

Obituaries

Obituary — M H (Harry) Kellerman, OBE

Maurice Herman Kellerman — known everywhere as Harry — passed away in April at the age of almost 98, having become an Australian icon in education, freemasonry and community service.

Born in Wellington, New Zealand in 1902, he was dissuaded by his father from becoming a doctor; his father believed there were enough doctors already. As a result, Harry began to study engineering and worked as a research chemist in his university holidays. Before long, a scientific career was abandoned in favour of teaching; Harry's father now told him, 'If you have to be a teacher, then be a good one!'. The long and distinguished career in education which followed showed just how good a teacher Harry was.

He began teaching in Walcha in 1923, but before long went back to university and graduated in economics. He became commerce master at Telopea High School in Canberra and is said to have taught economics to Gough Whitlam. By 1934 he was headmaster at Tullibigeal, but within a few years sought a position in Sydney. He was already recognised as a fine teacher and firm disciplinarian known by the nickname, 'Kill-a-Man'. In Sydney he became deputy headmaster and then principal of the newly established Blackfriars Correspondence School, remaining with the school for 25 years and becoming the great pioneer, practitioner and exponent of distance education, with a staff of over 400 teachers and 7000 pupils. He was not only an administrator but an active teacher, known for his School of the Air broadcasts over the ABC. His eminence as an educator was widely acknowledged. He was awarded the Coronation Medal in 1937, was appointed OBE in 1969, and received a number of professional awards. Retiring from the New South Wales Education Department in 1963, he became principal of the International Correspondence School until he retired once again in 1973.

His rapacious energy led him to the leadership of the New South Wales Board of Education during a period that was financially dif-

ficult but educationally rewarding, with new schools and classes opening up in many districts to cater for the growing and diversifying Jewish community. He worked closely with Rabbi Dr Israel Porush; he and the rabbi alternated in the presidency of the Board for lengthy periods, Harry holding office for 12 years and becoming involved not only in administration but in teacher training and supervision and school inspections. The Board appointed him honorary life president in 1969, the first person to be accorded this honour. The history of the Board written by him was published in 1979 and is a solid contribution to the story of Jewish education in Australia as well as testimony to its author's skills as a researcher and writer. The Kellerman Gallery in the new Board of Education building recognises his seminal contribution.

In the Australian Jewish Historical Society he was a committee member for many years and for 13 years its editor of publications. His own papers in the AJHS Journal dealt with subjects as diverse as Benjamin Leopold Farjeon, Walter L. Lindenthal, Abraham Abrahamson, the York Street Synagogue and the Jewish Literary and Debating Society of Sydney.

His Jewish community involvement included many years as a highly respected member of the Great Synagogue, a member of the Synagogue board from 1957 to 1960, a member of the Journal Committee and a prolific contributor to the Synagogue Journal.

Harry was far from a retiring individual: every time he retired from a position there was always another major challenge awaiting him. The last several decades of his long life were devoted almost full-time to freemasonry. He became a member of Lodge Apsley No. 129 in 1924, and from then onwards remained active in the movement in a whole sheaf of lodges, many of whom he served as Worshipful Master. He was promoted several times to Grand Lodge rank and close to 20 years was Grand Librarian of the United Grand Lodge of New South Wales. He wrote a number of papers for the Research Lodge in New South Wales, held office in that lodge and was its editor of publications. In addition he was the author of a two-volume history of the United Grand Lodge, covering the years 1948 to 1988. He believed that the masonic ethos had a major role to play in building a quality society, and his masonic lectures, given with great energy and lucidity till he was well in his 90s, were an inspiration to countless audiences. He was so well known and esteemed as a masonic lecturer and author that in his honour the Kellerman Lectures were instituted in order to foster masonic knowledge and pay tribute to Harry's leadership.

In 1926 Harry married Millie Ellis, and her support for him throughout his career and in all his activities was a decisive factor

in his success. She predeceased him in 1984. Their two sons Geoffrey and Gordon have both become eminent professional men in their own right. To them and all their family the warmest of condolences are expressed.

Rabbi Raymond Apple

Obituary — Rabbi Ronald Lubofsky, AM

For over four decades, Rabbi Ronald Lubofsky, who passed away suddenly during Pesach, was a towering figure in the Australasian rabbinate. Born in London in 1928, he was always passionately interested in Jewish studies and had already become a proficient Torah reader at synagogue services before his Barmitzvah. During the Second World War he spent several years as a full-time yeshivah student; not until he was 17 was he able to pursue secular subjects for matriculation. However, he subsequently gained a BA (Hons) degree at London University as well as ministerial qualifications from Jews' College.

He entered the ministry as assistant to the Rev Dr Isaac Levy of the Hampstead Synagogue and then moved on to the growing suburban Jewish community of Cockfosters and Southgate. In 1957 he came to Sydney as assistant minister to Rabbi Dr Israel Porush. His impact on the Sydney community was electric; he was tall, dark and handsome, with a rich voice, penetrating mind and personal charisma. After being ordained as a rabbi as a result of a fresh period of study in London, he returned to Sydney but in 1963 was appointed chief minister of the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation.

At St Kilda, where he held office for 25 years, his preaching placed him in the top rank of Australian public speakers. He had a creative approach to synagogue programming and broadened the range of synagogue activities. He became involved in many areas of wider community activity; he held office as president of Mount Scopus College; lectured widely, including a period on the staff of the Prahran College; and was the inspirer and founder of the Jewish Museum of Australia which is situated across the road from the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation in Melbourne. He started the outstandingly successful Open University series of lectures, and for many years gave *shiurim* for women. In addition, though often critical of