



TIM REVELL | DISPATCH

Marsha Hurwitz, new president and chief executive officer of the Columbus Jewish Federation

New leader shoulders new tasks at Jewish Federation

By Felix Hoover
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

The Lion of Judah pin that Marsha Hurwitz wears reflects leadership by example that many think will suit her well as the Columbus Jewish Federation's new president and chief executive officer.



Lion of Judah

The clasp on her left lapel indicates she donated \$5,000 to the women's annual campaign of the Jewish Federations of North America.

"I wear it proudly, I really do," Hurwitz said. "In excess of

3,000 to 4,000 Jewish women wear it throughout the country to denote our support for the annual campaign."

Fund raising, among the Virginia native's strengths, is a major part of the job she assumed in September at the foundation, on College Avenue south of Bexley. In six years as executive director of the Richmond Jewish Community Federation, she helped increase annual donations to it by 25 percent.

Hurwitz, 47, succeeds Hal M. Lewis, who left to become associate dean for public program at Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies in Chicago.

This year's local campaign goal is \$7.4 million, nearly 10

percent more than last year's, said Joshua Platt, director of marketing and public relations.

About 70 percent of the money goes to synagogues, Jewish schools and agencies and social services. The rest goes mostly to Israel, the former Soviet Union, Argentina and 60 other countries for social services.

Robert H. Schottenstein, chairman of the Columbus Jewish Federation's board of directors and a member of the CEO search committee, is excited by Hurwitz's skills.

"Clearly, we have challenges," he said. "As our federation becomes stronger, so does our ability to strengthen the quality

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MARSHA HURWITZ
president, Columbus Jewish Federation

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of Jewish life throughout the world. It will take Marsha's best leadership and tremendous support and partnering from the community leaders to make these goals reality."

Hurwitz's arrival makes the local organization the largest led by a woman among 189 federations and 400 independent Jewish communities in the United States and Canada. About 22,000 Jews live in the Columbus area, according to a decennial survey released two years ago.

"I'm a believer in the work we do as a Jewish community," said Hurwitz, who has been in related work for more than two decades. "It's wonderful to think, as I tell my children, we're writing the next chapter of Jewish history."

Some of her writing will be based on good listening as she learns the community, its leaders and its history.

By buying a house in Bexley for herself and daughter Daniele, the youngest of her three children, Hurwitz placed herself at the traditional core of the Jewish community and close to work. But she wants to spread the word about the growth of the community throughout central Ohio, particularly in northwestern Franklin County, where she hopes to set up a satellite operation.

"There needs to be a structure," she said. "It doesn't have to be fancy, but there needs to be some place you can drive by that says 'Jewish Federation' or 'Jewish Community Center.'"

Part of the challenge for today's Jewish organizations is to persuade people to identify with the faith and culture, while respecting different degrees of observance.

"Back in my parents' generation, being Jewish wasn't an option; they weren't as welcome as they are now by the non-Jewish community," Hurwitz said. "Today people can choose to identify Jewishly or they can choose not to have that be part of their life."

She doesn't expect to change the world overnight.

"I try to impart measured expectations," Hurwitz said.

The reminders given Daniele and Hurwitz's other children, daughter Shira and son Ezra, carry a message for others, too.

"I say to my kids: 'Two generations ago, your grandparents came here from Lithuania. If they turned left instead of right, we might not be here. Thank God we are, and we have a responsibility to make the world a better place.'"

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Business

The Columbus Dispatch

TUESDAY

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LOCAL SCENE

▶ **Sherman A. Katz**, Ohio State University assistant clinical professor of surgery, has joined Vascular Services of Ohio Inc.

▶ **Marsha F. Katz** has been named president and chief executive at Columbus Jewish Federation.

