

Elsie Hillman's Remarks on Accepting the Frieda Shapira Award

1967....So many years ago and when Frieda's and my lives came together. I won't tell you about how old we were, but she was 12 years older than me, and a hundred years wiser. As time went on, I learned to love her "inside" and her "outside." Her lovely, trim figure and her beautiful white hair! She already had her master's degree in social work and I had only made it through 1 year of Westminster Choir College, but she had already reached beyond that degree into the heart of our city.

As an inspirational, young Jewish woman, she held no bias – she never chose between who needed the most support, the youngest, the oldest, the race of one's heritage or the color of their skin. She had an inner thermometer that knew the difference between right and wrong, good or bad and a spirit to prove the difference.

Frieda paid little attention to the structure of our city's map or whether the streets were alleys or boulevards. She cared about the people who lived on them – the ones who could give a little or those who needed to be given a lot. She was more than welcomed into each of their front doors. Perhaps some of it was because of her warm and wonderful smile that made them trust her and they learned, too, that what she said she would do – she did!

Today, I have been given the most exciting and wonderful award, and I am so grateful to The Forbes Fund and the family for this honor.

I am also privileged to receive a gift and will to relay it to an organization that will, hopefully, please The Foundation and Frieda's family.

In her early days as a community reformer, Frieda was a social worker for The Children's Service Bureau – teaching neglected and dependent children. She loved the young people and her dreams for them were to let them grow up well fed, well taught and well loved. So, perhaps, today this gift to The Homeless Children's Education Fund will help to make her dreams come true.

Please know how grateful I am to be with so many friends of the Shapira family and of ours, and of this wonderful seminar group. You should be proud of yourselves every day as you do the work of community service. I am proud of myself today, too, and must say heartfelt thanks to Henry, my wonderful husband of 66 years today, for what he has made possible for us to do!

And, there aren't enough words to thank The Jewish Healthcare Foundation and Karen, the Forbes Fund and its leadership and Edie, David and Dan for their kindness and generosity.