

Farewell to a Tzaddik

NACOEJ mourns the passing of Jerry Simon, a *tzaddik* (righteous person) if ever there was one.

Our deepest sympathy goes to Jerry's family, his many, many friends, and more than 20 Ethiopian-Israeli college students and graduates, who loved him as a father.

Jerry, a Los Angeles builder, contractor and hand-carpenter, was a close older friend to NACOEJ's founding President, Jonathan Giesberg. After Jonathan's untimely death, Jerry decided to sponsor Ethiopian college students in Israel, in Jonathan's memory.

Jerry's plan was simple: he wrote letters to dozens of friends and family once a year, asking each to contribute any amount at all to his Adopt-A-Student project. The results enabled "The Jerry Simon Group" to sponsor 22 students over 16 years – and Jerry wrote to them all.

Though he was physically limited in his last years, Jerry more than once flew to Israel to take his students out to lunch or to attend a student's wedding or graduation. He danced – with the aid of a walker – with the beautiful students who loved him. Jerry's family and friends will now



Jerry Simon (center) having lunch last year with a few of his students. Yehudit Abramson is standing at the right.

maintain the group in his memory as well as Jonathan's, and we hope it will be a model for many others.

Here's a quote from one of Jerry's last letters to his group: "Please elect to work with us. Remember 'Jews help Jews'. That's all."

Jerry will always be missed, but his spirit will never die. With love from,

Evelyn Deitchman
AAS Director, USA

Yehudit Abramson
AAS Director, Israel

Barbara Ribakove Gordon
NACOEJ Director

The Giesberg Family

Twenty-two Ethiopian-Israeli students and their families