

In Memoriam

The American Friends of the Jewish Museum of Greece (AGJMG) deeply mourn the passing of one of our community's most dedicated champions, as well as foremost Member of its Board of Directors.

When Doris joined our ranks, it was no exaggeration that not too many Jews in the United States were more than dimly aware of either the Sephardic or Romaniote communities, although these represented the earliest signs of presence of organized Jewish life on European soil. This is all the more surprising considering that, since the dawn of our era, Jews had been living in Greece and made this land their home in cities like Thebes, Thessaloniki and Corinth. They furnished the foundation on which the refugees that, since the 16th century, flocked from the Iberian Peninsula, to establish the Sephardic, highly sophisticated and outward-bound Communities, whose presence had an impact and played a significant role on the subsequent development of the Balkans and beyond.

Her work of excavation in Rome and Southern Italy brought home to Doris Brickner the wealth of knowledge, history and human creativity that lay beneath the ruins. She visited Greece in the seventies, often returning later. She met with Stavroulakis, a Jew from Chania, Crete, who had been given the task to establish a Jewish Museum from personal belongings, recovered from the holocaust of Greek Jews who, for centuries had thrived in cities like Drama, Kavalla and Xanthi, in Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace.

From such obscure beginnings, the Jewish Museum was born. Doris bought into this project, and Greece became a stop on her regular visits through Europe to Israel and beyond. This is roughly how we bonded, from the 1980's onward and how a shared objective made her a vital part of a project and revival which continues to this day. It has brought both Jews and Christians, Romaniote, Sepharadim and Ashkenazim under one canopy. Of course, over the years, the canopy widened to include broader concerns, as AFJMG has expanded its objectives and greatly increased its membership. Indeed, in four decades it has come to represent Greek Jewry in the US. None of all this could have happened without the dedication of highly exceptional people, like our departed friend. We owe it all to a passion of special individuals, like Doris Brickner, whose deep sense of tradition and history, an overarching purpose, strategic disposition and organizational skills helped build an institution that both in the US and Greece has made its presence felt.

It is this shared objective and sense of obligation to both our past and future that come to mind when we reflect on bonds, we built over decades of learning to work closely with Doris Brickner and drawing on her wisdom and knowledge of the world.

She will be sorely missed but her memory will live on and be a blessing to all.

Dimitri Argyriades

AFJMG