

Fund Established in Memory of Cherished Son

The memory of a fallen soldier from the Vietnam era is kept alive almost 50 years later.

When the inconceivable happens in war time, survivors struggle with how to honor and keep alive the memory of their lost loved ones.

Over time, photos fade away, but the pain of loss has a half-life that never seems to dissipate fully.



Temple members Louis and Ethel Kanter (both deceased) lost their beloved only child Edward Lee Kanter ("Eddie"), to the Vietnam War in August of 1969. He was three months away from his 22nd birthday.

Temple member Bob Kanter, Eddie's uncle and Lou's brother, remembers that "Eddie was a sweet, friendly kid."

Eddie and his cousin, Howard Schwartz, grew up together, hanging out at Coney Island, where Eddie's father managed operations at the amusement park. Howard smiles at the memory. "We would play skee-ball and water gun games for hours. Eddie's Bar Mitzvah party was there."

A graduate of Wise Temple religious school and Woodward High School, Eddie spent three years at University of Cincinnati before settling into a training

program at the First National Bank. He was looking forward to his career when he was drafted into the Army.

Eddie's Army job became his nickname, a common practice among the troops. He was the "Mailman," a well-loved and friendly visitor bringing news from home to the soldiers. A helicopter would drop him into landing zones (clearings carved out of the jungle where U.S. forces were lodged and often surrounded by the enemy). He delivered mail to the soldiers and then moved on to the next drop. However, on the evening of August 10, 1969, it was decided that he would stay the night at "LZ Becky" on guard duty. Sometime after midnight, a Vietcong soldier managed to slip inside the perimeter and toss an explosive into Eddie's bunker, killing him.

The Vietnam War left many scars upon those who lived through it. Bob and Howard recall with painful clarity the devastation visited upon Eddie's parents. Lou and Ethel turned to Wise Temple for solace and comfort.

They also turned to Wise Temple as a way to keep Eddie's memory alive. Of all the places they could have chosen to remember their son, they were drawn to Wise Temple – their second family, their support. Lou and Ethel first donated a meditative fountain as a testament to Eddie's heroism. Later it was replaced by the large backlit photos of Plum Street Temple in the Wise Center lobby. Eighteen unique photos of Plum Street are rotated every other month to provide striking views of our historic synagogue.

But their generosity didn't stop there. They established a fund in Eddie's name and left their entire estate to this fund upon their deaths – a gift that will provide a generous annual sum to this Temple community in perpetuity – all in the name of their son who was their whole world.

This fund, called the Edward Kanter Fund for Innovation, allows the Temple to fund new endeavors and creative ideas. Once a project has been established, or after a maximum of 3 years, the fund is used for a new innovation. This allows the Temple to try ideas it wouldn't otherwise be able to fund. Most recently, the GPS (Gifts, Passions, and Skills) database was made possible in part by Eddie's fund (see page 7). This innovative tool helps engage congregants in Temple life, something that was so important to Lou and Ethel.

Eddie's life will always be remembered in this congregation, just as Lou and Ethel wanted. Bob notes that Lou and Ethel would be proud of the impact this fund will have on members of this congregation – now and for years and years to come.

