

**SDJA PRESIDENT, ROBERTO JINICH'S REMARKS FROM THE EVERY
CHILD CAMPAIGN PRESIDENTS' DINNER HONORING LARRY ACHEATEL
DECEMBER 6, 2009**

As the thirty year anniversary of San Diego Jewish Academy approached, I reflected on the significance of this milestone. What is it that we're really celebrating? We are immensely proud of our school, of our campus, of our teachers and of our students, but I think SDJA is much more than a school. SDJA is a vibrant, dynamic environment where our Jewish values and traditions are taught and transmitted to younger generations. It is a keystone of the larger Jewish community of San Diego, critical to its long term success and viability and, therefore, this celebration belongs to the community as a whole.

SDJA, through its mission of pluralism, welcomes and embraces families regardless of their Jewish religious affiliation. It opens its doors to diversity, enriching its faculty and student body by integrating families of varying origins and nationalities. I know this first hand: eleven years ago, when we moved to San Diego and enrolled our children at SDJA, the only thing we were expecting to receive was a Jewish education for them... we got so much more than we bargained for! We received a welcoming community that opened its doors and heart to us. We made friends; we gained a family.

SDJA is a place of Arts and Humanities, of Science and Mathematics, of Hebrew and Torah and Israel, SDJA is a place of values, of *Menschlichkeit* and *Tikkun Olam* but perhaps most important of all, the academy, as we lovingly refer to our school, is where future leaders of the Jewish community are formed.

Success doesn't happen spontaneously. We are able to celebrate this important milestone because of the hard work and immense generosity of many individuals before us. We are honored by the company of

some past Board Presidents on whose shoulders we stand today. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do for our school. We will persist down the path that you set out; we will carry on with your work and build a stronger SDJA. We are fortunate to have an outstanding faculty and staff alongside passionate and hard working parents and volunteers, so I have absolutely no doubt that our shared success will continue to grow and flourish.

But tonight, we recognize the vision, leadership, example, effort and generosity of one person above all. His hard work and unconditional commitment to SDJA during the past ten years has not only been inspiring, but also crucial to our success: That person is, Larry Acheatel. I could repeat many of the well deserved accolades mentioned before, or go through a list of Larry's achievements as an educator and a leader, but instead, as is fitting for the celebration of a Jewish day school, I will turn to our Teachings to describe what Larry means for our community.

The first verse of the first chapter of *Pirkei Avot* says: "Moses received the Torah from Sinai and gave it over to Joshua. Joshua gave it over to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets gave it over to the Men of the Great Assembly. They, the Men of the Great Assembly, would always say these three things: Be cautious in judgment. Establish many pupils. And make a safety fence around the Torah."

Apply the broadest definition of Torah to mean not only the five books of Moses but also, instruction, teachings, traditions ... and the relevance of this verse becomes even more significant - it describes action. Moses transmits the Torah to Joshua and Joshua receives it first, and then transmits it himself down the line. Teachers transmit; students receive- and then become teachers themselves. Larry's actions have helped build much more than a school. He has served as a critical link

in a chain that spans hundreds of generations; he has continued what was started by Moses and Joshua thousands of years ago.

Larry, you have strengthened SDJA, and by doing so, you have been true to the words of the Men of the Great Assembly... “Establish many pupils. Make a safety fence around the Torah”. Larry, when 600 children gather in a brand new gym, wear your mustache and thank you in unison, you must be doing something right!!

Larry: accept this Menorah as a symbol of gratitude from the entire past, present and future SDJA family. When you go home tonight, put it in a special place and when you see it: remember this moment, reflect on the significance of your work, think of the hundreds of young lives you have touched and of the future Jewish leaders you have helped form and inspire. Think of the fire you have kept burning for the next generations. Be proud of yourself as we all are proud of you! Let me add my own personal voice to the voices of our 600 children when I say: Thank you Mr. Acheatel.