

WASHINGTON DATELINE

BY TRUDE B. FELDMAN
ISRAELITE's White House Correspondent

Betty Ford at A.J.C.

First Lady Betty Ford delighted a group of friends and officers of the American Jewish Congress with her natural charm and grace at ceremonies last week marking the dedication of the Martin Steinberg Center, New York's newest Jewish cultural institution.

A highlight of the garden ceremony at American Jewish Congress National headquarters was the affixing of a Mezuzzah to the doorport by A.J.C.'s President, Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, and the presentation by him to Mrs. Ford of a silver Mezuzzah for the White House.

"Let this Mezuzzah, which is fixed to the lintel of every Jewish home in America and wherever there are Jews, be part of your home, too," Dr. Hertzberg said. "It represents all that is most authentically Jewish -- and hence authentically American -- in us, and we give it to you in friendship, in admiration and in love."

After thanking Rabbi Hertzberg for the gift, Betty Ford unveiled a plaque, and spoke of the purposes of the Martin Steinberg Center, which will serve as a gathering place for young Jewish artists, writers, musicians and filmmakers.

"The dedication of the Jewish people throughout the centuries to the creative arts has enlivened the music, literature and theatre of many lands," Mrs. Ford said in her remarks. "Many American artists have been nurtured by the Jewish heritage. This influence has contributed to the diversity of our culture."

She added that because the Martin Steinberg Center will "help keep alive the legacy of Jewish creativity, I'm pleased to share in the ancient ceremony of blessing the Mezuzzah which symbolizes your faith. I know this center will help continue the lively history of Jewish cultural contributions, which bring so much joy to so many."

Funds for the new center, which includes a music library and listening booths, a circulating and reference library, a screening room for film presentations, and exhibition space for work by Jewish artists and sculptors, were provided by a gift from Martin Steinberg, a Brooklyn



BETTY (Soalt Photo)

realtor and investor. Steinberg, a longtime supporter of the Congress, is the husband of Lillian Steinberg, an active leader of the organization who served as president of its national women's division from 1962 to 1965.

There was a poignant note to the ceremony. Martin Steinberg was not able to attend because of illness and his wife was at his bedside. Rabbi Hertzberg told the assemblage of two hundred: "From the gifts of Martin and Lillian Steinberg we have taken encouragement and inspiration and we have built living institutions where young people may gather to read, to paint, to sing -- to bring out the best in themselves as citizens and as Jews. It is a noble and beautiful work that the Steinbergs have undertaken. Our joy in this occasion is marred only by their absence."

Howard Squadron, a senior vice president of the Congress, conducted Mrs. Ford on a tour of the center, which includes the Charles and Bertie Schwartz Jewish Reading Room and Library and The Bernard L. Madoff Jewish Music Library, as well as a screening room for film viewing.

At the dedication the screening room presented 'A People Reborn,' a film about Israel narrated by the Rev. Billy Zeoli, a close friend of President and Mrs. Ford. The First Lady told Julius Schatz, the A.J.C. film man, that the President would be especially pleased.

JEWISH LEADER SUCCUMBS AT JNF FETE

NEW YORK (WNS) -- Dr. Maurice S. Sage, president of the Jewish National Fund, collapsed shortly after he introduced Mrs. Betty Ford, wife of the President, to some 2500 persons attending the JNF's Gala Bicentennial Dinner here.

The 59-year-old Zionist leader was pronounced dead at a hospital of a heart attack. The incident occurred near the end of the dinner in which Mrs. Ford was about to be presented with a silver Jerusalem Bible and a key to the JNF Bicentennial Park near Jerusalem. Mrs. Ford, visibly shaken and her voice trembling, led the audience in a prayer for Dr. Sage. The \$150 plate dinner launched the American Bicentennial Park near Jerusalem.

Moments before he collapsed, Dr. Sage told the audience that the \$6 million park

"which is the largest project endorsed by the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration in celebration of our nation's heritage, will be dedicated in Israel on the Fourth of July."

Earlier in the evening, Jacob Tzur, world president of JNF, said the Bicentennial Park "will remind every citizen of Jerusalem, every citizen of Israel, of the great democracy overseas, who taught us by its example how to stand guard over remote and difficult stretches of land, who inspired us in our pioneering tradition, who has stood by us in difficult times."

Dr. Sage, an internationally-known chemist, was JNF president for eight months and a former president of the Religious Zionists of America. He was active in many Jewish and Zionist organizations.

TEL AVIV (WNS) -- Likud leader Menachem Beigin, head of the party's Herut faction, is coming under growing pressure from Liberal and Free Center members of the opposition group to retire.

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