

The Valley

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Friends & Neighbors



Living To The Fullest In Quail Creek

Cover photo by Beagley Photography



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We would like to thank Antonio Moreno with ReMax Portfolio Homes for sponsoring this month's feature story.

Living To The Fullest In Quail Creek

By Tabitha Yates | Photo by Beagley Photography

A famous quote by Rabbi Noah Weinberg states: "If you don't know what you're living for, you haven't yet lived." That reflection does not apply to fellow Rabbi Norm Roman. He has spent the vast majority of his life helping and teaching others. He began his ministry in 1974 in the Cleveland Area, where he had the privilege of being the Assistant Rabbi at the Temple where he had grown up. He spent two years there before taking another two to work with a small congregation in the far suburbs of Cleveland.

Norm continued his ministry, which included a stint teaching religious studies at a small liberal arts college, followed by three years in Santa Monica, California. Norm says, "I was very much a fish out of water in Southern California, so I went back to the

Midwest and spent four years as the Associate Rabbi at a large premiere congregation there."

Rabbi Roman made a name for himself as someone who specialized in working with youth. He served for two years on the Board of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform), by virtue of having been elected President of its Great Lakes & Ohio Valley Region. He also served for three years as Chairman of its National Committee on Youth and was frequently teaching or a part of the faculty at Jewish summer camps. Norm's focus was to energize youth program and reach young couples and college students.



Lynne collects dolls created by Magda Watts. Watts survived the Holocaust by tearing pieces from her prison uniform and making dolls, which she gave to Nazi soldiers in exchange for food. Courtesy Photo



Lynne Roman and granddaughter, Riley June Rochkind, Brooklyn, NY. Courtesy Photo



The Roman's children: Spring 2016, in West Bloomfield, Michigan. Left to right: Caryn Roman, Corinne Ray Rochkind, Chad Rochkind, Adam Rochkind, Sarah Blaker Rochkind, Allison Marabate Rochkind, Blake Rochkind, Benjamin Rochkind. Courtesy Photo

In 1986, Norm was presented with the opportunity to serve at a Temple just six miles away. Norm explains, "The previous Rabbi, a Holocaust survivor, was retiring and Temple Kol Ami reached out to me and asked if I would be their Rabbi. I agreed and wound up being there for thirty years. I stayed through the 50th anniversary of the Temple." There is an extensive amount of education required to become a Rabbi. Norm had a double major in both psychology and sociology and after earning his bachelor's degree, he went on to spend five years in Seminary. Rabbi Roman was thrilled to spend one year of Rabbinic school in Jerusalem, where he focused on studying the Hebrew language. "In high school I studied in Jerusalem, so for me, it was like going home," says Norm.

Born in New York and raised in Ohio, Norm had traveled extensively before he met Detroit native Lynne in 1993. Lynne had never lived anywhere other than Detroit. At the time, Lynne



Norm Roman & granddaughter Jovie Rose Rochkind, in Brooklyn, NY. June 2021. Courtesy Photo

was a stay-at-home mom of four boys. When she went through a divorce, her oldest was nine and her youngest was just three years old. Lynne's background is in education as a public-school teacher. As fate would have it, the Rabbi that helped counsel Lynne through her divorce was also friends with Norm and he wanted them to meet. Lynne chuckles as she shares, "I asked what he did for a living and when I heard 'Rabbi', I thought, 'No way!' I cannot go out with a Rabbi! I mean, I love being Jewish, but... no. However, my Rabbi insisted that he had a really good feeling about it." Sure enough, upon meeting, they both "knew" immediately that they were meant to be together. "We just had to get the kids on board," Norm says with a laugh.

Lynne's four sons joined Norm's only daughter, and then together the couple had a son for the grand total of five boys and one lone girl! The same Rabbi who introduced them, married them

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as well. They are now blessed with two granddaughters whom the Romans adore beyond words, with another on the way. Sadly, one of the couple's sons passed away from cancer in 2004 and they miss him every day.

A long journey full of twists and turns landed the couple in Quail Creek. After residing in the Detroit area for 35 years, their kids started moving to other parts of the country and Lynne thought, "Why would we live and suffer through winter in Detroit when our kids aren't even here?" Their original plan had been to be snowbirds in Florida. The Romans particularly loved the Sarasota area and had both friends and relatives there. Upon their retirement in 2016, Norm and Lynne embarked on a big cross country road trip and spent three months visiting relatives, friends, and members of prior congregations.

Norm shares, "The story is that we came across Interstate 10 and got to Tucson on the way to Scottsdale. We stopped to visit friends in Saddlebrook. They surprised us by inviting another couple from our old congregation who were active members of Beth Shalom Temple Center. They told us that they were trying to decide if they should engage a rabbi part time. They asked if I'd be willing to perhaps come down sometime for a weekend and discuss what a Rabbi could do in a retirement area like this?"

The Romans continued their travels, and it took eight months to set up a visit back to Green Valley. The weekend that the Romans



Norm Roman at Beth Shalom Temple Center, December 2020. Celebrating the Festival of Chanukah. Courtesy Photo

arrived was just after the tragic shooting at a synagogue in Pittsburgh. So, they had an interfaith memorial service with Norm present. At the end of the weekend, as Norm and Lynne prepared to fly back to Michigan, the outgoing president at Beth Shalom Temple asked them, "What would it take to get you guys here?" They said, "We don't think Arizona is where we want to live. We never really considered it." He looked them in the eye and asked for them to please think it over.

Norm and Lynne gathered all their kids together at a vacation rental in Florida to share the request with them and gauge their reactions. Norm remarked to his adult children, "I miss doing the pastoral tasks and leading spiritual services." Their family supported their decision, so they flew back down to look at real estate in Green Valley.

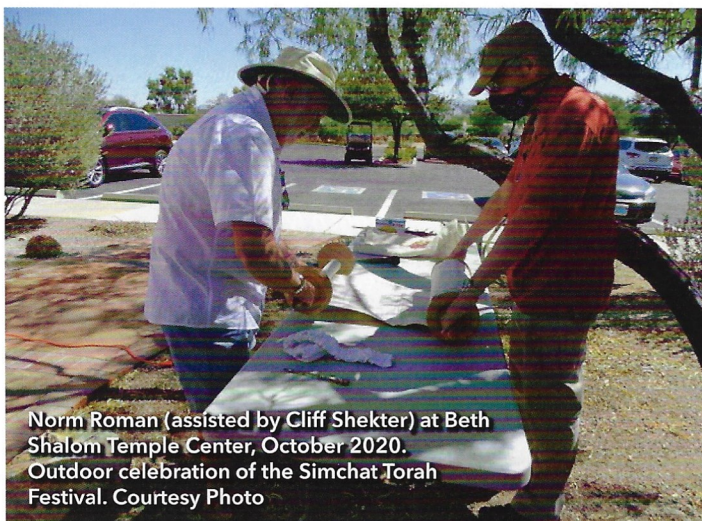
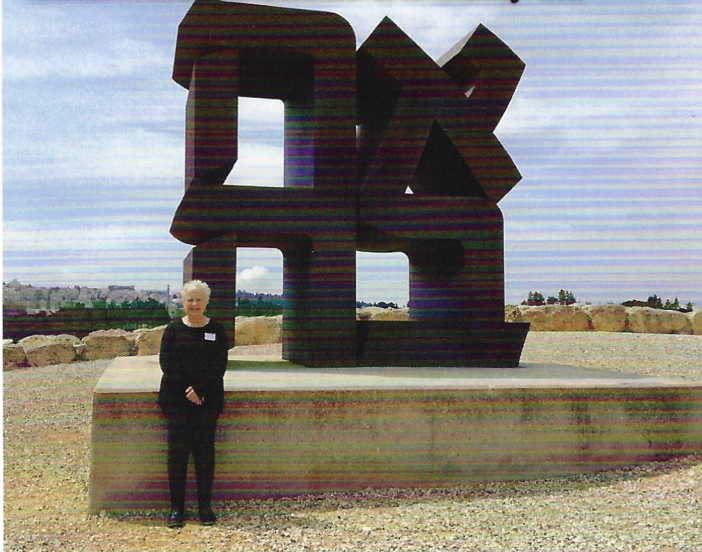
Lynne explains, "We stayed with friends in Quail Creek while we were checking things out. Our friends hosted a cocktail hour with their neighbors. I could not get over how nice these people were. I thought I would like to live in a community like this. They were so incredibly kind and that is what won me over. We began looking at model homes in Quail Creek." The Romans settled on a new build and planned their move to coincide with their Quail Creek home being finished.

Prior to deciding to move, Norm had accepted an assignment to serve as a Rabbi on a cruise ship for a month. The house in Quail Creek ended up being completed early, so the couple had a whirlwind week of selling their home in Michigan on a Tuesday, flying to Arizona on Wednesday, closing on their new home on Friday and then flying off to London to meet the cruise ship. They officially moved in October 2019 and Rabbi Roman's 1st day at the Temple Center was January 1, 2020. Of course, within three months Covid hit. Unfortunately, both Lynne and Norm contracted Covid themselves but they have recovered completely.

It was an interesting first year in Green Valley for the Romans, to say the least! Norm and Lynne both enjoy traveling. Norm even considers himself to be an amateur travel agent. The couple plans to visit Israel in November. Lynne enjoys reading, soap operas, and interior decorating. Norm likes to read, play golf, walk, and sing. He was previously in a folk singing trio that traveled over Israel performing songs for Israeli soldiers. Norm adds, "I've been invited to join a couple of boards and I am on the volunteer list at hospitals for chaplaincy. I'd like to find one or two areas outside the Jewish community to do some volunteer work."

Lynne admires her husband's heart for his Temple members. She praises him, "He gives beautiful sermons. He knows everyone's

Lynne Roman in the Billy Rose Sculpture Garden, at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. December 2015. Courtesy Photo

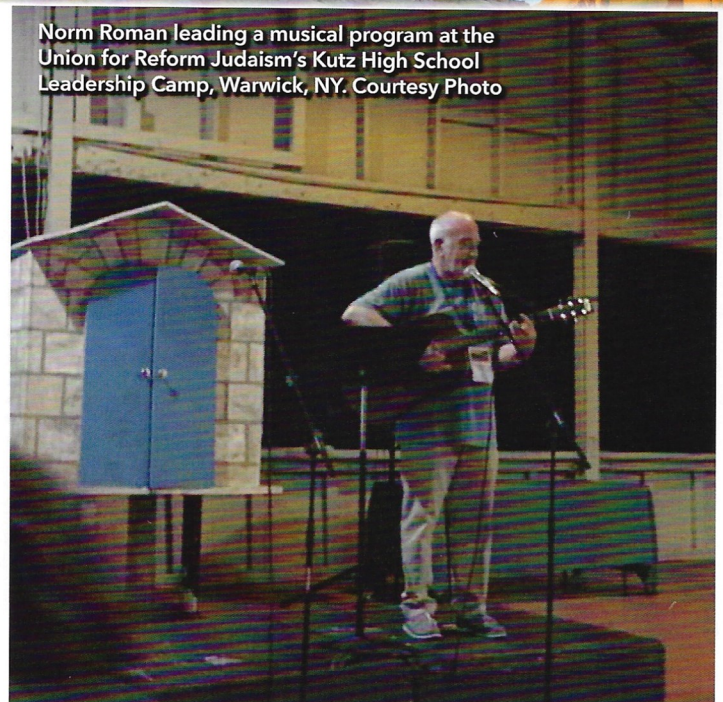


Norm Roman (assisted by Cliff Shekter) at Beth Shalom Temple Center, October 2020. Outdoor celebration of the Simchat Torah Festival. Courtesy Photo

Lynne and Norm Roman in London, England. September 2019. Courtesy Photo



Norm Roman leading a musical program at the Union for Reform Judaism's Kutz High School Leadership Camp, Warwick, NY. Courtesy Photo



name. There could be hundreds of people sitting in the congregation and he knows everyone. It's amazing to me."

Though Covid-19 has made their initial entry into Arizona an adventure they could not have anticipated, the Romans would not trade their time in Quail Creek and with Beth Shalom Temple Center for anything. Norm says, "The people are so friendly, welcoming, and unpretentious. We just immediately felt comfortable." Lynne shares his sentiment, "We've made such good friends, so quickly. Everybody here waves. You acknowledge people. You say good morning. We love it here. We really do. It is just the perfect fit."

The Jewish New Year (Rosh HaShana in Hebrew) begins on Monday evening, September 6th. Lynne, Norm, and the entire Beth Shalom Temple Center community wish everyone a sweet, happy, and healthy 5782!

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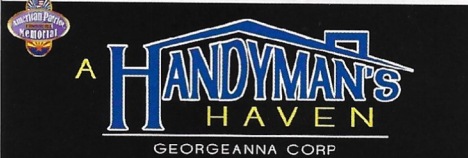
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