.
- Abram O. Kanner** represented Martin County as a representative and then as a senator (1936-1941) in the Florida Legislature and later as a judge.
- 1933** **David Sholtz** begins his term as Governor of Florida (1933-1936).
- 1936** **Max Hutkin.** was the son of Polish immigrants, and was often referred to as Mr. Boca Raton for his many civic contributions. He was the first chair of Boca Raton's Community Relations Board and founded the Chamber of Commerce there.

- 1941** **Admiral Ellis N. Zacharias**, of Jacksonville, Chief of Naval Intelligence, breaks the Japanese code. This leads to the U.S. victory in the Pacific.
- 1943** **Mitchell Wolfson** serves as Mayor of Miami Beach, the first of 15 Jewish mayors in that city.
- 1949** **Max Orvitz**. Together with area businessmen, founded Mount Sinai Hospital when Jewish doctors returning from the war were denied staff privileges at Miami area hospitals. Mt. Sinai also became the first hospital in Miami to allow African-American physicians to practice medicine.
- 1951** **Ruth Greenfield** opened the first integrated school for the cultural arts in Miami.
- 1953** **Abe Aronovitz** serves as Mayor of Miami, the only Jew to serve in this office.
- 1954** **Morris Lapidus** was the architect for the famed Fontainebleau Hotel, the Eden Roc Hotel, and Lincoln Road Mall.
- Ben Novak** built the Fontainbleau Hotel.
- 1968** **Marshall Warren Nirenberg** of Orlando receives the Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology for deciphering the genetic code.
- 1973** **Harry Kaplan**, a resident of Melbourne, contributed to the development of the astronauts' space suits and back-packs.
- 1974** **Richard Stone** begins his term as a U.S. Senator (1974-1980), the second Florida Jew to hold this office.
- 1975** **Arthur England** begins his term as Justice on Florida's Supreme Court (1975-1981). He becomes Chief Justice in 1978.
- 1981** **Raymond Ehrlich** begins his term on Florida's Supreme Court (1981-1991). He becomes Chief Justice in 1988. More than 250 Jews have served as judges in Florida.
- 1987** **Gerald Kogan** begins his term as Justice on Florida's Supreme Court (1987-1998). He becomes Chief Justice in 1996.
- 1990** "MOSAIC: Jewish Life in Florida," a traveling exhibit, begins its tour to 13 cities.
- Gwen Margolis** becomes the first female Florida Senate President.

- 1995** Jewish Museum of Florida opens.
- 1997** **Barbara Pariente** becomes the second woman appointed to the Florida Supreme Court. In 2004 she becomes Chief Justice.
- 2003** Governor Jeb Bush signs a Bill designating each January as Florida Jewish History Month.
- The Honorable Federal Magistrate, **Judge Ted Klein**, was appointed from Miami, Florida, as the first child survivor of the Holocaust to serve on the Federal bench.
- 2004** **Debbie Wasserman Schultz** is elected to the U.S. Congress, the first Jewish woman to represent Florida.
- 2006** President George Bush signs a Proclamation designating each May as Jewish American Heritage Month to honor contributions by Jewish Americans to our nation. The Jewish Museum of Florida was the birthplace of this legislation, with the effort led by Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz.

Timeline and Who's Who information provided with permission and courtesy of the following:

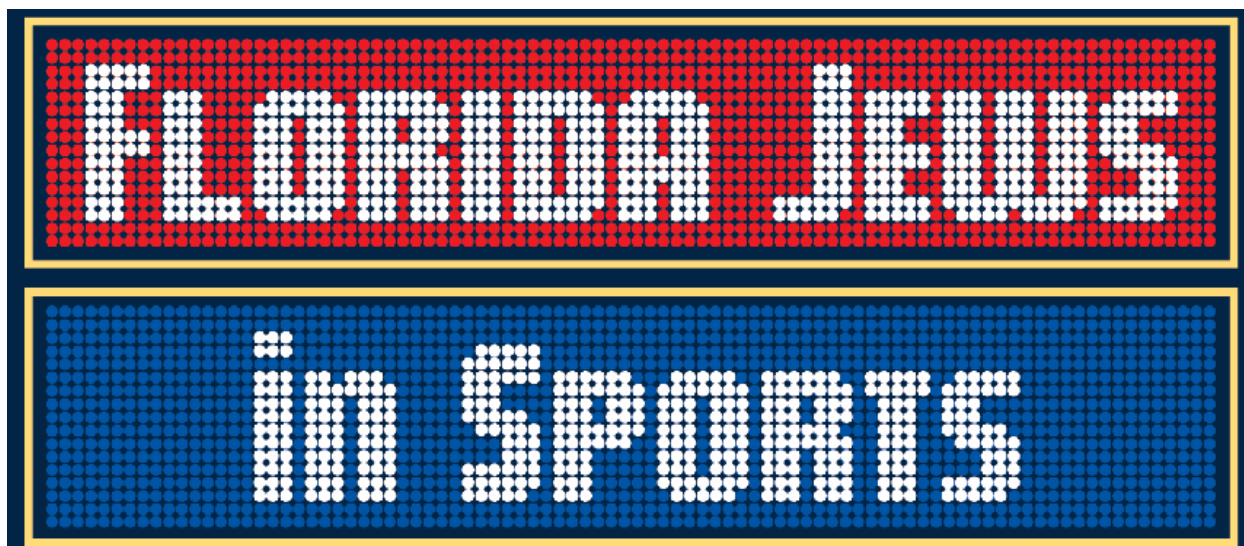
Jewish Museum of Florida, with much appreciation to Marcia Zerivitz, Executive Director, Miami Beach, Florida

Jerry Levine, Producer "Generations in the Sun" Film and Film Guide written by Dr. Miriam Klein Kassenoff and Dr. Anita Meyer Meinbach, 2003

Florida Jewish Heritage Trail (an outgrowth of MOSAIC), published by the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, 2000

South Florida Jewish Museum's publication, Jewish Life in Florida, published by Mosaic, Inc., 1991

JEWISH MUSEUM OF FLORIDA



**THIS EXHIBIT IS ON DISPLAY AND AVAILABLE FOR
STUDENT TOURS THROUGH AUGUST 23, 2009, AT
THE JEWISH MUSEUM OF FLORIDA**

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2009

**Suggested Curriculum and Resource Guide
From the Jewish Museum of Florida**

Theme Focus 2009

Florida Jews in Sports

Curriculum and Instruction, Social Sciences, in cooperation with The Jewish Museum of Florida, is providing Miami-Dade County Public Schools' teachers with a suggested activities resource guide for Florida Jewish History Month. This guide is based on the theme, *Florida Jews in Sports*, as exhibited at The Jewish Museum of Florida in Miami Beach, Florida through August 2009. We gratefully acknowledge the Jewish Museum for its permission to include the following activities and resource guide.

Please Note: The Museum exhibit and activities included in this packet are valuable educator resources for grades 3-12. Although the guide has been prepared with student visits to The Jewish Museum of Florida in mind, many of the included activities can be implemented at any time in the classroom during the month of January 2009, or anytime before and /or after a visit to the Museum or possibly without any visit at all.

INTRODUCTION TO RESOURCE GUIDE

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WHY THIS EXHIBIT?

The Jewish Museum of Florida prides itself in being able to present many different facets of the Jewish experience in Florida. MOSAIC, the core exhibit, focuses on the state of Florida as a land of opportunity for Jews who have inhabited the territory since 1763. In addition to the vast scope of Jewish accomplishments in areas such as business, government, architecture and the arts, Jews have made a mark in the world of sports as well. The various arenas of sports have proven to be places where Jews could display their athletic abilities and, in the process, their ethics and values. Regardless of the realities of discrimination that often faced Jews on the playing fields, many Jews were able to demonstrate their skills, their integrity and, in many cases, their commitment to their Jewish faith. *Florida Jews in Sports* will introduce the museum visitor to an impressive gallery of athletes, representing over 20 different sports, who have revealed themselves as true role models for their individual communities and for the state of Florida.

In America, the participation of Jews in organized sports presented opportunities for assimilation and acceptance. Although they faced the challenge of balancing religious observance with the demands of athletic pursuits, many Jews found ways to make significant contributions to mainstream American sports.

HOW STUDENTS BENEFIT

This exhibit at the Jewish Museum of Florida serves as a vivid showcase for a number of significant educational themes. The concepts of fair play, leadership, community responsibility, teamwork, sportsmanship and respecting others are represented here. Students from elementary, middle and high school levels can benefit from exposure to examples of dedication, perseverance and accountability. Students will relate to these athletes for their sheer love of playing their sport but they will also respond to the ways these role models conducted themselves, both on and off the playing field. Some of these athletes faced many obstacles during their careers which included disabilities and discrimination, yet their actions in overcoming adversity will serve as inspiration for the students.

There is a wide spectrum of accomplishments within the exhibit's collection of sports figures. Some of the achievements noted here are of an individual and personal nature. Other achievements noted are part of a team effort as athletes often united to bring triumph to their schools, their community or their country. The sense of pride derived from these endeavors can be taken as a true inspiration for every student who experiences the exhibit.

EDUCATIONAL THEMES AND FOCUS AREAS

Fairness and Integrity

Parents and teachers today place strong emphasis on fair play and sportsmanship. Our students are being prepared to live in a world where rules and regulations are to be honored and where figures of authority are to be respected. The athletes featured in *Florida Jews in Sports* demonstrate how they apply these ethics and values within their sports and daily lives.

Jeff Poppell, an All-American high school swimmer from Jacksonville was known for his integrity. His dedication, work ethic and unselfish contribution to the swim team led to his selection as Captain of the Men's Swimming and Diving Team at the University of Georgia. The Jeff Poppell Leadership Award is given by the university each year to a student whose "career achievements and leadership qualities set him apart from his teammates and peers."

Jay Fiedler, former quarterback for the Miami Dolphins, received the "Good Guy Award" from the New York *Jewish Sports Hall of Fame** for his dedication to fair play and admirable standards on the playing field.

Ralph Steinberg, an outstanding pitcher for the University of Tampa, used his enthusiasm, hard work and dedication to fairness and equal justice in baseball to become an equally outstanding judge. On December 21, 1977, Governor Rubin Askew appointed him as a County Court Judge and he continues to serve today as a senior judge even in his retirement.

Ed Newman, four-time Pro Bowl selection from the Miami Dolphins, also pursued a career as a judge after completing his years with the NFL. He is currently serving as District Court Judge for Miami-Dade County. Judge Newman is a member of the *Jewish Sports Hall of Fame.**

Robert Haas, the Florida State Four-Wall Handball Champion, received the National Handball Championship Trophy for Sportsmanship in 1961. He was the first private citizen to have a public facility renamed for him in Miami Beach when the handball courts at Flamingo Park were dedicated to him shortly after his untimely death at the age of 42.

Dealing with Discrimination

Every ethnic group has experienced discrimination in one form or another through the course of time. The history of Jews in the sports world includes many examples of situations in which Jews were excluded, taunted or persecuted. The fact that many athletes have persevered and found ways to deal with these forms of discrimination is a testimonial to their character and determination. Included here are names not only from Florida but known worldwide also.

Sandy Koufax achieved world-wide recognition and admiration, not only through his Hall-of-Fame-worthy pitching, but also through his decision not to play Game One of the 1965 World Series because it fell on the sacred Jewish holiday of *Yom Kippur*.

Angela Buxton, a Jewish girl born in England, was one of the top female tennis players in the world in the mid-1950s. She teamed with Althea Gibson, an African American young woman, to win the Wimbledon Doubles Championship in 1956. Angela experienced much anti-Semitism in her career. Even fifty years after her Wimbledon triumph, the exclusive All England Lawn Tennis Club has still not invited her to join.

Julius “Julie” Cohen played basketball for Erasmus Hall High School in Brooklyn and was on the 1957 All-American Team. After completing his first year of college, Cohen transferred to the University of Miami, where he played from 1959-1962. When Cohen came to Miami from Brooklyn, he was shocked to see that schools were segregated and hotels on Miami Beach were restricted against Jews. He often heard anti-Semitic remarks by other players, which was something he had not experienced in New York.

Dimitry Salita, an Orthodox Jewish boxer from Russia who trains in Florida, has succeeded in establishing his Jewish identity. Boxing under the nickname “*Star of David*,” Dimitry refuses to box on Friday nights or Saturdays, which is the Jewish Sabbath. His discipline and devotion to his faith has enhanced the level of respect he receives in the ring.

Mo Steel Flag Football Team, of the Michael-Ann Russell Jewish Community Center in North Miami, also succeeds in clarifying its priorities as they balance their playing schedule with their sense of commitment. The league includes players ranging in age from 7 to 17. During the International Federation of American Football (IFAF) World Championships in the Netherlands, the team would not play on the Jewish holiday of *Yom Kippur* and opted to go to synagogue instead. The next day they played a two-day tournament in one day and won the world tournament.

Prior to the late twentieth century, some country clubs refused to admit members of minority racial groups or members of specific faiths, such as Jews or Catholics. Because of this discrimination, Jewish country clubs were created. Four of those country clubs existed in Florida: Palm Beach Country Club opened in 1917 and still exists today; Westview in Miami opened in 1924 and still exists; Beauclerc opened in Jacksonville in 1953 and closed in 1984; Plymouth in Orlando, existed in the 1950s for a few years.

Overcoming Disabilities

Excelling at sports can be challenging even in optimum conditions. When someone has a physical handicap, it may seem insurmountable. Faced with such handicaps, yet unwilling to be discouraged, some athletes featured in this exhibit have overcome extraordinary obstacles and serve as inspirations for all of us.

Neal Walk, the first AP All-American basketball player at the University of Florida, went on to play professional basketball in the U.S. and Israel. In 1988, a benign tumor was discovered enveloping Walk’s spine. After having surgery, he was left paralyzed. Instead of giving up his passion for basketball, he joined the L.A. Phoenix Samaritans in the National Wheelchair Basketball Association. In 1990, Walk was honored at the White House by President George

H.W. Bush as the “Wheelchair Athlete of the Year” and in 2006, he was inducted into the *Jewish Sports Hall of Fame*.^{*} He currently works for the Phoenix Suns in their Digital Archives Department and gives inspirational speeches for various charities.

Ryan Levinson was a junior cyclist in high school in Tampa, winning the Florida State Championships for his age group. He planned on competing in his senior year and turning professional, but he started doing poorly in races and noticed changes in his body. He was finally diagnosed with Muscular Dystrophy at age 23. His doctors told him to train for a non-physical job, since the prevailing medical theory at the time was that excessive exercise would accelerate the disease. Levinson instead defied doctor’s orders and engaged in a wide range of athletic activities, from surfing and kayaking to scuba diving. He also got on his bike again for the first time in twelve years, and contrary to the doctor’s predictions, Levinson’s healthy muscles were getting stronger and his diseased muscles were unchanged. Now living in San Diego and working as an EMT, Levinson continues to challenge himself and inspire others. “*Ryan Levinson Day*” was proclaimed on November 18, 2001.

^{*}*Jewish Sports Hall of Fame* can be found online at: www.jewishsports.org.

Giving Back to the Community Through Sports

There are some Jews in sports who aren’t found on the playing field. Their passion for sports led them instead into the business of sports, including the business of writing about them. Team owners and sports journalists have also demonstrated their respect for excellence and fair play by bringing their love of sports to their communities. Many such people have shown incredible generosity and compassion in the process.

William Davidson is the owner of Palace Sports & Entertainment, Inc., an ownership group that includes the 2004 Stanley Cup Champion, Tampa Bay Lightning of the NHL. Davidson is also the managing partner of the NBA’s Detroit Pistons. Much of Palace Sports & Entertainment’s stability and prosperity can be attributed to Davidson, who over the years has earned the reputation of being an astute businessman.

Malcolm Glazer is the owner and president of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, the NFL’s 24th franchise. A true American success story, Glazer began working in his father’s watch parts business at the age of eight. When he was fifteen, his father died and Glazer assumed responsibility for the family business and expanded it. In 1999 he launched the Glazer Family Foundation, which is dedicated to assisting charitable and educational causes in Tampa.

Lawrence DuBow is one of nine part owners of the Jacksonville Jaguars, which is part of the National Football League (NFL). DuBow is on the Board of the Jaguars Foundations, the charitable arm of the team that has donated \$7.6 million to agencies in Northeast Florida since the team’s inception in 1997. In 2007, he and his wife Linda donated one million dollars to create the DuBow Family Graduate Student Education Fund at the University of Florida to support graduate student research in the Department of Pharmacy Health Care Administration.

Susana and Jack Levine of Miami are longtime supporters of Israel Children's Centers, the American-based organization affiliated with Israel Tennis Centers. ITC is an organization that promotes the social, psychological and physical development of children in disadvantaged neighborhoods throughout Israel, teaching them life skills through sport.

Gary Gerson, as a college freshman in 1951, recognized the critical need to help athletes balance their work on both the playing field and in the classroom. Over the past 50 years, more than 5,000 student athletes have been assisted through his tutoring program, which now has an annual budget of \$2 million. For establishing this excellent program, Gary Gerson was inducted into the University of Florida Athletic Hall of Fame in 2002.

Jewish Women In Sports

The issue of gender equity in our society has been a controversial one over the years and women have often used sports to display their abilities and talents as they competed and excelled in many arenas. The exhibit at the Jewish Museum of Florida is rich in examples of women who established themselves strongly in a number of sports and, in many cases, excelled in fields usually dominated by men.

Jo Ann Mason-Parker began playing Pocket Billiards at the age of four. At the age of 13, she won "The National 8-Ball Championship" which made her the number one amateur in the country. During her ten years as a tour professional, she won numerous events worldwide, even capturing the most prestigious titles, "The U.S. Open 9-Ball Championship" and "The Master's World Open." Once she climbed the ranks of the WPBA (Women's Professional Billiard Association) she stayed in the top five for eight out of ten years playing on the tour worldwide. She now lives in Boca Raton.

Janet Haas was an undefeated tennis player at the University of Miami and won two consecutive Florida State Collegiate Championships. She played the Virginia Slims Professional Woman's Circuit where her best National ranking was 28 and her world ranking was 62. She played Wimbledon, the US Open, and the French and Italian Championships. Before turning pro, she won a silver and bronze medal in the IXth Maccabiah Games in Israel.

Margie Goldstein-Engle is a native of Miami who has become a world-renowned horsewoman, and holds an unprecedented number of records and medals in U.S. show jumping. She has represented the U.S. at the Olympics and other international competitions, bringing home gold, silver and bronze medals. She is the American Grandprix Association's only ten-time *Rider of the Year* and the first rider ever to place first, second, third, fourth and fifth in a single Grand Prix class. She has been inducted into the New York Jewish Sports Museum's Hall of Fame.

Tamra Sheffman is a commercial, instrument rated pilot with over 1,500 flying hours. She was the former Chairperson of the *Florida Goldcoast Ninety-Nines*, the only international organization of licensed women pilots. Sheffman has been participating in the Air Race Classic since 2005, completing her fourth Air Race Classic at the end of June 2008.

Sandy Freedman was among the nation's top-ranked tennis players before knee injuries ended her career in college. Sandy came to Tampa with her family from Newark at age two. She entered politics in 1974 as city councilwoman and became chairwoman in 1983. In 1986 Freedman was elected the first woman mayor of Tampa and served until 1995.

Michelle Kaufman has been a sportswriter for 21 years. A Miami native, she graduated from the University of Miami in 1987 with a double major in Journalism and English. Her career began at the St. Petersburg Times, where she covered the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and was one of the only women covering the NFL at that time. From there she went to the Detroit Free Press before returning home to the Miami Herald in 1996. She has covered ten Olympics, four World Cups, numerous Wimbledons, French Opens, US Opens, NCAA Final Fours, Super Bowls, Pan Am Games, World Series and NBA Finals. She also teaches a sports writing class at the University of Miami School of Journalism.

Ronni Reis Bernstein has been the head coach of the University of Michigan's women's tennis program since August 9, 2007. Bernstein arrived at Michigan after enjoying a 10-year head coaching career at Florida International University in Miami from 1997-2007. She was the longest-tenured head coach in the history of the FIU women's tennis program.

Exceptional Young Jewish Athletes

Morgan Pressel started playing golf at age eight, and a few years later became the youngest qualifier in the history of the US Women's Open at age 12. Morgan is originally from Tampa, and had many accomplishments in her amateur career.

Joshua Quartin, a 15 year-old student at Miami Palmetto High School, has distinguished himself as an ISKA (International Sport Karate Association) World Champion. In addition to his rigorous schedule of school and competition, he also manages to find time to give back to his community. He performs twice a year at *Give Kids the World* in Orlando and yearly for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, as well as at many churches and synagogues. He hopes to not only entertain children less fortunate than himself, but also to inspire them by seeing what dedication and hard work can do.

Aaron Krickstein. Aaron had an outstanding junior tennis career winning many championships including the Boys 14 and Under National Clay Courts at the age of 12. In October 1983, Aaron, at the age of 16, became the youngest winner of an ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) event in Tel Aviv, a record that still stands 25 years later. That same year, Aaron defeated Vitas Gerulaitis at the U.S. Open and turned professional.

Carly Ray Goldstein of Coral Springs, Florida is a standout junior golf star who has been playing since the age of two. She has 54 golf tournament wins at the age of 12, including a victory in The Doral/Publix Junior World Championship, known as The World's Largest Junior Golf Tournament, at age 11. Carly Ray has appeared twice on national television, displaying her golf talents in prime time on The Golf Channel, and has also appeared in Golf Tips magazine and Golfweek magazine.

SUGGESTED LESSON ACTIVITIES IN CONJUNCTION WITH VISITATION TO THE JEWISH MUSEUM OF FLORIDA

Curriculum and Instruction, Social Sciences, encourages teachers to visit the exhibit at the Jewish Museum of Florida before August 2009. The following activities can be done in the classroom with or without a visit to the exhibit or can be administered at any time during Florida Jewish History Month.

Suggested Lesson Activities

(Reprinted and edited with permission from The Jewish Museum of Florida)

Grades 3-5

WHAT ARE CHARACTERISTICS OF A ROLE MODEL?

OVERVIEW:

Young people need responsible and principled role models to set examples and provide inspiration. Sports can be a rich source for such examples. Young athletes who respect authority, exercise tolerance, observe rules and play fairly within an organized structure are able to transfer those values to other aspects of their daily lives.

Research

Using the Internet and other resources in your classroom and media center, research and respond in writing and discussion to the following:

1. Define the character traits of role models. What qualities do they display?
2. Define specific concepts relative to sports activity: leadership, teamwork, sportsmanship, fairness, loyalty, responsibility, overcoming obstacles, cooperation and tolerance. Discuss how these qualities are important in sports and in daily life.
3. Clarify the necessity for rules and regulations in sports games and in daily life.

Research, Discuss and Learn

The following activities are suggested for small learning circle groups to discuss:

1. Research and name in discussion some of your own personal role models including professional athletes. What behaviors or actions qualify them as role models?
2. Discuss the rules that are necessary in the sports you enjoy. What are the goals of a set of rules? What would happen during a game of football or basketball if there were no rules required?

Reflect, Write, and Discuss

The following activities are suggested as writing prompts for writing and discussion purposes and can also be used as post-visit activities:

1. Discuss the importance of **fair play** in sports games. How do you feel when someone does not demonstrate fair play towards you? Are there other situations at school or at home where it is important to be fair?
2. After considering the accomplishments of the sports figures in *Florida Jews in Sports*, which character traits would you like to cultivate in yourself?

3. After further research, what life-lessons can you draw from the experiences of the athletes and non-athletes listed here? In what ways did they inspire you to be a better individual or a better team player?

4. Define the word “**obstacle.**” Discuss how some of the Jewish athletes had to overcome obstacles to achieve their goals. What athletes from other ethnic groups have also had to deal with similar obstacles? What obstacles have you had to face in your own life? What actions did you take to overcome them?

Grades 6-8

COMPETITION OR COOPERATION: THE LESSONS OF SPORTS

OVERVIEW:

Sports are often viewed as an aspect of **socialization** for young people. While playing on a team or taking on individual sports challenges, students stand to learn many valuable life lessons. An emphasis on winning can lead to positive results but there are many other elements inherent to a sports activity. Students can learn a great deal about values such as cooperation and teamwork as they strive to achieve their goals in a diverse, multicultural environment.

Research

Using the Internet and other resources in your classroom and media center, research and respond in writing and discussion to the following:

1. Find information on the benefits of athletic achievement. Emphasize how success at athletic endeavors may reflect responsibility, unity, leadership, organization, preparation and dedication.
2. Research and study the history of sports in a specific region of Florida, noting the participation of various immigrant groups including the Jews. Discuss the challenges that these athletes faced.
3. Research a community or communities in Florida in which athletes have brought pride and solidarity to the teams, schools and communities to which they are connected. What qualities do they display? How can their efforts serve to unite diverse groups within a community?
4. What are the various ways that athletes demonstrate character and citizenship while playing sports? Name five specific criteria of good character and citizenship and show how sports figures can demonstrate these attributes in their personal and professional life. Be prepared to discuss with others in the class on a panel review.

Research, Discuss and Learn

The following activities are suggested for small learning circle groups to discuss:

1. Define “sportsmanship.” What does the definition imply about the attitudes and approaches one should take while playing sports? What might be the results of sportsmanship? What negative experiences are avoided when good sportsmanship prevails?
2. Review, through research and discussion, the benefits of athletic achievement. How can success at athletic endeavors reflect responsibility, unity, leadership, organization, preparation and dedication?
3. Clarify the necessity for rules and regulations in sports games and in daily life.

4. What stereotypes exist in the world of sports? Is it fair to associate certain traits or abilities with specific races, nationalities, religions or genders?
5. Have you ever witnessed or experienced situations where players are mocked, jeered or bullied on the playing field? Have you ever witnessed prejudice or discrimination on the playing field? What can be done to promote fairness and respect on the playing field that will be reflected in the community?

Reflect, Write, and Discuss

The following activities are suggested as writing prompts for writing and discussion purposes and can be used also as post-visit activities:

1. What qualities, attributes or accomplishments impressed you most about the athletes in the *Florida Jews in Sports* exhibit and/or in the *Focus Theme* descriptions given here in this packet of information?
2. Select one athlete from the exhibit or in the *Focus Theme* descriptions and write a short story, poem or news article about how his or her success in an athletic field dispelled a stereotype about Jews or women.
3. Select and interview a Florida sports coach about how “fair play” and character development are taught within his or her sport. Write an essay emphasizing the ways the coach promotes self-control and teamwork during the process of preparing his or her young athletes for the game.

Grades 9-12

CITIZENSHIP: ACCULTURATION THROUGH SPORTS

OVERVIEW:

Jewish immigrants at the beginning of the 20th century were sometimes made fun of and teased because they hadn't yet learned how to fit into American society. These immigrants were considered unsophisticated and inexperienced in the modern way of life that was emerging in the United States. For Jews and other ethnic groups, sports became a vehicle of acculturation, a way to participate in a world where teamwork and community pride were measures of acceptance and inclusion.

Research

Using the Internet and other resources in your classroom and media center, research and respond in writing and discussion to the following:

1. Study the history of sports in America and the participation of various immigrant groups including the Jews. Prepare a timeline and visual poster of your findings to share with the class. Explain your findings and specifically focus on the role of Jewish athletes in South Florida's sports.
2. Analyze the lifestyles and cultures represented by many ethnic groups as they assimilated into American society. How was acculturation through sports accomplished by different ethnic groups? What are the similarities in their experiences? What are some major differences? How did these groups finally learn to assimilate? Emphasize the various cultural groups of South Florida.
3. According to the recent documentary, "The First Basket," basketball was originally a sport dominated by young Jewish athletes.* Research the unique contribution of Jews to the sport of basketball in its early days including the Settlement Houses, the YMHA organizations, college basketball in New York and professional sports teams. Were there any professional Jewish basketball players in or from South Florida in the sport's early days? Prepare to share your findings with the class.

*for more information, see:

<http://www.thefirstbasket.com/story.html>

<http://www.jewishsports.com/jewsin/history/basketballhistory.htm>

Research, Discuss and Learn

The following activities are suggested for small learning circle groups to discuss:

1. Discuss the historical ways that Jews utilized sports as a means of **acculturation**. How did Jews specifically achieve status and acceptance in society through their achievements in sports? How did they accomplish this?

2. Research the lives and accomplishments of the following outstanding, well-known Jewish athletes: Sandy Koufax, Sid Luckman, Hank Greenberg, Al Rosen, Angela Buxton. Discuss three character traits each had in common which helped them to become successful in athletics and in life.
3. Define the character traits of role models. Do all role models display these character traits? What are some of the universal positive qualities they display? Why do you think these qualities are important to success in life? In our society, are some athletes and celebrities elevated to the status of “role model,” who do not necessarily reflect these positive attitudes and traits? Why do you think that is? What can be done to promote the positive attitudes and characteristics of true role models?

Reflect, Write, and Discuss

The following activities are suggested as writing prompts for writing and discussion purposes and can also be used as post-visit activities:

1. Choose another ethnic group, besides Jews, and research the ways in which sports have been important to their sense of identity, acceptance and pride. What groups have contributed in important ways to professional sports today? How have these ethnic groups contributed to sports in Florida? Why have these contributions been important to the acculturation of these groups to Florida and to American society in general?
2. Are there examples of stereotyping in sports? What perceptions exist regarding women playing sports usually associated with men? What reactions exist toward women working in the field of sports journalism? Are certain races or nationalities associated only with specific sports and not with others? Are these perceptions accurate and fair?
3. What do sports mean to you personally? Are you a player of sports? A team assistant? A fan? What social and other benefits have you gained from being associated with sports activities of any kind?

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