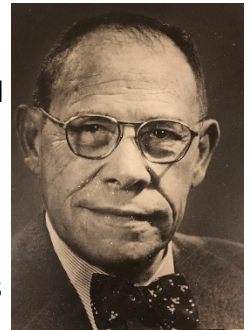


Philip Sterling
President: 1941-1946

Philip Sterling served as President of Rodeph Shalom for five years (1941-46). He grew up in Philadelphia and was a graduate of Central High School, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Pennsylvania Law School. He served on the board of the Association of Jewish Children, as chair of the advisory committee on Children and Youth for the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare, and as a member of the Pennsylvania Mothers' Assistance Fund.



In addition to an active legal practice, Mr. Sterling was active in politics and served as a State Representative from 1917 through 1934. He chaired the powerful Ways and Means Committee and is still well known as the author of the Sterling Act, which prohibits local governments from taxing services already taxed by the State and, conversely, allowed the City of Philadelphia to create the City Wage Tax and other local levies.

During World War II, much of the Congregation's energy went into supporting the war effort. For example, the Congregation kept a Role of Honor of all its members who were serving in the Armed Forces and encouraged congregants to keep in touch with these soldiers and sailors. Additionally, Rabbi Sack, an Associate Rabbi, left the pulpit in 1942 to serve as a Chaplain.

One of Mr. Sterling's challenges was respecting the Congregation's diverse opinions about Israel. In 1942, Rabbi Wolsey was a vocal non-Zionist and signer of the Principles of Non-Zionism. Many other congregants were active supporters of Zionism. As the sad facts evolved, a consensus about the need for a Jewish Homeland emerged and Rabbi Wolsey and other rabbis became vocal supporters of Israel.

Mr. Sterling captured the tone and challenges of the time: "All of us will be called upon to make sacrifices in the dark days ahead; all of us will feel the sting of such sacrifices; all of us will need great courage and fortitude; all of us will require stout hearts; all of us will seek, and find, comfort in the realization that we, in American Jewry, are a people who have survived comparably dark and hopeless days—that by our faith in the Divine Being, we have emerged into better more hopeful years."

He told his family in later years that one of his proudest achievements was going up to Newark with Tessie, his wife, to interview David H. Wice to serve as rabbi. He also treasured his participation with other past presidents of holding a Torah at Kol Nidre services. He continued to practice law after his retirement from political life, up to the day of his passing in January 1972, and in his later years he developed a passion for painting.

Written by Tom Perloff