

Ivan H. Gabel
President: 1980-1983

Ivan Gabel grew up in Philadelphia and graduated from Friends Central School and Swarthmore College. Mr. Gabel was drafted into the Army and spent the first two (of sixty-one) years of his marriage to Ruth in Nancy, France. Upon return, he joined Merit Oil, a regional chain of price-oriented gas stations. He served as CEO of the firm from 1987 until 2000, when the firm was purchased by its prime supplier, the Hess Corporation.



Mr. Gabel's community activities included serving as Chairman of the Board of Jewish Children and Family Service of Greater Philadelphia, Congregation Rodeph Shalom and the Albert Einstein Healthcare Network. He also was a lifetime Honorary Trustee of the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia and a trustee of the Jefferson Health System and the United Way.

Besides the fiscal acumen that Mr. Gabel brought to his Presidency at RS, from 1980 – 1983, was his commitment to living—not just talking about—ethical values. For example, he played an integral role in the recruitment of Patrice Heller as the Congregation's first female rabbi. On his watch, in the spirit of equality of all members irrespective of their fiscal resources, the Congregation formally ended the fading practice of buying seats for the High Holy Days. Similarly, even before the merger with Beth Ahavah, he introduced a resolution to the Board in support of the Pennsylvania Marriage Equality Act—not because it was politically correct, rather because it was the right thing to do.

Written by Tom Perloff