

Visiting Professor Program – Named Lectureships



Max & Molly Ochs Fischer

Max Fischer was born September 10, 1910, in the village of Bobryk in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, into a well-to-do, commercially prominent family with an extensive leather business which stretched from Berlin to Kiev (Ukraine). The family was forced to flee from the area around Fortress Lemberg during the first Russian offensive in October, 1914. The family walked approximately 500 miles, finally arriving in Hamburg, then Amsterdam, arriving in the United States on February 15, 1915, on the liner Nieuw Amsterdam. Following the traditional route to the lower East Side of New York City, the family quickly reestablished itself in the ancestral business. He attended the City College of New York, finishing three years, but had to leave school because of the Depression and to help support the family. The ancestral business – fat rendering, leather, and hides – flourished during the next 30 years until the advent of petroleum-based detergents caused the family to sell the business and transpose the assets into real estate, which again was successful. He was a leader in his community, very philanthropically inclined, and received many community honors. He and his wife relocated to Jerusalem, Israel in 1980. There he continued his scholarly pursuits as well as his philanthropic activities, and continued to run the various family businesses until his death at the age of 90 on April 4, 2000.

In 1935, Mr. Fischer married Molly Ochs, whose family had emigrated to the United States in 1890. She attended Hunter College in New York, but again had to leave college in order to go to work and help support her family. She served as a volunteer in her community, especially in organizations which were dedicated to the help of the less fortunate. After moving to Jerusalem in 1980, she quickly re-established herself in the community there and was honored with Mr. Fischer by several philanthropic organizations. She died of chronic illness in 1994.

Mr. & Mrs. Fischer had three sons – Josef; Harvey, who is an operations research engineer for the City of New York, supervising construction; and Saul, an academic and well-known academic historical sociologist, who lives in Jerusalem. There are seven grandchildren.