

ON SYRACUSE

SYRACUSE, A UNIVERSITY FOUNDED BY METHODISTS, accepted a large number of Jews in the 1940s and 1950s, a time when a Jew couldn't get into the Ivy League unless he was a genius. Those colleges had their "Hebrew" quota.

Some of my Jewish contemporaries at Syracuse went on to get master's degrees from the Wharton School or the Harvard Business School or a law degree from Yale or Harvard. Their lives became ones of great success, and it was Syracuse that gave them their start.

I compliment Syracuse for its foresight, and that is a reason I'm paying the university back today as an active member of its board of trustees. I've served as chairman of the Investment and Endowment Committee, on the Organization and Nomination Committee, as vice chairman of the board, and on the executive committee.

Syracuse did a wonderful thing for me and for all the veterans and members of minorities it accepted.

About ten years ago I represented the board at a dinner honoring a famous black artist, Gordon Parks. Syracuse, I learned, had a greater percentage of African-Americans at that time than any other private university. I thought to myself that the university was now 1950s.

I also appreciate Syracuse because it admitted three of my children at a time when they would probably have had trouble getting into other high-quality universities. Syracuse gave them a chance, not

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because of me but because of their unique qualities and the passion they demonstrated in their interviews. All three graduated successfully.

My son Roy graduated from the Syracuse School of Architecture, the best undergraduate architectural school in the country. Because he was born and reared in Israel, his English writing skills had not been outstanding. My son Doug had problems because he liked to party too much. He began college at Tulane, in New Orleans, but that siren of a city offered too many temptations. Despite his problems, he was accepted to the Syracuse School of Management. My daughter Lauren, a whiz kid as an undergraduate at Northwestern University, decided about ten years later that she wanted to be a lawyer. But her LSATs and her bowling scores were about the same: low. The Syracuse law school granted her an interview though, and she wowed them.

I commend Syracuse as being open-minded and thinking “outside the box.” The university doesn’t have rigid requirements like a certain class ranking or SAT or LSAT scores in a specific range. Most other highly rated colleges are not as open.