

The Delray Democrat

Remembering Barry Silver¹

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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.

¹ [The Delray Democrat](#), April 2024, page 3.

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.