

Reynold Greenberg
President: 1954-1959

Reynold Greenberg served with dignity and compassion as President of Rodeph Shalom for five pivotal years (1954-59). During this period, membership had to be titrated because of capacity constraints, particularly in the Religious School.



Mr. Greenberg was a partner in the Center City real estate firm of Joseph J. and Reynold H. Greenberg, Inc. Accordingly, he served on a number of local professional societies and civic associations. In addition to his years of communal service at Rodeph Shalom, he served as President of Philadelphia HIAS and was on the board of the Jewish Employment and Vocational Bureau. He also served a term on the Executive Board of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

In the decade following the end of World War II, the Jewish population in Mount Airy/Germantown and the Northern Suburbs mushroomed. Accordingly, RS joined with Keneseth Israel, KI, to hold periodic Shabbat services at the Curtis Arboretum and to operate a religious school in the former Wolf estate on High School Road in Elkins Park. Within a few years (and after considering a merger with RS) KI decided to leave North Broad Street and move entirely to Elkins Park. Subsequently, in 1955, Rodeph Shalom bought out KI's interest in the Elkins Park property.

Mr. Greenberg, Rabbi Wice and the Board perceived an alternative reality: substantial growth at both the North Broad St. complex and in the Northern Suburbs. For example, over 630 children attended religious school at the Main Synagogue and 279 on split-shifts in Elkins Park. Thus, the leadership developed an alternative approach: the Rodeph Shalom City and Suburban Development (R.S.C.S.D.) initiative. In this model resources and energy would be directed to both the "Suburban Center" and "Metropolitan."

After an extensive process of balancing projected needs and fiscal realities, the Congregation hired Henry Magaziner to design an extension to the main house in Elkins Park consisting of a 600-seat auditorium and 12 additional classrooms. Ground was broken for the extension on April 13, 1958 and the Suburban center was dedicated on November 7, 1958.

At the same time, infrastructure projects were identified at Metropolitan and, critically, four neighboring properties were purchased for increased parking. Thus, when a \$600,000 capital campaign was launched, the great majority of members realized their families would benefit.

Mr. Greenberg's commitment to Judaism and Rodeph Shalom, in particular, can be summarized in his words:

"It has been truly said that a man is rich or poor according to what he is, not what he has. No investment pays higher dividends than investments in one's synagogue and its activities. If we are truly rich in our religious spirit, and we share these riches—then our lives become an inspiration to our children, and our children's children, and there spreads about us an aura of ever-widening peace, good-will and happiness."

Written by Tom Perloff

