

# Moss appointed director of Jewish foundation

BY AMY KAUFMAN

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John Moss was appointed executive director of Oregon Jewish Community Foundation at its June 2003 annual meeting, having served as interim executive director exactly one year to the day since June 3, 2002.

Moss grew up in Larchmont, N.Y., where his father had helped found a synagogue. He came to Portland in 1989 as president of Moss Broadcasting, his radio syndication company. Prior to that he held high management positions at both CBS and Mutual Radio Networks. He also ran a radio station covering most of Western Europe during the mid-80s.

When he moved to Oregon, he realized that the radio shows he produced and syndicated were ephemeral. "There was no legacy; everything would vanish," he said. "The commercials would run, they would expire and be gone. When I moved to Oregon, suddenly my family wanted to put down roots, and I wanted to do something of substance that counted."

Moss and his wife Jo-Ann settled in West Linn, where they now live with daughter Brittany, 17, and son Gabriel, 9. Moss co-founded South Metro Jewish Congregation in 1992, and, he said, "It became my obsession." In the process, he discovered that he "loved to be a



JOHN MOSS

community builder."

Moss became active in the greater civic community first as a planning commissioner and then as a City Councilor for the city of West Linn from 1993-96. He is now vice chair of the West Linn Planning Commission.

During the mid-90s, Moss was senior vice president of Teleport, the region's largest internet service provider.

In gratitude to the Jewish Federation of Portland for awarding SMJC a community initiative grant in 1994, Moss joined the boards of several organizations, including the Community Relations Committee of Jewish Federation of Portland, the Jewish Federation of Portland itself, the American Jewish Committee and the Jewish Review Committee,

## OJCF funds award \$987,614

The Donor Advisors of the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation awarded a total of \$987,614 in grants to 105 organizations from January through July 2003. OJCF is a family of more than 100 charitable funds and serves as a permanent repository of funds available to safeguard the quality of Jewish communal life in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

OJCF offers a variety of giving vehicles, including donor-advised funds and charitable trusts. It provides educational services for donors interested in leaving a charitable legacy. It invests the money and provides the donor with maximum tax deductions. These planned gifts can support a specific Jewish and/or secular charity. OJCF also assists Jewish organizations in securing permanent endowments.

The largest awards for the first half of 2003 were: Camp Solomon Schechter, \$52,000; Cedar Sinai Park, \$47,743; Jewish Federation of Portland, \$221,942; Mittleman Jewish Community Center, \$54,376; Northwest Christian Community Foundation, \$41,665; Portland Jewish Academy, \$103,250; Jewish Family and Child Service, \$24,976.

"all because of that small amount to bootstrap our congregation."

He became "fascinated" with the mission of OJCF, which was to build endowment for the Jewish community. To describe the culture of giving that he believes is essential, he often uses his mother's expression, "giving with warm hands."

"She wanted to make her gifts while she was on this side of the grass, and do it with generosity," he said. "It's great that we have tax incentives, but the reason people should be giving is to see positive things happen. ... Being generous should be a pleasure. It should be second nature."

Every day Moss has conversations with people about finding deeper meaning in life. "Jews, everyone, we are all engaged in a search for meaning. I think I have the solution," he said.

Moss said OJCF makes giving easier by taking over "some of the more complicated transactions, including the sale or donation of a business, stocks and bonds, real

estate, or any other asset."

According to Moss, individuals have the opportunity to direct their gifts, called "donor-directed gifts."

"Perhaps their personal passion is the Robison Jewish Health Center or their synagogue. They sometimes pace their gifts to Jewish Federation of Portland, so that even after death the JFP receives an annual gift in perpetuity. Others want to ensure that Mittleman Jewish Community Center or the Jewish Family and Child Service remains healthy," he said.

Moss encourages people to remember the community in their wills, so that they can derive pleasure from the act while they are alive.

Moss said Oregon has a unique environment that fosters involvement in the community.

"It's different from any other place I have known," he said. "If you participate in the process, voice your opinions, spend a dollar, do something proactively, you can change the outcome. In New York, Los Angeles, Detroit, Chicago, you're anonymous."

During his first year at OJCF, Moss said, the board focused on making the foundation "financially sound and strong, with the philosophy that everything is oriented toward permanence—this is going to be a permanent repository. When I inherited the organization, we were running on a deficit. We are now successfully managing a surplus of revenues in excess of expenses."

The board now hopes to build a larger amount of unrestricted funds and scholarships to meet the future emergency needs of the community, he said.

Moss said he has had excellent guidance from Irwin Holzman, who is "a great president."

"Irwin has a spine. He clearly understood the dangers of the trends during the last few years of negative financial market and what we needed to do to be permanent, as opposed to being buffeted by what's going on outside. ... Last year we outperformed most foundations. ... Now the market is swinging back and things are going very well. Gifts are up."

Moss said in upcoming weeks OJCF will announce the formation of its Oregon Jewish Community Youth Foundation. He said OJCF has just issued its first charitable gift annuity, with more to follow.

Moss credited community leaders who have stepped forward to donate their skills pro bono. "They make a profound difference," he said.

Moss holds Portland's older generation of benefactors as a shining example of the culture of giving.

"Working with the Henry Blauers, the Irwin Holzmans, the Milt Carls, the Harold Pollins, Roy Lamberts, and Stuart Durkheimers of the world, and so many others, is a great part of my compensation," he said. "It's on my shoulders to carry forward those dreams."

## Free guide addresses religion in schools

With the return to school, parents are once again left to wonder: "Can my son's football coach lead the team in prayer?" "Can a music teacher really expect students to learn Christmas carols?"

Fortunately, the Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Portland has the answer to many of those types of questions, and the answers are all neatly packaged in the free booklet "Religion in the Public Schools: A Guide for the Perplexed."

Additionally, if specific issues arise during the year, parents can

contact Community Relations Director Robert Horenstein for help in resolving those issues.

Horenstein said most issues arise out of school officials' lack of understanding of laws regarding religion in public schools. He noted that many issues are "murky gray areas." However, he said, the CRC's guide can answer definitively many questions parents and teachers have about what is permitted.

For a copy of the guide for yourself or your school, contact Horenstein at 503-245-6496 or bob@jewishportland.org.