

# Building Bridges Instead of Walls: Temple Mount Sinai

By Rachel Murphree

It has often been a matter of comment that the relation between the Jewish and Christian population of our city has been so cordial ... in social, educational, philanthropic work, we too can cooperate. Above all things let us each see the good in the other and remember we are brothers," said Rev. H. W. Moore, First Presbyterian Church, at the dedication of the first Temple Mount Sinai in 1899, according to an issue of the *El Paso Herald*. Interfaith dialogue is trending in our current decades of unrest as a way to bridge the divide between groups and to heal the issues that lead to strife. When we look at the history of interfaith dialogue in the El Paso border region, we see that it has always been a part of the fabric of our lives. We can see this interfaith dialogue by exploring the history of Temple Mount Sinai and its rabbis.

When the first Jewish immigrants came to town, as early as 1856, as we have written about in other *Borderlands* articles, they quickly immersed themselves in the civic and social aspects, working with Catholics and Protestants to meet the needs of the growing city. With the death of a Jewish person in the area, the community formed the Mt. Sinai Association in 1887, to purchase a cemetery for Jewish residents and also to be a benevolent society engaged in charity work.

The celebration brochure for the Temple's 25th anniversary says that the Association was begun with 32 members, each contributing \$1.25 each quarter to its existence. The members were respected civic leaders and merchants in the community: the Schutzes, Kraukauers and the Kohlbergs. This was the beginning of Temple Mount Sinai, the oldest Jewish congregation in the Sun City, and the "oldest congregation in the entire Southwest, between Dallas and Los Angeles," according to Rabbi Floyd Fierman in a 1965 *El Paso Herald-Post* article on Rosh Hashanah.

After a time, the congregation organized a Hebrew Sunday School which met at the County Courthouse and realized they needed the services of a rabbi. A December 1898 *El Paso Herald* article said that their services were often held at Chopin Hall on Myrtle Street and later in Christian churches until they were able to build the first temple in 1899 on the corner of Oregon Street and what was then Idaho Street (now Yandell Boulevard). The plan was to house artifacts from the time, but the items were stolen before they could be sealed into the cornerstone.

*El Paso Times* articles written in 1998 at the 100th anniversary celebration of the Temple, noted that the original temple was built with "nearly equal donations from Jews and Christians" and also remarked that during various constructions of buildings in both faiths, they shared each other's places of worship. Three Christian ministers (from St. Clement's Episcopal, First Presbyterian and Trinity/First Methodist) spoke at the dedication, a fact that was written up in the largest selling Christian periodical of the time, UK based *Christian Herald and Signs of our Times*, according to a January 1900 issue of the *Herald*.

In later years, the interfaith cooperation continued. The congregation of St. Clement's met in the temple for several months in 1906 while their church was being built. In the 1940s when the



First Temple Mount Sinai (Image courtesy of Temple Mount Sinai)

church was being renovated, the Jewish community donated \$10,000 to the effort.

Mount Sinai's first rabbi was Oscar Cohen, a rabbi who came from Mobile, Ala. because of his asthma issues. His wife was a brilliant soloist and choir director, described in the *El Paso Herald* in 1898 as "without an equal among soprano singers in El Paso." *El Paso Herald* articles of the time recorded that in his short three years of leadership, he and his wife were involved in civic activities such as promoting the new city park, doing benefits for the firemen and speaking at various Elks events and joining other college fraternity members in town to start a Pan-Hellenic organization.

In 1900, Rabbi Cohen left to lead the largest Jewish congregation in Texas, in Dallas, where he died the following year at 35. Later rabbi and historian Floyd Fierman described him as a "strong personality with splendid powers of leadership."

The first temple served the congregation well. In 1900 the congregation hired Rabbi Martin Zielonka who was born in Berlin, Germany, and who came to the U.S. when he was four. He and his wife Dora moved to El Paso from Waco, Texas, at a time when our city had 18,000 people, 40-45 Jewish families were members of the congregation and "Sin City," as El Paso was known then, had gambling halls in every saloon, according to a September 1930 issue of the *El Paso Herald*. The temple had only gas lights because there was no electricity or sidewalks north of the railroad tracks. Rabbi Zielonka built a sidewalk in front of the first temple to encourage sidewalk building in the city, and he joined in the fight to clean up gambling, according to an article in the 1935 *El Paso Herald-Post*.

As the congregation grew, the rabbi recommended building a parsonage and enlarging the school facilities, and work was begun on those issues. In 1914, the board voted to rebuild, and in 1916 the first temple was sold and the new building

started, according to the Temple's 75th anniversary brochure. The Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL) website tells of large numbers of troops who were amassed in the area to protect the border during World War I, including many Jewish men for whom the Temple created a downtown clubhouse because they had no physical home at that time.

The second temple at N. Oregon and Montana streets seated 750 people. At the dedication, the cornerstone included mementos such as photographs of the first temple and the boys' Sunday school class. The Jewish Federation of El Paso's website describes the second temple. "In 1916, El Paso opened its new Temple Mount Sinai building, which boasted a gym with showers, a stage, a billiard room, a library, a moving picture booth, a large kitchen and a social hall, one of the first 'modern' temple buildings West of the Mississippi." In the 1920 *Rotarian Magazine*, Rabbi Zielonka wrote about the temple facilities and the practice of using Judaism to benefit the community:

*Temple Mount Sinai attempts to give a social service interpretation to life. ... but all these features are not for the exclusive use of the Jewish community. One need not be a member of Temple Mount Sinai to enjoy these privileges. One need not be a Jew to participate therein. The orthodox Jew mingles with the Reform Jew and both with the non-Jew.*

During Rabbi Zielonka's tenure, the Temple purchased a beautiful organ and built a parsonage. By the time of the congregation's 25th Silver Jubilee, a perpetual care fund had been established to wipe out the Temple's debt, spearheaded by A. Schwartz with a donation of \$2,500. By 1926, the congregation was debt free. However, the 75th anniversary brochure tells that during the Great Depression the size of the congregation dwindled as families moved to find employment.

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Rabbi Zielonka passed away suddenly in 1938, and there were numerous *El Paso Herald-Post* articles on his accomplishments and stature in the city. He was very active in civic life and was especially interested in bettering children's lives. He addressed the Equal Franchise (Suffrage) League in 1915 on issues of safety and illness of children in the public schools. He worked with Miss Louise Dietrich, another El Paso pioneer and nurse we have profiled in an earlier *Borderlands*. He organized the El Paso Health League (formerly the United El Paso Consumptive Relief Society) and brought the first visiting nurse to El Paso and to Texas. He founded the Family Welfare Association and the Sunshine Day Nursery, both of which were closed on the day of his funeral.

*El Paso Herald* and *El Paso Evening Post* articles tell how he vigorously defended children who were whipped and beaten in the public schools and consistently questioned the practice of only approving Christian holidays for the public school calendar. He wanted separation of church and state, or if not, equal access to Jewish holidays for those students and teachers. He also focused on higher education. In 1918 Zielonka founded the College of the City of El Paso which in time became the Junior College and later merged with the Texas State School of Mines and Metallurgy to eventually become the University of Texas at El Paso.

He was an avid fisherman, but there was at least one instant where he did not like water! In an *El Paso Times* article on the dedication of the current temple, Irving Schwartz, one of the boys from the Sunday school photo placed into the first temple cornerstone, told the story of the rabbi giving them a clubhouse on Temple property. The boys rigged up a bucket of water over the door as a practical joke, which backfired when the rabbi came through the door and got soaked.

Another story about the rabbi was told by his wife in a 1932 *El Paso Times* article. Because their own wedding ceremony was a grueling 45 minutes long, the rabbi always performed 12-minute ceremonies, to take it easy on the couple.

Martin Zielonka was an active member of Interreligious Good-Will Council, president of the Rotary, a member of the Chamber of Commerce, a Scottish Rite Mason and a Shriner. He helped establish Memorial Park in what is now the Manhattan Heights Historical District. Zielonka was internationally known for his work in rescuing Jews in Mexico who fled Europe, helping to found the Jewish Relief Society in Mexico City, the country's first Jewish organization.

The congregation elected him Rabbi for Life in 1927, and after his death, the Sisterhood, an organization for women in the Temple, gifted Zielonka Memorial Hall to commemorate his 37 years of service and love of the people for their rabbi. Rev B.M.G. Williams, St. Clement's Episcopal, spoke at his burial service which was attended by people of all races and religions, according to the Jan. 6, 1938 *El Paso Times* article "Jews, Gentiles, Revere Rabbi." His wife Dora passed away a year later.

As the Depression continued, the congregation faced the horror of Adolf Hitler and the Holocaust



Interior of Hayman Krupp Memorial Chapel (Photograph by Frédéric Dalbin. Image courtesy of Temple Mount Sinai)

during World War II. During this time they were led by Rabbi Wendell Phillips into another phase of their development. Phillips led the congregation into including more tradition in the ceremonies. Temple historian and Rabbi Floyd Fierman wrote of these years that Rabbi Phillips "reacted with a strong Zionism, or Jewish Nationalism, and the urgency to rescue those of our brothers that were still alive. This spirit gave the congregation and the Jews of El Paso vigor and a new outlook."

Rabbi Phillips became the new rabbi in May 1938, just months after Rabbi Zielonka's death, bringing with him his wife and newborn son. Previously he was the Director of Field Activities for the Jewish Institute of Religion from which he graduated. Rabbi Phillips was born in Germany to American parents while his father was the dentist to the royal family. His father and family returned to the U.S. after World War I.

According to a 1948 *El Paso Times* article, Phillips was a chaplain to the Marine Hospital (a public health quarantine station established here at the turn of the 20th century). He was president of the Central Council of Social Agencies. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1943-1946 and served as a naval chaplain. The *Austin American* in 1948 stated that after World War II, he served as Correspondent to the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine.

Phillips made friends in El Paso with Christian clergy, which led to open forums in which they discussed issues of religion, politics, democracy and fascism. In 1941, he worked with Christians from the College of Mines to set up a work camp in Cloudcroft, N.M., for men and women to "study the ills of the world." A May 1942 *El Paso Herald-Post* article reported that at a celebration for new citizens with Fort Bliss commanders, he spoke out against derogatory comments based on ethnicity. The ISJL website states that "Phillips also insisted that African Americans be allowed to serve on the USO Board during World War II."

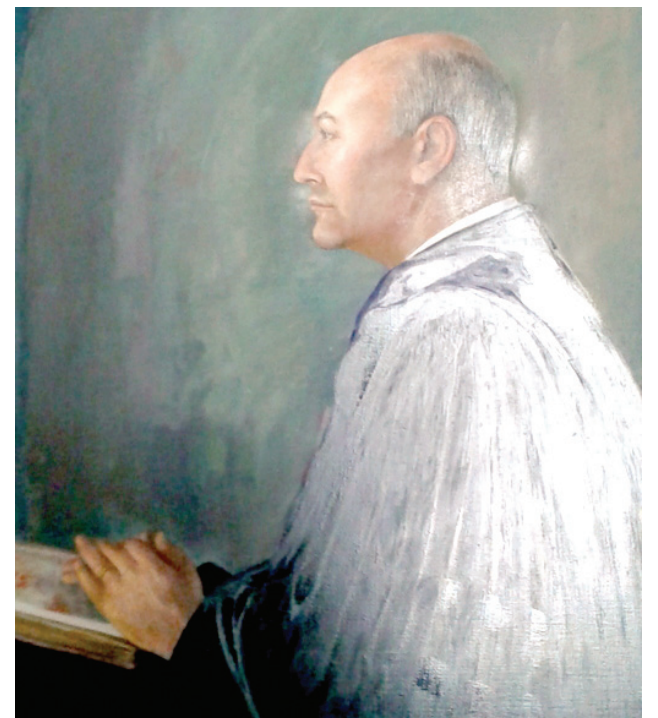
In a 1975 *El Paso Times* article on the 25th anniversary of Providence Hospital, Chairman of the hospital board and honoree Sam D. Young cited the contribution made by three spiritual leaders in El Paso who first purchased and operated the old Providence Hospital — Dr. Paul Newton Poling, First Presbyterian; Dr. L. Evans, Trinity Methodist; and Rabbi Wendell Phillips, Temple Mount Sinai. According to a 1967 *El Paso Herald-Post* article, these three saw a need for improved medical services in the community, and they joined with civic leader

Mrs. Walter F. (Irene) Wulfjen to approach a group of businessmen headed by Sam Young. The result was the new Providence Memorial Hospital which opened on Oregon street in 1952.

So after what could arguably be his most important contribution to the entire city population, Rabbi Phillips left the community in 1949 to take a position in Chicago. In announcing his departure, the *El Paso Times* said, "Rabbi Phillips has crusaded for the defense and extension of democratic ideals and has been a vigorous leader in community affairs."

Rabbi Floyd S. Fierman was hired to head the congregation, and his arrival in 1949 coincided with the economic growth of the 1950s and 1960s and consequent Temple growth. The Temple congregation more than doubled between 1940 and 1960, according to the ISJL website. After starting to renovate the existing temple, the Board saw the need for a new edifice. Planning began in 1952 and in 1962 the modern beautiful building at 4408 N. Stanton Street, designed by Los Angeles architect Sidney Eisenshtat, was dedicated. This architect is well known for his innovative architecture, largely in California. The *El Paso Times* reported that Melvin L. Potash, President of the Temple congregation and grandson of a charter member, led the ceremonies. Rabbi Fierman documented that by 1971, the Temple was debt free.

Dr. Floyd S. Fierman is the longest running rabbi the Temple has had and was much beloved. He came to town from Pittsburgh, Pa., with his wife Edythe



Painting of Rabbi Floyd S. Fierman, artist unknown (Photograph courtesy of Rachel Murphree)

and toddler daughter Leslie. Their family would later include a son, Gordon. Dr. Fierman, a social worker before entering the ministry, graduated from the Hebrew Union College and received his doctorate from the University of Pittsburgh. In his 2013 El Paso County Historical Society Hall of Honor nomination as reported in their journal *Password*, Susan Novick wrote that "His leadership extended far beyond the Temple. He was actively engaged in combating racism and fighting for civil

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rights in El Paso. He also was dedicated to interfaith education and communication and to tracking the history of Jews in the Southwest.”

The influence of Texas Western College on the cultural activities on the community was a factor that drew Fierman to El Paso. After the death of Rabbi Joseph Roth, Rabbi at B’nai Zion and head of the Philosophy Department at the college, Fierman joined other local Protestant and Catholic clergy in teaching in the department, according to a 1984 UTEP oral history interview by Sarah John with Tom Chism, the former Chair of the Religion Department. Fierman taught for 12 years, continuing to “touch the life of the Non-Jew, particularly those of Latin American background,” according to the 75th anniversary Temple brochure.

The congregation under Fierman’s leadership embarked on a new time of interfaith activities. He introduced the Bar Mitzvah ceremony and full Hebrew program in the religious school and organized the Men’s Club. This group existed concurrently with the Sisterhood that since the Temple’s inception had supported the religious school and youth groups. The Board, Men’s Club and Sisterhood strengthened the congregation with their support of sending confirmands to Israel and making camperships available to members of the Youth Group. The Rabbi spoke in almost every historic church in the city, and the Temple often hosted visiting rabbis that addressed interfaith meetings.

In addition to his strong leadership at the Temple, he is remembered as an educator and historian, having written numerous books and scholarly articles on Jewish history in the Southwest and founding the El Paso Jewish Historical Society in 1980. He amassed an archive of historical research that is kept at the Special Collections of the University of Arizona Libraries. *El Paso Herald-Post* articles from the 1970s show he was honored outside El Paso by being elected President of the Pacific Association of Reform Rabbis, and he received an honorary doctorate from Hebrew Union College and a special award from the state of Israel.

In 1966, Rabbi Fierman was given life tenure as the Temple’s rabbi and in 1979 became Rabbi Emeritus. Temple administrator Sally Parke recalls his 6-foot-6-inch stature and booming voice and presence. Fierman could be seen wearing a beret and driving in his convertible, interacting with everyone in town with insight and humor. In 2013, his daughter Leslie wrote in *Password* that “he knew and liked everybody. He embraced every religion.” At his death, the *El Paso Times* called him “The Conscience of El Paso.” His death was even announced in the national newspaper *USA Today* on Feb. 17, 1989.

When Fierman’s health began to decline in the mid-1970s, Rabbi Edward Cohn led the Temple from 1976 to 1980. During his term, the Classical Reform movement encouraged by Rabbi Fierman changed with the introduction of youth groupers with guitars and increased use of Hebrew in the services. He was also involved in community activities such as the El Paso Council for the Aging, Jewish Federation Board and the Hebrew Day School Board, according to the Temple website.



**Exterior of Temple Mount Sinai on September 2015, welcoming the High Holy Days 5776 (Photograph by Walter “Buddy” Schwartz. Image courtesy of Temple Mount Sinai)**

Rabbi Ken Weiss came to El Paso in 1980 and led the Temple until his retirement in 2002. He and his wife Sue had three children. Under his leadership the Temple celebrated their centennial, and the *El Paso Times* reported the service included a speech by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and community representatives from all faiths.

Rabbi Weiss was a huge proponent of Union of Reform Judaism camping (engaging youth in a lifetime of Judaism) and promoting the philosophy of Jewish peoplehood, belonging to the Jewish collective and embracing the rich past and shared future of faith and culture. The Temple’s website credits him for his promotion of a strong, caring Jewish community. This philosophy extended to support of Israel, including two congregational trips there during his time as Rabbi. Rabbi Weiss also became President of the Pacific Association of Reform Rabbis and was on the advisory board of Mazon: a Jewish Response to Hunger, according to a 2002 *El Paso Times* article.

During the years of Weiss’s tenure, the idea of a dual clergy was explored, and Rabbis Mark Goldfarb and Lawrence Bach, and Cantor Judith Ovadia served alongside Rabbi Weiss. In 2002, Rabbi Larry Bach assumed the position of Senior Rabbi, providing a seamless transition. In 2014, Rabbi Bach posted a eulogy on his blog, remembering Rabbi Weiss as a gifted pastor and someone who would go the extra mile for someone in need.

Under Rabbi Bach, the congregation’s focus turned back to interfaith education and learning in the community and a continued support of Israel, including five congregational trips between 2004 and 2010, and increased musical culture with congregation participation. Rabbi Bach was a leader

in interfaith and social change and an avid musician and guitarist. He was one of the founders of the West Side Interfaith Alliance, a group of clergy committed to social justice. That group has grown to include laypeople and is now known as Border Interfaith, further described by Jan H. Wolfe on *Newspaper Tree* online.

As reported by the *El Paso Times*, he was involved in workforce training and Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center, which provides low-cost legal aid for immigrants, and he was on the board of Project ARRIBA. In 2007, the YWCA El Paso del Norte Region named him “racial justice ambassador” for his work in these areas. In 2014 he helped organize a series of interfaith lecture and dinners where

Muslims, Jews and Christians met at each table to discuss issues. In a June 2015 *El Paso Times* article entitled “Jewish leader leaves legacy of interfaith dialogue as he moves to the East Coast,” Rabbi Bach said, “because Jews are a minority in El Paso, I think it’s important for us to be visible and open and both teach and learn with our neighbors.”

Rabbi Sandra Bellush joined the Temple as Associate Rabbi in 2011 and was devoted to interfaith work in relieving hunger in the region. She initiated a Temple partnership with a local food pantry, and initiated a Baby Boomers group to strengthen the bonds within the Temple and also promote social action projects in our area. She is now the Rabbi at Temple Am Echad in New York, whose website describes her contributions in El Paso.

When both rabbis left in 2015, the congregation hired Rabbi Ben Zeidman, who came to town with his wife Katie and toddler son Oliver. Their daughter Isabel was born shortly after their move. He was Associate Rabbi at the historic Temple Emanu-El in Manhattan, and while they enjoyed life in New York City, they were looking for a good fit and good place to raise their young family. He will be the next rabbi to make his mark on the congregation and the larger community. In a recent personal interview, he said he views his role as helping congregants find the greater meaning in life, for themselves as well as for the Temple as a whole. Being a Jew exists alongside with being an American, a millennial, a professor or however we define ourselves. His role is to aid the Temple in being the anchor or resource for meaningful life.

He views the congregation as strongly committed to each other and to the Temple. He would not be surprised if the majority of the congregation on

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**Torah in Glass designed by Hal Marcus (Image courtesy of Temple Mount Sinai)**

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reading this article would know most of this history because they have either grown up here or have been told the stories by congregants who are long time members. The Temple is driven by lay leaders and congregation participation and commitment, and the commitment to its history and existence was fostered by the leadership and teachings of the rabbis that came before. He states that not all rabbis or temples have been successful in this, and other congregations around the country are struggling to have a sense of self as an organization, but Temple Mount Sinai has always had that. It is one of its strengths.

The history of the Temple is celebrated throughout the building. In a literal and figurative expression of continuity, the chapel entrance houses the cornerstone of the first temple which serves as the physical base of the stand that displays the Temple's Centennial Commemorative Torah book. The pages of this special book are turned as it is read through the year.

The second temple's cornerstone is in their beautiful courtyard. Panels from the first Zielonka Memorial Hall were transferred to the new temple, and plaques, photos and memorials line the halls showing important people in the life of the congregation. The building itself commemorates the tradition and history of Judaism.

The curved lines on the inside ceiling of the Hayman Krupp Memorial Chapel represent the curved lines of a tent, memorializing the long years of Israelite exile in the desert, and it can also represent the inside of a prayer book. In the striking stained glass, the yellow Hebrew numbers one through ten represent the Ten Commandments and the Ark that holds the Torah scrolls, the Lectern and the Eternal Light are inspired by the revered Tree of Life symbol.

The pointed shape of the outside of the temple also represents the outlines of a prayer book. When the building was being erected in the 1960s, the TV show *The Flying Nun* was very popular, and the story goes that the neighborhood kids thought its shape was a nun's headdress, based either on their Catholic experience or on the TV show! In keeping with other stained glass installations, Zielonka Memorial Hall was graced in 2001 by congregant Hal Marcus' *Torah in Glass*, a five panel stained glass mosaic depicting the stories of the Torah, or first five books of the Bible.

Tradition is carried on in other ways, including the commitment to providing space for other faiths

when they need a place of worship. In recent years, Protestant congregations that have met in the temple have included Westside churches Christ the King and St. Francis on the Hill. Wonderful friendly relations and shared worship experiences have occurred as an outgrowth of this cooperation.

Judaism has many shared concerns with the broader interfaith community. Rabbi Zeidman said in a recent personal interview that the Reform Jewish heritage teaches the extreme importance of social justice and social action. "We view ourselves as being taught to care for people no matter where they are. We are taught to be 'a light to the nation,' and I interpret that as we are to be a role model on what it means to live a life of value and meaning." He also explained that from the arrival of Jews in America, it was important to let non-Jews get to know them as people, to not see them as different or strange, and to create a space for themselves that was different from the anti-Semitic experience. Being part of the broader community is not only part of Reform Judaism values, but it is also partly influenced by the violence the Jewish community has experienced, especially in Europe.

He continued by saying that "our shared narrative as Jewish people is that we were slaves in Egypt and that's what teaches us to care for the stranger, the widow, the orphan." There are three congregations in El Paso, all on the Westside which is where most Jewish people settle, plus a chapel at Fort Bliss. The congregations are the Chabad Lubavitch, the Congregation B'nai Zion and the congregation Temple Mount Sinai. Each fills a niche for people who want to experience or live their Judaism in different ways. The distinction lies in how each interprets Jewish law, whether literally, as in the case of the Chabad, or with exceptions codified into conservative law at the B'nai Zion synagogue, or the Temple's evaluation of the context and spirit of the law and how each individual chooses to apply that to their own meaningful life. In addition, the worship experience is different in each, based again on interpretations of ancient laws.

The relations among the congregations are very cordial, especially between the Synagogue and the Temple who have congregants with dual membership or have family branches that worship at one or the other. Competition between groups in town is not an issue here, as it may be in other large cities, and all participate in celebrations and activities fostered by the Jewish Federation of El Paso, the local chapter



Rabbi Ben Zeidman (Photo courtesy of Temple Mount Sinai)

of a national group that provides a meeting place for practicing and non-practicing Jews to gather.

Temple Mount Sinai has provided more than a century of commitment to its congregation and the broader community, with many of its leaders focused on interfaith dialogue, commitment to social betterment and social justice and listening to the concerns and views of all groups of people, whether Christian, Jew or Muslim. As Rabbi Weiss said of El Paso in a 1998 *Times* article during the 100th celebration of the Temple, "The truth is that we build bridges here instead of walls between religious groups ... It is certainly not as in other places." The words of Rabbi Zeidman add to this fact: "Whether or not you see the Temple name or logo on an effort, we as Jewish individuals are involved in almost everything in our community. This is part of what we teach: the importance of being part of the larger community and to speak out and to live our values." ✡

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Hedeman settled down in Morgan Mill, Texas, with his wife Tracy and their two boys, Lane and Trevor. According to Peter, Hedeman resigned as president of the PBR in 2004 because he felt the riders were no longer the main concern of the PBR. Hedeman then became president of the Championship Bull Riding (CBR) organization in May 2005, which was founded in 2002 by a stock contractor, Terry Williams, and a businessman, Joel Logan.

The CBR is a stand-alone bull riding organization like the PBR. Hedeman explained his mission as ambassador for the CBR when he stated, "My goals are the same as they have always been and that is to create a system based on merit

only — with no politics or favoritism. I want to create events that guys want to come to, not that they have to come to."

In May 1997, Hedeman was inducted into the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame. Later that same year he was inducted into the Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame. Then in 1999, he was inducted into the Professional Bull Riders Ring of Honor and in 2002, into the Texas Cowboy Hall of Fame. With four professional bull riding world titles and a number of business accomplishments, he has definitely earned the status of the "Michael Jordan of bull riding."

Hedeman has certainly lived up to the nickname "Tuff," and despite the heartache of losing his best friend and the serious injuries he suffered in the

latter part of his career, he managed to become one of the most revered World Champion bull riders. Hedeman was instrumental in helping make professional bull riding what it is today. With its tremendous increase in prize money and broadcasts on national television, bull riding has grown into an international sport.

Although Hedeman no longer competes, he is still active in the bull riding community as ambassador of the CBR and broadcaster at numerous bull riding events. The tale of Richard Neale "Tuff" Hedeman is an inspiration to all. Despite injury and loss, champions do not quit. With heart and determination, Tuff truly showed he was — tough! 🤠