

Dr. S. Steven Barron

By Cindy Sher
Managing Editor



Barron with his grandson, Ben.

When James Barron was growing up during cold Minnesota winters, he recalls his father reading a wind chill chart to him from the newspaper. His dad would set the paper down and say, "If it's 10 degrees and there's a wind of 15 miles per hour, then the wind chill is..." and he would tell him exactly what the wind chill was. "He had memorized the whole chart. I was amazed at his mind," said Barron.

That's who his father, Dr. S. Steven Barron, was. He was brilliant, interested in science, art, and nature. A Chicago Jewish community leader, a pathologist, and a lover of the arts and gardening, Barron died on May 29 at his home in Highland Park at the age of 90.

Born and raised in St. Paul, MN, Barron served in the Navy and then returned to

Minneapolis to begin his career as a pathologist. He married Lynn Keidan in 1953 and the couple moved to Glencoe a decade later. In Chicago, he became director of Pathology at Grant Hospital, and co-founded Mason-Barron Laboratories.

Outside of his career, Barron worked tirelessly for the Chicago Jewish community. “He had a great passion for [the Jewish people] and for Israel,” said James. “He never complained when he would go downtown to the Federation meetings in a blizzard. He was 88 years old and he didn’t care because he was so devoted.”

Barron served for many years on the JUF/JF Board of Directors, the Council for Jewish Elderly, the Jewish Community Relations Council, and many other Federation Committees.

“Dr. Barron was a thoughtful, sensitive, and committed Jewish leader,” said Dr. Steven B. Nasatir, president of JUF/JF. “When he took on an assignment or a cause, he was tenacious in seeing it through. He also was very supportive of others. He cared less about personal credit and most about results that benefited the Jewish people.”

Back in the 1980s, Barron was a leader in the movement to successfully lobby for the release of Soviet Refusniks.

He and his wife, Lynn, loved Israel too, visiting there countless times. “He believed so thoroughly in Israel, on a political level and on a spiritual level,” said James. “He had experienced World War II in a way that he felt... that we needed a safe haven—Israel was it.”

Barron is survived by his wife, Lynn Keidan Barron; his son Reuvain, of Jerusalem,

and his wife Haya; his son James, and his wife, Jeannette Montgomery Barron of South Kent, CT and Rome; his daughter Gayle Grabell and her husband Peter Grabell, of Encinitas, CA; his daughter Patty White, of Chicago; and three grandchildren, Isabelle and Benjamin Barron; and Skye Grabell.

Contributions may be made to the Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago at 30 South Wells, Chicago 60606.

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