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Jewish Federation names Hurwitz its new chief exec

BY KATHY HOKE ■ BUSINESS FIRST
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The boxes arrived but remain unpacked. First, there are meetings to attend.

Even before she officially begins her job as president and chief executive of the Columbus Jewish Federation Sept. 9, Marsha Hurwitz has been meeting with key leaders in the Jewish community.

A lifelong Virginian, Hurwitz arrived in Central Ohio just before the Labor Day weekend to prepare for her new role leading the federation, now in its 76th year.

Hurwitz comes to Ohio with more than two decades of experience in the Jewish community, most of it in Jewish federation work in Virginia. She was executive director of the Jewish Community Federation of Richmond from 1996 until July, when she agreed to take the top federation job in Columbus.

She succeeds Hal M. Lewis, who headed the federation for three years before leaving in July. He became associate dean for public programs and an assistant professor at the Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies in Chicago.

Hurwitz, 47, will spend her early weeks on the job listening to donors, agency leaders and others involved in the federations' work of raising and distributing more than \$7 million each year for Jewish religious, educational and community services in Central Ohio.

"It's important for me to understand the culture here," she said. "What may have worked in a Southern community may or may not work in a Midwestern community."

Open-minded leader

Hurwitz makes no assumptions about what's important in the Jewish community of Central Ohio, which numbers about 22,000 in Franklin and adjacent counties, up from about 15,000 in 1990. Much of the population growth has been in the northern and northwestern suburbs.

"It's been my sense that Columbus has a reputation of being a very caring, generous and committed community, one that recognizes it has a role to play in the greater Jewish world," she said.

The work of Jewish federations resembles that of the United Way system, in which independent community organizations raise money annually for community programs and services, monitor the effectiveness of the programs and encourage dialogue and partnerships.

The Columbus Jewish Federation supports a wide variety of programs, including some that benefit people of other faiths. In recent months, the Columbus federation as well as 189 other federations have increased their support for Israel as violence continues in that nation and its occupied territories.

Last April, the Columbus federation raised an additional \$2.1 million to support the Israeli Relief Fund, aimed at assisting

Israelis whose lives have been disrupted by violence.

For the annual campaign that runs from October through January, the federation hopes to raise 10 percent more than the \$6.8 million it pulled in last year, not counting the special Israeli fund.

MARSHA F. HURWITZ

Title: President and CEO, Columbus Jewish Federation

Job duties: Leads umbrella organization that raises and distributes more than \$7 million a year for Jewish community building and social services.

Education: B.S., nursing home administration, Medical College of Virginia, 1977; M.S. gerontology, Virginia Commonwealth University, 1980.

Experience:

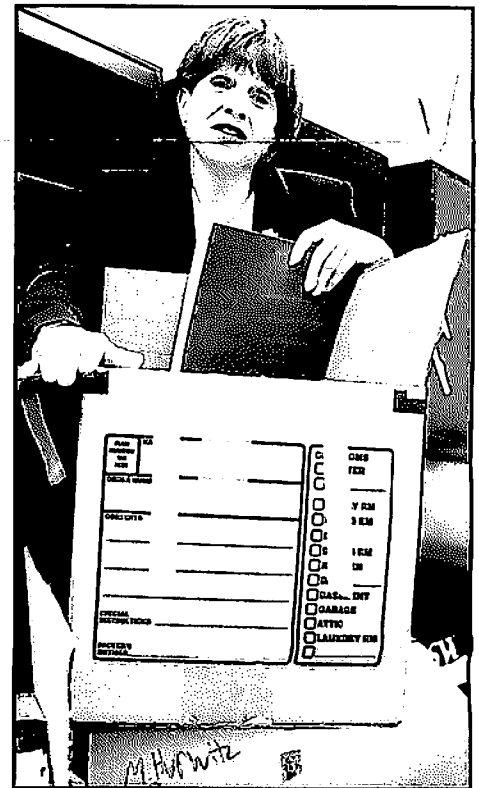
■ Executive director, Jewish Community Federation of Richmond, Va., 1996-2002.

■ Associate executive director, United Jewish Federation of Tidewater, Va., 1994-96.

■ Associate executive director, Jewish Community Federation of Richmond, Va. 1989-94.

Resides: Bexley

Family: Divorced, three children.



JAKET ADAMS ■ BUSINESS FIRST

Marsha Hurwitz still has most of her belongings in boxes because she has been too busy to unpack since coming to Columbus to take over as president and CEO of the Columbus Jewish Federation.

Up to the challenge

Hurwitz said the goal is ambitious in light of stock market turmoil and a struggling economy. "I think it's achievable," she said. "I believe we have a wonderful program. We're encouraging people to invest in quality of life and improving quality of life for people in our community, here and overseas.

Hurwitz was chosen from among 50 candidates. During the recruiting, she met with more than 100 community leaders and professionals.

In late June, the committee unanimously picked her for the job.