

The Delray Democrat

April 2024 (# 67)

Rabbi Barry Silver, Esq.

Michael K. Cantwell

“His life was gentle; and the elements
So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, this was a man!”

Barry was not merely what Shakespeare called a “man.” He was a mensch, a complete human being – a devoted father and husband, a fierce advocate for the vulnerable and downtrodden, and an inspirational religious leader and co-founder of “Cosmic Judaism.” The elements were mixed in him, although he was not gentle with those who abused their positions of trust or took advantage of the defenseless.

In this issue, dedicated to Barry, we – friends, colleagues, followers, and all of us who were touched and inspired by Barry – remember and celebrate this remarkable human being.

I first met Barry in the summer of 2018, shortly after Donald Trump’s Orwellian-titled American Healthcare Act cleared the House. I joined a large crowd rallying in front of the courthouse in downtown Delray Beach to protest a law that stripped millions of insurance and condemned thousands to premature, preventable deaths. Barry was one of the speakers.

After the rally a group of us were sitting around and talking, and I learned that Barry had conceived the rally only days earlier, along with a few others, including Geoff Kashdan and Mark Schneider. I found it remarkable that he was able to attract such a sizable crowd in such short order.

I’m honored that Barry was a follower of and frequent contributor to *The Delray Democrat* as well as a member of the Democratic Club of Delray Beach for many years. The last time I saw Barry was when he asked for “a minute” to speak at a Club meeting last October.

He wanted to speak about the preliminary vote by the Palm Beach County Commission to open up the Ag Reserve to developers. Two Democrats were in the 4-3 majority voting in favor, and a follow-up hearing was scheduled the next week.

Barry spoke for far longer than a minute, and he was on fire, not only passionately condemning the betrayal of a promise to keep developers out of the last undeveloped part of Palm Beach County but also talking about Cosmic Judaism. You could tell that physically he was not doing well, but he was inspired by a holy spirit.

The next day he circulated an email call-to-arms and Mindy Koch, the chair of the Democratic Executive Committee of Palm Beach County, issued a plea for people to attend the hearing and speak out against the land swap. You can hear Barry speak out at Commission meetings [here](#) and at 4:16:10 [here](#) (urging the commissioners to “listen to the horses say ‘nay’”). His voice and passion played a major role in the decision by the two Democrats on the Commission to change their votes.

Barry was also a tireless supporter of Ukraine following Putin’s invasion, and that leads to perhaps the sweetest collaboration with Barry, who had spearheaded a rally in Veterans Park in downtown Delray. Our Club had simultaneously scheduled a sign waving in support of Ukraine at the “Peace Corner” (Atlantic and Swinton Avenues), and Barry asked us to join his rally.

After waving signs we silently marched along Atlantic Avenue with our signs and were cheered and even given standing ovations from diners as we made our way to (and later back from) the Pavilion in Veterans’ Park. In over 60 years of marching and protesting, I have never received a reception like that. None of us had.

The memory of Barry is a blessing. It is also a call to us all that we can and should be doing more.

My Teacher, the Rabbi-Rouser

Geoff Kashdan

Many years ago, I participated in a fund-raising 25-mile bike event. The bike I had was old but with multi-speed settings, so I thought it to be a more than O.K. Oh! Was I wrong! As the ride progressed, I was surprised when so many others seemed to effortlessly pass me. The “so many others” included four-year-olds on trikes and even a zombie on a pogo stick. Not only did I learn humility, but I was inspired to get a new and lighter bike and then try again.

That was a metaphor for my personal experience in activism with Barry Silver. I had considered myself a fighter for the separation of church and state since my ninth-grade protest against a religious Christmas event at my public high school. In my adulthood, I wanted to start a PBC chapter of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State (Americans United). When I contacted the Americans United office, I was advised to reach out to someone called Barry Silver who also expressed such an interest in my area. I had already seen Barry when he was the featured speaker at Center for Inquiry event in Broward County. So, I knew what he looked like and, when our paths crossed at a Delray Art Festival, I introduced myself. That is where it began.

Over the years, Barry got me involved with a plethora of causes and events. He always sought to include others and I was part of the “others.” We worked together to create a progressive “umbrella” organization which he called the Justice League. He asked me to participate in a lawsuit he launched against the PBC School District for its failure to teach the science of evolution to middle school children . . . and to use the term, “evolution” instead of “gradual change over time.”

Barry was an activist in the fight for common sense gun regulation and always made a “space” at his rallies to comment on gun carnage and reforms needed. Barry organized, with Michael Cantwell (editor of *The Delray Democrat* newsletter), a public gathering supporting the people of the Ukraine. He argued against the selling of farmland in the Ag. Reserves at a Palm Beach County Commission meeting. And he filed suit to prove that the bans on abortion rights were an example of the intrusion of one religious perspective on others, regardless of their religious affiliations or non-affiliations. He had so many issues, so many projects and so many concerns.

So, let me now connect the dots. What relationship does the story about the 25-mile bike ride have with the story of my involvement with Rabbi Barry Silver. The analogy is that while I considered myself a respectable bike rider and learned that I had much to achieve in that realm, I also considered myself a respectable progressive activist and learned from Barry that I had much to achieve in the realm as well. Barry was so amazingly informed, so eloquent a speaker, so linguistically talented that I felt honored (and, to be honest, surprised) that he included me in his circle of friends. He officiated at my daughter's wedding and I gave Power Point presentations to his temple. Now I look forward to reading his book, *Cosmic Judaism*, and learn more about this amazing and inspirational man. He still has so much to teach and I look forward to learning from him. I miss him already!

Cosmic Rabbi, Florida Representative, and Civil Rights Lawyer Barry Silver

Arlene Ustin

As for Barry's public positions as a Cosmic Rabbi, Florida Representative, and Civil Rights Lawyer, the list of his efforts and accomplishments is very long. We lost a deeply beloved friend and universal citizen.

For those who have had a moment to be with him, hear him, read his pieces, argue his provocative premises, and take care of event details, we know we have lost a brilliant pillar of unrelenting activism and a profound sense of humanity for the vital issues that we face.

His undaunted energy to uplift our democracy and honor our planet in all its nuances will endure. It is now up to us.

Remembering Barry Silver

Sheila Jaffe

I first met Barry Silver in early 1989 when I joined the local NOW chapter. My printing business began preparing the newsletters for the South Palm Beach County Chapter of NOW (National Organization for Women). And here we are, 34 years later still working with NOW and other feminists for human rights for all, especially women's rights.



If ever there was someone deserving of NOW's Feminist of the Year 2023 award, it was Rabbi Barry Silver. He had the courage, patience, and tenacity to take on important battles and to work in coalition with other individuals and groups.

In the spring of 1989, Operation Rescue (O.R.) came to Boca Raton with over 600 people to obstruct and blockade the entrance to the clinic of Dr. Robert Livingston. They blocked patients from entering the clinic because he performed abortions, *legal and safe* abortions. After numerous threats to Dr. Livingston from O.R., he withdrew his support of the lawsuit. Barry offered to represent our chapter as the plaintiff in a legal fight to protect women's rights to control their own bodies and we accepted.

Our case took years, but we won under the RICO racketeering laws and this prevented blockades throughout the nation.

Barry was a role model for others. He was a legal and moral advocate for the environment, animal rights, gun safety, religious freedom, and a consumer champion as a public interest attorney.

He served as a state legislator and really shook up Tallahassee. He was the only rabbi to ever serve in the Florida House of Representatives.

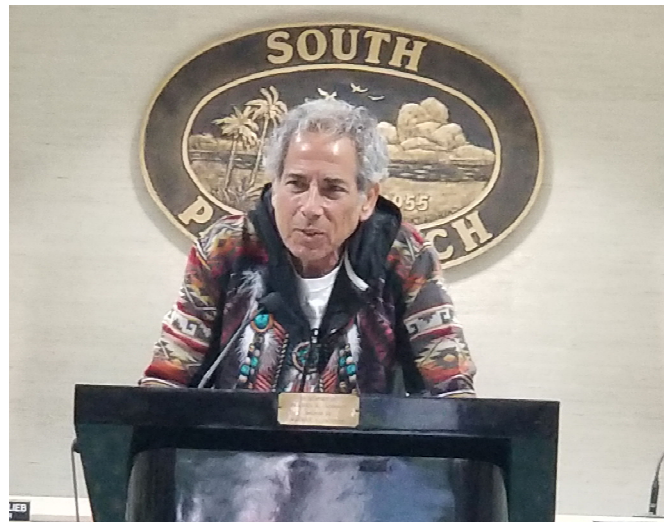
Barry became an activist early on, learning from his outstanding parents, Rabbi Sam Silver and Elaine Silver. Barry was an alumnus of FAU and Nova University Law School.

Recently, in June of 2022, he filed a lawsuit against a new Florida law that banned abortions after 15 weeks, on the grounds that the law infringed on our constitutional right to freedom of religion as well as the right to privacy.

He has led congregation L'Dor Va-Dor in Palm Beach County since 1996. The temple's name translates from Hebrew to "Generation to Generation." He was also a songwriter and social activist rabbi-rouser.

He practiced Cosmic Judaism, which merges Judaism and science with ecumenical outreach. Rabbi Barry's book about Cosmic Judaism was published just before his death on March 21, 2024.

More than 20 men who are members of his temple joined our chapter because we are for human rights. We refer to them as "Barry's Brigade" in the future.



Palm Beach County NOW proudly presented the 2023 Feminist of the Year award to Rabbi Barry Silver on the 50th anniversary of the creation of our local chapter in 1973. NOW supports true freedom, choice, and opportunities for all.

Sheila is president of the PBC Chapter of NOW.

My Friend, Barry Silver

Steve West

I lost a dear friend to cancer this week. His name was Barry Silver. He was a Rabbi, a lawyer, a social justice advocate, a musician, and a strong family man.

Barry had so much going on at one time I was sure that he was triplets. Actually he had several fundamental roles that he fulfilled with dozens of cameo parts to be played along the way.

One starring role was as a lifelong political activist. When he obtained his law degree he began to use his credentials to bring legal actions to protect the environment, fight censorship, and take on many social justice issues. As Barry Silver, Esq. he even took his quarrels with injustice into the Florida Legislature after being elected for a single term in 1996. His takeaway from that experience reinforced his independent nature, teaching him he could do more good working outside the system than within.

In his mantle as religious leader, “Rabbi Barry” was heartily loved by those who understood his struggle to help people liberate their minds from the superstitions and misinformation handed down by their uninformed ancestors and to use more evidence-based information to create a more rational decanter in which to age the fine wine of religion.

Barry pleaded his case by suggesting that organized religion stop regarding their “good book” as divinely authored by their very own god whom they regarded as infallible. Those who took that advice were liberated to develop more independent thinking. Many who didn’t understand his meaning felt uncomfortable and some even hated the challenge Rabbi Barry laid at their feet.

Following in the footsteps of his father, Rabbi Sam Silver, he created Cosmic Judaism, which synthesizes religion and science and employs that synthesis to ally the ethics and spirituality of religion with evidence-based knowledge to make the two disciplines more relevant and synergistic. It incorporates the ideas of great thinkers like Darwin, Einstein, Sagan, and Hawking. Barry calls on us to use our minds to support our beliefs with the indisputable knowledge we’ve gained in the last 5000 years.

In a beautiful coincidence, Barry’s book, “Cosmic Judaism” was published and delivered to Barry the



Barry attracted the best people. Here we are in L’dor V’dor with Gandhi’s granddaughter.

day he passed. That will be his legacy and he held it in his hands before he left us. Judy and I held those hands as he lay dying, his energy gone. He was still aware and responded with hand squeezes and an occasional love, ever holding Judy’s eyes his with silent approval. His fight was spent and he was submitting to his fate with peaceful acceptance.

Barry was lucky to have come from a loving family. His mother, Elaine was an accomplished musician and the family rock. His father, Sam, was a forward-thinking rabbi and a loving and concerned human being. He was a huge influence on Barry and planted the seeds of Cosmic Judaism.

Barry’s third role was as family man, and he played it as fiercely as he did his others. Francine was the family’s rock, the nucleus of the family who held down the fort while Barry was bettering the world.

Barry always made time for his kids and respected their interests and their choices. Both boys were sports oriented - Brandon leaned to basketball and Ari “The Lion” had a talent for tennis. Both boys have exceptional intellects that shone throughout their studies. Barry gave each his loving attention coaching Brandon’s basketball team and playing tennis with Ari; he even pawned Ari off on me for weekly tennis games and chats. The competition helped the boy’s ego (I always lost), and we spent

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plenty of time talking about our common passion of social justice. These two young men are building their futures with their achievements inside and outside the classrooms.

On a personal level, our relationship goes back about 15 years. We have similar goals and souls so there was much to encourage it to advance down the road from acquaintances to friends. Needless to

say, with two strong personalities there were a few speed bumps in the road. By virtue of our common bond we talked often and regularly over the decade and a half of our relationship. We mellowed over the last few years, and almost never did a week pass without our talking at least once.

Barry died way too early, removed by the manager from this playing field at the height of his game and with too many innings left unplayed.

The Farmer *Jack Goldstein*

The world has lost a wonderful person, Barry Silver.

I go back many years with Barry and I sit here and recall the rabbi and the man. I remember him on a trampoline years ago teaching young teens he called the Jew Crew how to use it.

I recall his creativity and love of music and his musical messages. I will always picture him with his bullhorn leading and speaking to crowds demonstrating for such things as clean air, water, the rights of women and the harm of banning books. I recall sitting in a mosque with him at a time when Trump was verbally attacking Muslims and the mosque had been physically damaged. Barry brought together various groups and we learned from one another. We saw we had more in common than differences.

In my last conversation with him, he defined his role. You see, I was always a believer in the separation of church and state while he defined his role as one to talk about human values and the need to protect the planet while advocating for the rights of all living things.

So we say goodbye to a kind of farmer. Not one who grew fruits and vegetables but one who planted the seeds of appropriate values in humanity. He fostered the germination of ideals that will grow after a period of dormancy. His legacy will lead many people in the future in helping our world to become a better place.

Barry, you did a good job as a writer, a speaker, and a role model. In our hearts and minds you will forever live.

Rabbi Barry Silver *Char Lane*

It was September 20, 2022. DeSantis was scheduled to attend an Educational Freedom Event hosted by Florida's Jewish and Faith Communities in Boca Raton. It sounded like a good sign-wave opportunity so David, June, Michael, and I headed there. We had to stand across the street from the venue, and shortly thereafter Rabbi Barry showed up, chatted with us, and then entered the den of Republicans.

He had with him a motion to mediate related to the abortion lawsuit that he'd filed and wanted to deliver to the governor. When DeSantis began talking about the constitution Rabbi Barry called out "separation

of church and state" and was then told by the police that it was a private party and they escorted him out of the gathering. As he was being led out of this private party he called out "love the immigrants as yourself" in Hebrew in relation to the misrepresentation to and transport of immigrants to Martha's Vineyard.

I knew him only slightly, but that was sufficient to realize that he was a very special person and a true force of nature. What I remember most is his focus, dedication, intelligence, and sense that he could make a difference. And he usually did.

Remembering Rabbi Barry Silver

Debra Tendrich

I write this in loving memory of Rabbi Barry Silver, a dear friend and dedicated advocate.

Together, we championed causes such as protecting the AG Reserve, standing up for Israel and Ukraine, combating racism and antisemitism, and defending democracy. His passion and commitment will be forever cherished and deeply missed. We will all miss Barry as we fight the good fight.

Recently, whenever I reached out to Barry to check on him, he would tell me he was “OK” and selflessly deflect to inquire about my campaign instead of his own challenges. He told me to focus on “raising issues” over “raising money” and advised me to be a peaceful warrior and a moral compass in the Legislature. His unwavering support and belief in me were truly invaluable and will always hold a special place in my heart.

Our friendship was forged on shared values of community, integrity, and making the world a better place for all. I am grateful for his friendship, guidance, and relentless dedication until the very end. His wisdom will forever resonate with me and I thank him for everything.

I am dedicated to upholding Rabbi Barry Silver's legacy by continuing the good fight with fervor and commitment, and I was honored to have his endorsement, copied below in part:

The organization you founded, “Eat Better, Live Better,” is a remarkable example of how one person can make a difference in this world as envisioned by Anne Frank. I commend you not only for your outstanding efforts to feed the hungry, but also to educate our community on the health benefits of proper nutrition and for offering healthy food to those in need. I am excited to endorse your candidacy for the State House of Representatives, District 89, a seat which I once occupied.

What We’re Reading

Adam Serwer, [How Hur Misled the Country on Biden’s Memory](#), *The Atlantic*: “First impressions stick. After a big story hits, the initial conclusions can turn out to be wrong, or partly wrong, but the revisions are not what people remember. They remember the headlines in imposing font, the solemn tone from a presenter, the avalanche of ironic summaries on social media. Political operatives know this, and it’s that indelible impression they want, one that sticks like a greasy fingerprint and that no number of follow-ups or awkward corrections could possibly wipe away.”

Peter Wehner, [If There’s One Thing Trump Is Right About, It’s Republicans](#), *The New York Times*: “For the thousandth time, the Republican Party refused an off-ramp that would free itself from Donald Trump. As long as he’s around, it never will . . . Whatever one thought of the Republican Party pre-Trump, it was not fundamentally illiberal or nihilistic; its leaders were not sociopathic, merciless con men, wantonly cruel and lawless. No area of Mr. Trump’s life appears to have been untouched by moral corruption.”

Fintan O’Toole, [Laugh Riot](#), *New York Review of Books*: “What is new in the development of antidemocratic politics is that Trump brings all this comic doubleness—the confusion of the real and the performative, of character and caricature—to bear on the authoritarian persona of the caudillo, the duce, the strongman savior. The prototype dictators of the far right may have looked absurd to their critics (“Hitler,” wrote Adorno and Horkheimer, “can gesticulate like a clown, Mussolini risk false notes like a provincial tenor”), but within the community of their followers and the shadow community of their intended victims, their histrionics had to be taken entirely seriously. Trump, on the other hand, retains all his self-aware absurdity even while creating a political persona of immense consequence.”

Democratic Club of Delray Beach Officers and Directors

Michael Cantwell, President; Char Lane, Vice-President; Mary Fader, Secretary; David Kulick, Treasurer; Robert Averack, Parliamentarian; Peter Camacho, Charlie Holbrook, June Neal, Directors; Sandra Elaisse-Cantwell, Director Emerita; and John Ramos, Director Emeritus.

Thank Joe Biden

The American Rescue Plan Act begins the recovery from the Trump Depression:

- Local governments provided \$360 billion to keep front line public workers on the job and paid.
- Expanded and extended unemployment payments protect workers until the economy reopens.
- Over 200 million Americans are vaccinated against COVID in first 100 days, thanks to \$160 billion funding for supplies and vaccines.
- Investments in Affordable Care Act allowed more than 18 million Americans to obtain health insurance, savings tens of thousands from premature, preventable deaths.
- Increased and expanded Child Tax Credit cut child poverty by 35% in 2021.
- Helped create more jobs (6.7 million) during the first year of any presidency.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act passes with 17 Republican senators voting in favor. Florida's senators vote against the bill, although they and our governor are happy to take credit for the money and services it provides.

- The largest investment in infrastructure in over a decade.
- The largest investment in clean drinking water and wastewater infrastructure in U.S. history.
- The largest investment in clean energy transmission and EV infrastructure in U.S. history.
- The largest investment in public transit in nearly six decades.
- The largest investment in bridges since the construction of the interstate highway system.
- More than 40,000 projects already off the ground.

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act is the first gun safety legislation in nearly three decades.

The PACT Act is the biggest expansion of veterans' benefits in over three decades. The Act has already sparked \$200 billion in private investments in the United States.

The Inflation Reduction Act is the greatest investment in green energy in U.S. history. It reduces the deficit by authorizing Medicare to negotiate with drug companies, closing tax loopholes, and providing \$80 billion to the IRS for additional tax enforcement.

The CHIPS Act invests in microchip production to make America more competitive with China and reduce our reliance on foreign sources for a vital component used by the defense industry. The Act has already sparked \$200 billion in private investments in the United States.

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Editorial Board: Michael K. Cantwell (Editor), Char Lane (Managing Editor), Sandra Elaisse-Cantwell, David Kulick, and June Neal.

2024 Membership

Char Lane

It's March 2024 and the Primaries are in August and November's General Election is only eight months away. It's time for some serious work to elect Democrats to save our democracy.

If you haven't already done so, it's time to renew your DCDB membership for 2024. Membership is on a calendar year basis and your dues help provide funding for operational projects, such as *The Delray Democrat*, our meetings, other operational supplies, and signage for our sign waving events. Meetings are at 7 PM on the third Thursday of each month at the Palm Beach County Democratic Party office, located in the Congress Office Park, 220 Congress Park Drive, Suite 140, in Delray Beach. Our meetings are hybrid so you can also join via zoom. Meeting notices are sent out in the weeks before the meetings, and include Zoom links to register for and/or join the meetings and links to our various websites.

Our goal is to educate people as to the importance of voting, why they should vote Democratic and why they should use Vote-by-Mail as a critical tool in support of this goal. With all that's been going on we'll have to work exceptionally hard to help keep our democracy intact and protect it from being decimated by Trump and his cohorts.

Getting out the vote is our most important mission. You can help by making phone calls, texting, writing postcards, canvassing, or becoming a precinct leader. You can register people to vote and help people sign up or reenroll to vote by mail. You can volunteer for projects to benefit the community. There's so much work to do between now and November 2024 and we'll need your help.

If you're a member of the Democratic Club of Delray Beach and haven't already done so, please renew your membership for 2024. If you're not a member of the Club, please consider joining.

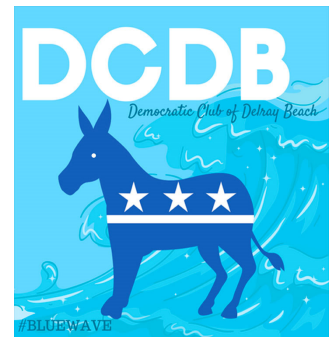
Please visit us at www.demclubofdelray.org. Read our monthly publication *The Delray Democrat* at www.thedelraydemocrat.com.

Visit us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/992741928168620>.

Become a member of the DCDB: complete and mail the Membership application or click on the QR code below. You can also give me your membership application/renewal at our meetings.



Democratic Club of Delray Beach 2024 Membership Application and Renewal



Date _____ New _____ Renewal _____
Name/names of household members _____
Address _____
E-mail Address _____ Phone number _____

(E-mail addresses are shared with the Palm Beach County Democratic Party so our members will be kept abreast of the latest County Democratic Activity. If you do not wish to receive this information, please initial here _____ and we will not share your E-mail address.)

Preferred method of contact: E-mail _____ Mail _____ Phone _____ Text _____

Send newsletter by: E-mail _____ Hand delivery _____ U.S. Mail _____

I/we are in South Florida from _____ to _____ each year or are a permanent resident _____.

Payment: Individual \$25 _____ Household \$35 _____ Donation _____

Please make checks payable to Democratic Club of Delray Beach and mail to P.O. Box 8224, Delray Beach, FL 33484. Thank you and welcome to our Club.