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Zola joins with Ambassadors Shapiro and Saperstein to honor distinguished Reform Jewish educator, Jerry Kaye

Former campers from every generation since 1952 gather in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin for a weekend of tribute and Jewish learning honoring 48 years of Kaye's leadership

CINCINNATI, OH:---From Friday, September 8 through Sunday, September 10, a Study Weekend was held at Camp Olin Sang-Ruby Union Institute (OSRUI) in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin to honor retiring camp director Jerry Kaye. Jerry and his wife Paula spent 48 summers at OSRUI, working to advance the camp's mission to provide dynamic Jewish life experiences to children from throughout North America and beyond. OSRUI—which opened in 1952—was Reform Judaism's very first camp. Today, it is one of sixteen Jewish camps operated by the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ).



Jerry and Paula Kaye at OSRUI. Jerry is retiring after 48 years as a director. (Photo by Chime Costello)

Participating faculty during the study weekend included Rabbi Leora Kaye, daughter of Jerry and Paula Kaye, and Director of Programs at URJ; former U.S. Ambassadors Rabbi David Saperstein and Dan Shapiro; and Dr. Gary P. Zola, Executive Director of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of American Jewish Archives and the Edward M. Ackerman Family Distinguished Professor of the American Jewish Experience & Reform Jewish History at HUC-JIR, Cincinnati. Panel discussions focused on exploring ways that Jewish camping can help build Jewish identity and empowerment, while working to cultivate new generations of Jewish leaders.

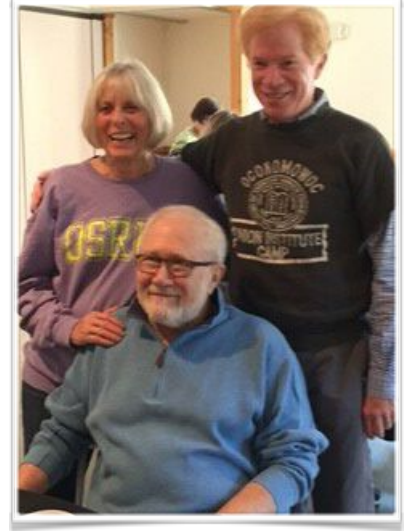


(L-R) Rabbi Saperstein, Dan Shapiro, Dr. Gary P. Zola, Rabbi Leora Kaye

Attendees — including alumni from all generations since the camp's founding in 1952 — heard reflections from Rabbi Leora Kaye about the many lessons she learned from her father. Jerry is well known—and much beloved—for his warmth, humor and engaging storytelling. She also spoke to the gathering about how to continue to tell those stories, using them to more deeply engage succeeding generations of Jewish campers.

Rabbi Saperstein offered insights into his work as the U.S. Ambassador for Religious Freedom and his focus on the Jewish commitment to minority rights for others. Dan Shapiro provided the group with an overview of his work as U.S. Ambassador to Israel, Middle East politics and Israel's future.

Prior to matriculating to the Hebrew Union College's Rabbinical School in 1977, Dr. Zola served for three years as one of the camp's assistant directors. Zola was also a former OSRUI camper and staff member. During the study weekend, Professor Zola offered teachings in American Jewish history, exploring the stories of George Washington and religious freedom for Jews; and the role of American Jews during the Civil Rights era. "I know that to a very great extent, my interest and passion for Jewish learning, Jewish history and teaching was ignited when I was a camper in Oconomowoc— and I am certainly not alone," says Zola. "Jerry and Paula have given a priceless gift to the Jewish people. That is, they have devoted their lives to making Judasim come alive for the over 30,000 campers that have passed through OSRUI's gates since Jerry was appointed director in 1970. And they have encouraged each one of them to bring their own ideas to the ways they wish to express their own Judaism. The Reform Movement has been remarkably blessed by Jerry and Paula — powerful pillars of Jewish commitment and leadership."



(Clockwise from left:) Paula Kaye, Dr. Gary P. Zola, and Jerry Kaye

The weekend, organized by OSRUI Board Chair Michael Lorge, also included prayer services, jazz music, campfires and s'mores. "Jerry came to camp when its mission was set, but what was unknown was how to grow that mission to reach more people," said Lorge. "The fact is, he is so multi-faceted. He's a builder of the facilities, builder of the programs, and a builder of relationships. He's a visionary."

For more information please contact Joyce Kamen at 513.543.8109.

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The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, founded in 1947 by its namesake on the historic campus of the Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, is committed to preserving a documentary heritage of the religious, organizational, economic, cultural, personal, social and family life of American Jewry. The Marcus Center contains over 15,000 linear feet of archives, manuscripts, nearprint materials, photographs, audio and videotapes, microfilm, and genealogical materials.