

Ursula Sherman

Founding Member of BOSS & Lifelong Civil Rights Activist



Ursula was one of the founding members of BOSS, and was an active Board member for nearly 30 years. She was honored by the City of Berkeley as an "Outstanding Berkeley Woman" of 2000 among other honors over the years.

Ursula came to California in 1938 after her family spent 5 years in Paris as refugees from Nazi Germany. She learned the importance of volunteerism at the University of Wisconsin and during her year as a researcher at the Nuremberg trials, where she fully grasped the concept that "There but for the grace of God go I" (or any person targeted by the powers that be).

Ursula became an advocate for youth as a children's librarian and UC visiting lecturer. She worked hard at integrating Berkeley Schools in the late sixties. She and members of the Jewish Community organized the Hillel Streetwork project (later to become Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency, or BOSS). Thus a Jewish component was added to the existing church organizations that served the homeless mentally disabled population of the early seventies.

Ten years later, the same group created the Berkeley Richmond Jewish Community Center as a secular community organization. The Jewish Music Festival was also founded and thrived under Ursula's chairmanship. With the support of many volunteers and some staff, it now attracts up to 4,000 people during an As a Board member and past president of A Traveling Jewish Theater, she also helped create a gem of a little theater in San Francisco and was a Board member of the American Jewish Congress of Northern California. She was a member of the Berkeley Public Library Foundation which raised over \$3 million dollars for a safer and larger library.

Ursula was always a strong voice for the human and civil rights of the homeless, poor, and disenfranchised in Berkeley and beyond.



*I am a firm believer in the power of volunteers
to change the world, given patience,
perseverance, and time.*