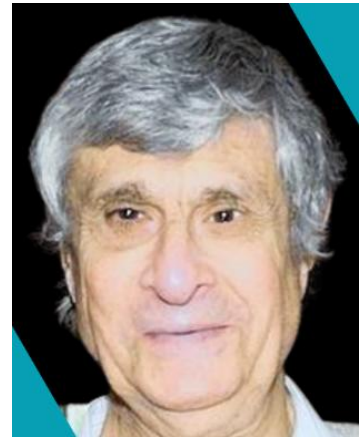


The story of a shul and a community

The Roodepoort Florida Hebrew Congregation

By Brian Josselowitz

Brian Josselowitz, whose dream it was to publish a book on the Roodepoort Florida Hebrew Congregation, reached out to all families he could find from 2018. With their contributions, he compiled the family stories that you can read on the 'People' page of the Roodepoort community site on the CHOL website www.chol.website.



Brian said: 'Thanks to all who contributed including the **Geffens** and **George Rosowsky** who provided a lot of the material and **Gerald Zimbler** who died while this history was being compiled.

Many other former members of the Roodepoort Florida Hebrew Congregation have contributed to this historical record where they write in their own words their recollections of what it was like growing up in a small, but close and warm community. They include the **Blumsohns**, the **Boners**, **Bernard Kaplan**, **George Rosowsky**, the **Simon family**, stalwarts **Barry Geffen**, who was chairman when the shul celebrated its 70th anniversary, his wife, **Sandra**, and **Gerald Zimbler**, z"l, who sadly passed away as this project was nearing completion.

Brian quoted **Rolene (Benjas) Noik**, a noted author and journalist saying: *Whenever I think of Roodepoort, my face lights up, Gus Silber*, who has strong links to the long-gone community, said, *'I very occasionally find myself in Roodepoort, these days only if I'm there to get my driving licence renewed, or similar. I always drive past the shul and pause there for a while. And I hear the songs in my head, and I picture the throng outside, and I feel, even after all these years, connected. I still feel like I belong.'*

Pamela Greenberg (Hayon) said: *Growing up and living in Roodepoort was a privilege. An institution. We had the best town with the best people and the best community. You were welcome anywhere at any time without an invitation. We enjoyed the outdoor games; friends were loyal and there was no bullying. Teachers cared and school activities were full of fun and interesting excursions. We only had a public pool and everyone played together. There was no anti-Semitism as I can recall, and it didn't matter what religion your friends were. Jewish children all bonded and had fun parties after the Saturday morning service. We all wanted to go to shul. All the old haunts included the Rendezvous Café and Corner Lounge, adjacent to the Magistrate's Court; bioscopes and clubs 763 and 51 were places for teenagers to enjoy. I am in contact with many old Roodepoorters but not all Jewish but they're old school friends with the same mind-set and are my anchor.*

Sadly, Brian Josselowitz himself passed away in Cape Town in 2021 before his mission was complete. Thanks to Geoffrey Boner in Hofit, Israel who grew up in Roodepoort, Geraldine Auerbach MBE in London who created with others the CHOL Community and Professor Abraham Lenhoff in Delaware who created the CHOL website, these stories have now been edited and illustrated as far as possible and placed on the CHOL website www.chol.website under communities / Roodepoort.