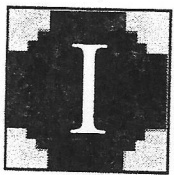


## Dr. Allan Hurst and wife Leona R. Hurst and the NMJHS

by Leona R. Hurst



In 1939, Allan Hurst became Dr. Allan Hurst. His education, in the specialty of chest and allergy, had been completed. Allan decided not to go into private practice, but to work for the New York Public Health Services as the Assistant Head of Contagious Diseases.

At that time, tuberculosis was rampant and highly contagious. There was no cure for it, no protection with shots, no sulfa or penicillin drugs; just the same treatments of rest, sunshine and isolation.

When we entered World War II in 1941, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Allan tried to enlist. The New York Tuberculosis Control would not release him – he was too important to our country as a tuberculosis specialist.

In 1950, Allan was invited by the Israeli government to speak on the control of tuberculosis in their country. At the end of his two-week stay, and because of his exceptional talent in this field, the Israeli government offered him a permanent position in Israel. He refused, with thanks, and returned to the United States to his former job in New York City.

Soon after that, he received, and accepted, an offer from the National Jewish Hospital in Denver, CO., to be the Medical Director of the hospital. He remained there for ten years before he went into private practice.

Before we knew it, his retirement was fast approaching and we had to decide where we would spend our retirement years. We had a home in Denver and a wonderful summer cabin in the mountains near Denver. This summer cabin was an important part of our lifestyle. Our little cabin, with its evergreens, wonderful climate, clean air, no television, primitive in a modern way, (it had plumbing) was a delight.

Allan Hurst was a transplanted New Yorker when Florida called to him. We went to Florida for two winters and decided it just was not our style. Okay, now where? I casually said "How about Santa Fe, New Mexico?" He looked at me and said, "Great, all I really need is a book to read and a place in the sun."

We returned to Denver, then visited Santa Fe for a week, where we found a lot in an area of new homes. "Quick decision" Hurst made

changes in the house plans, put the deposit down and gave me forty minutes to choose colors, plumbing and kitchen fixtures, tiles, etc., so we could be on our way. The house was to be "move-in ready" by March 4th of the following year. We returned to Florida where we decided what we wanted to take back with us, what to give away and to do all the other chores one must do to move to a new home and a new state. When our Santa Fe realtor told us that our house would be finished on time, we left Florida for Santa Fe.

While driving to Santa Fe, we talked about many things, including facts, philosophy and feelings, when it occurred to me that we didn't know if there was a Jewish community in Santa Fe. We hadn't a clue, but shortly after moving into our new home, we found, yes, there was a thriving Jewish community!

We joined Temple Beth Shalom, when Allan decided he wanted to give consultations to older people. He could not do this, however, without a New Mexico medical license. No problem! He attended classes, passed the necessary tests and received his New Mexico medical license.

A group of eleven dedicated, bright, interested people, which included Rabbi Leonard Helman, Manny Rodriguez, Dr. Allan Hurst, Stanley Hordes, Ralph Thaler, Walter Kahn, David Scholder, Peter Hess, Jerry Wertheim, Jim Mafschir and Leah Kellogg, met at Temple Beth Shalom, when Allan suggested there was a need for a New Mexico Jewish Historical Society. The group readily and quickly agreed.

Allan, who had been one of the founders and the first president of the Rocky Mountain Jewish Historical Society in Denver, led the group in what needed to be done, i.e., mission statement, committee boards, programs, etc., to get the organization going.

The first program was at the Hall of St. John's College, with two wonderful and vital speakers:

our own Stan Hordes and Rabbi Friedman, of Dallas, TX. When we walked into the Hall, we were absolutely and happily stunned. We expected a small attendance, but the place was packed, excitement filled the atmosphere and our first program was a great success. What a wonderful beginning!



*Leona R. Hurst. Photo by Harold Melnick*

The Second Annual Dinner Meeting was at our home, where I had a committee consisting of Paula Wolf, Lee Levin and Claire Grossman. This began a tradition and annual dinners were held at our home for several years.

I agreed to "do" the Annual Archives Meeting, held at the old New Mexico Archives Building in Santa Fe, for a number of years. I arranged to set up refreshments and to be the "hostess".

Then my husband's health began to fail and neither of us could do what we previously had done for the society. After I died in 1989, I attended a few meetings and one special meeting, Stan announced that the Board had voted to ask me to become a board member, replacing Allan. I thanked him and said, "I could not replace Allan, but would be happy to be on the board and make my own place". I came up with the idea of giving an annual award to someone deserving, for hard work of any kind and who helped our society, city and state. After much discussion, the decision was made to give the award. I took care of getting the award and was part of a committee to choose the recipient. I also suggested that we have our own pin, with our then logo, which was designed by Irma Thalís. This, too, was accepted by the Board.

When the time came to give our annual award, the Board realized the award had no name. After much discussion, nothing seemed right until Stan Hordes said, "The name of this award should be the Dr. Allan Hurst Award".

I am glad to be on the Board again: there has been a hiatus of a number of years since I last attended a meeting and I look forward to being, once again, a part of this wonderful group and meet our new and younger members.