

IRENE ZEHMAN AWARD CEREMONY
TUESDAY, APRIL 24, 2001

Good morning, I'm Charna Sherman. I'm one of Irene Zehman's granddaughters. I'm here today with Irene Zehman's daughter and my Mother, Judy Sherman, her sister, Fannye Shafran, her sister-in-law, Betty Ratner, another granddaughter, Nancy Wolf, a great granddaughter, Sydney Silverstein, and, you know we're a big family, more tables of even more relatives.

I'm sure it won't come as a surprise to any of you, given your involvement in the Jewish community, that this event is particularly hard for all of us this year, given the recent passing of our beloved Mother, Sister, and Aunt, Roz Wolf. But do know, we're so thrilled you're all here. We're overwhelmed, yet again, by the amazing works of this year's recipients. And in the most meaningful of ways, today gives us an opportunity to remember and celebrate what was so special about Aunt Rozzy — because the truth is she was so much her Mother's daughter.

A few weeks ago, my Mother gave me a tape. It was an interview of Aunt Rozzy by *The Jewish Scene*, right after she had returned from her tour of duty in Austria where my Uncle Milt had served as United States Ambassador. She was being interviewed about this very event — but 21 years ago, when the first Irene Zehman Award was awarded to Lois Bruck. It was more than a little eerie driving to and from work listening to Aunt Rozzy literally talk to me about why she and my Mother established this award, but it was soothing as well. In fact, the more I listened, the more I have was struck by the poignant parallel between my Aunt Rozzy's life and this award.

As you all know, this award is meant to recognize the unsung women of valor in our community: those who in truest tradition of our faith — and like Irene Zehman herself — have made extraordinary marks in providing direct service to those in need. And they stand out — for doing what they do with exemplary humility: for no reward other than repairing our world, day-to-day, person-to-person. But surely even Maimonides would himself have caught the irony of giving an award for this kind of tzedakah: what

lives. And there simply is no better tradition with which to honor and remember Irene Zehman.