

## **Rosel Hoffberger Schewel z"l**

**WRJ Ner Tamid Member.** Rosel was a true *Eshet Chayil* - woman of valor, an extraordinary citizen- a philanthropist, teacher, scholar, mentor, political activist, founder, board leader, and a champion for public education, racial justice, and the rights of women. Rosel passed away peacefully surrounded by family on September 28, 2017. She grew up in Baltimore and settled in Lynchburg, VA with her husband, Elliot Schewel. They raised their children in Lynchburg and were a force in the community as well as with their local Reform congregation, Agudath Sholom Synagogue. She is survived by her husband, former Sen. Elliot Schewel; by her children, Steve, Michael, and Susan; and her grandchildren, Laura Schewel, Elias Schewel, Abraham Schewel, Benjamin Schewel, and Solomon Schewel. She is also survived by a newborn great-grandson just born to Ben and Keri-Elliot Daniel Schewel.



Rosel was the first woman to serve as president of the Agudath Sholom Synagogue and later as Chair of the Social Action/Tzedakah/Community Relations Committee. She also served as one of the vice presidents of the WRJ Mid-Atlantic District from 1983-1985 and on the Board of Directors of WRJ.

Rosel was a strong advocate for women's rights. She was one of the original founders of the League of Women Voters of Lynchburg in the late 1950s and of the Women's Resource Center in the 1970s. She was a proud feminist. She was the first woman to serve on the board of Virginia Baptist Hospital and the first woman to serve on and chair the board of Lynchburg College. When local women formed a group to recruit and fund women running for office, they named it "Rosel's List."

Rosel was very intentional in championing life-changing causes within the community. The great cause of her final years was Beacon of Hope, the nonprofit she cherished whose mission is to enable all of Lynchburg's high school graduates to get a post-secondary education.

In October of 2014 a book, *Vowed to Justice: The Story of Elliot and Rosel Schewel*, was published about Rosel and her husband Eliot's lives, described as "advocates for justice and fairness for all."

Along with all her accomplishments, according to a close friend, “She was so modest and had numerous facets to her life and personality. She was remarkable for identifying needs, starting projects and seeing them through. She loved bringing young women along in their development and in their sense of community service.”

**In recognition of Rosel’s dedication to advocacy and passion for justice, she designated her bequest to WRJ’s Social Justice Fund.**