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Series B: Commission on Jewish Education in North America (CJENA). 1980–1993.
Subseries 2: Commissioner and Consultant Biographical Files, 1987–1993.

Box	Folder
6	12

Maryles, Matthew, 1988-1989.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the
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Jack N. and Lilyan Mandel Fund
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June 21, 1988

COPY

Dear Mr. Maryles:

I am pleased that you will be serving as a member of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America and look forward to working with you in my capacity as director.

With the first Commission meeting scheduled for Monday, August 1, my colleagues and I are actively involved in meeting preparations. At that meeting we would like to distribute a brief biographical sketch of each commissioner. I would appreciate your sending me information on your background. Please send it, as soon as possible, to Premier Industrial Foundation, 4500 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44103.

You can expect to hear from me regularly during the months ahead. If you have any questions or comments about the Commission, I can be reached at (216) 391-8300.

Sincerely,

Arthur J. Naparstek

Mr. Matthew Maryles
c/o Oppenheimer & Co., Inc.
1 World Financial Center
200 Liberty Street
New York, NY 10281

INTERVIEW WITH
MATTHEW MARYLES

ARTHUR NAPARSTEK
JULY 1, 1988

I. Personal Profile

Matty Maryles is a "modern" orthodox Jew who grew up and still lives in Flatbush, New York. He attended Yeshiva schools as a youngster and is active in Jewish life in NYC on a micro level (neighborhood) to a macro level (city-wide and international-Israel Diaspora relations). Matty is a fully committed Jew who prides himself on being able to relate to all segments of the Jewish community. He is a CPA by training and education and a partner of Oppenheimer and Company.

II. Views on Jewish Education - Problems

As indicated, Matty Maryles brings a macro/micro view to the issues of Jewish education. As a second term president of the Flatbush Yeshiva, Matty perceives of Jewish education issues from a micro perspective. He understands problems of the need for support of physical structure (building renovation), aid to immigrant students, the need for special education through outreach programs for the handicap and disabled. He also understands the need to upgrade basic working and personnel conditions for teachers i.e., pension and insurance benefits and other fringe benefits.

On a macro level, Matty perceives the problem as a personnel issue, but within a communal context. He stated, "Personnel is the key. Those who are in teaching today do not perceive of themselves positively and are not perceived positively by students and parents. Consequently, the larger community does not perceive them in a positive way." Furthermore, he suggests that the American Jewish community is extremely pluralistic, and no one part or segment of the community can independently take on the problems of Jewish education. He said, "The problem of Jewish education is too large for any one group. Only through a partnership can we hope to legitimize the pluralism within and between Jewish communities. The partnership has to occur between the religious and non-religious institutions and organizations that make up the national Jewish community."

III. Opportunities Which Make Commission Timely

There is a belief that the Jewish family is threatened. Jewish values are being undermined by broader societal trends. Twenty years ago this would not have been as apparent. Now more than before (prior two generations), young people want to be connected in a Jewish way. Further, there is a belief and apprehension among parents that Jewish children will choose a competing value system. Matty feels the apprehension of losing Jewish beliefs and values can stimulate greater support for Jewish education. He also believes Jewish education has to be packaged appropriately to be used by all segments of the community. The challenge is to have parents perceive Jewish education as a real option. If parents don't participate, they have to believe they are cheating their children. The opportunity for the Commission is to create a "marketing plan" that points to the relevance of Jewish education.

Further, it is timely as twenty years ago Jewish values were expressed in secular settings, i.e., civil rights, labor, etc. Today Jewish values need to be expressed in a Jewish setting.

IV. Systemic Changes

The key issue to bring about change is the notion of partnership. Matty feels partnerships are needed to stimulate change in the following areas:

- A. Personnel
- B. Curriculum
Here work needs to be carried out that will integrate Talmudic studies with sciences and general education.
- C. Quality of Physical Structures
- D. Support Systems
Use of computer technology
- E. Redefine Supplemental Education
Should not be labeled as supplemental as it suggests secondary objectives

V. Outcomes

Here Matty began on a cautionary note by stating, "Philanthropy by itself is not going to save Jewish education. Parent support is key to Jewish education. We need to develop a market driven strategy to stimulate Jewish education. A strategy in which giving to Jewish education is not perceived as charity, but the same as going to Columbia University. Thus the outcomes have to be a market driven strategy that can meet the pluralistic needs of the Jewish community." Key to the marketing strategy is to reprofessionalize and reinstitutionalize Jewish education."

IV. Involvement with Commission

He is committed, but does not have time for great involvement. Best use of his time is to conceptualize the problem and outcome strategies. He sees himself as a catalyst.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

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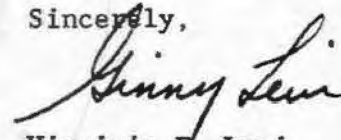
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44103

August 12, 1988

Dear Mr Maryles:

I am pleased to send you the enclosed set of three tapes of the first meeting of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America. When you are finished with them, I would appreciate your returning them to me. I hope you find them useful.

Sincerely,



Virginia F. Levi
Program Officer

new file

Mr. Matthew J. Maryles
Oppenheimer and Company, Inc.
1 World Financial Center
200 Liberty Street
New York, NY 10281

Enclosures

Interview:

1. Commissioner Matthew Maryles
2. Interviewer: AJN
3. Date: 11-2-88
4. Spirit: Extremely positive, intellectually stimulating, excited.
5. Setting: a kosher restaurant in the Wall Street area of NYC
6. Duration: 2 hours
7. Commissioner's current stand:
 - A. Personnel - yes.
 - B. Community - yes, with some caveats.
 - C. Programmatic options - yes, if they are organized in a particular way.

8. Summary:

Mattie Maryles is an orthodox Jew, and the President of the Trustees of the Flatbush Yeshiva, but is supportive of the institutions of reform and conservative Judaism. He points out that the primary precondition for Jewish education has to be the commitment to Jewish continuity. He is uncompromising on that position and believes that Jewish education cannot be taken for granted or the continuity of Jewish people will be jeopardized.

As the interview unfolded, Mr. Maryles offered the following:

I. Options.

- A. Personnel - He believes very strongly in personnel particularly as it relates to the issue of creating a profession and being able to put benefit packages together as well as salaries.

B. Community - We spent most of our time discussing this issue and he feels that the community has to be defined on a number of different levels. Basically, he takes a multidimensional view of community - a marketplace of ideas. He feels that we have to be very bottom line oriented, that we have to be practical, look for the best performing day school and supplemental school and try to learn from that. We reviewed programmatic options. He feels it is somewhat overwhelming and what is needed is the identification of models - (best practices). I asked him what he thought about the idea of taking a look at the programmatic options in the context of the life cycles from early childhood to the elderly. He got very excited and began to develop a format for putting that together. He said we should first put together early childhood models, formal and informal, look at elementary schools from the right-wing Yeshiva to the conservative day schools and reform schools. We should also look at supplemental school models as well, in terms of Sunday schools 2 to 3 afternoons a week, and begin to somehow determine what makes each of them function effectively. He supports the idea of assessing what works and try to replicate it.

C. Task Forces. He feels that task forces are the right way to go however, he feels that they have to be staff driven.

page 3.

Mr. Maryles will attend the December 13 meeting, but said that things comes up that at times prevent him from being flexible in his participation.

INTERVIEW WITH
MATTHEW MARYLES

ARTHUR J. NAPARSTEK
MAY 3, 1989

We began the meeting with a discussion of the mission's overall objectives. Matt Maryles agrees with the direction in which the Commission is going as well as its underlying assumptions that are related to change and implementation.

Matt is an orthodox Jew, but is committed to pluralism and believes the Commission has tremendous potential in legitimizing pluralism in the Jewish community. Matt Maryles began the interview by brainstorming and indicating that New York City is too big for the Commission to get its arms around, that whatever the Commission ends up doing should not be done in New York. We have to begin to look at communities and markets in which we can be assured of success.

Matt, quite independent of anything that I had said, moved immediately into how a national entity needs to be created that could provide high profile and visibility. To make this go, the lay community needs to be able to see Jewish education considered at the highest level.

I asked Matt if he thought the federation was the key and he indicated that the federation is the leader in New York City, but it would vary from community to community. Every community might have a different mechanism but he did say that, overall, the federation could be the mechanism. He went on to explain that a national entity or mechanism could stimulate national and local leaders.

I then began to discuss with Maryles the very functions that a national mechanism, were it to be established, would have to deal with.

1. Criteria

Maryles believes that it should be small in size, well organized in a Jewish sense with strong lay leadership.

2. Impressions related to quality

Select people who have high credibility. We need lay leaders who believe in excellence, that professionals can't control it, and that lay people can drive it.

3. Impressions related to negotiations with the existing institutions

Here he feels that lay leaders set standards and that federations, in concert with congregations and bureaus, can begin to initiate the process.

4. Funding Sources

He feels dollars are not as important as a lot of people think. Ideas are what is important. Maryles is not comfortable with funding. His philosophy is, it works best when people help themselves. He feels the national organization should be a catalyst and an idea exchange, not a money exchange. Professionals should support lay leadership in getting them to help. The national mechanism, again, should be hands on by definition but sell ideas. By selling ideas and not giving out too much money, he believes that will make the difference. If you are implementing ideas and strategies, it is by definition hands on, but with the money involved, it becomes self-serving. This was the first expression I've heard that money could be a problem in relationship to a national mechanism.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

We did not get into monitoring and evaluation or how the central mechanism will work with local communities.

Matt felt that the June 14th meeting had to excite people. He indicated that he was extraordinarily impressed with the quality of commissioners and, in fact, felt that he was unable to fully express himself because of the powerful intellects that are on the Commission.

Matt indicated that he would make every effort to attend the meeting. He was not sure he could give it an entire day. I asked him if he thought small groups would make a difference in terms of his participation and he indicated that they could make a difference.