

## SPOTLIGHT

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Coverage by  
Devorah Klein

## Torah Academy of Minneapolis Celebrates 75th Anniversary: Alumni Share Recollections



Rabbi Chaim Ginzberg, zt"l, circa 1945, Rav of Congregation Ahavas Achim.



At the wedding of Reb Yaacov Goldfein, z"l, who served as a *marbitz Torah* in Memphis for many years. The wedding was held in 1960 at the Telshe Yeshivah in Cleveland. Seated (R-L): Mr. Ben Goldfein, Reb Yaacov, Reb Manny Lapp (father of the *kallah*), and Mr. Simon Gandel, grandfather of the *kallah*. Standing: Reb Avrohom Tanzer, later a *Rosh Yeshivah* in Johannesburg.

Torah Academy of Minneapolis, the first Jewish day school to be established west of the Mississippi River, is celebrating its 75th anniversary. Founded in 1945, just one year after the founding of Torah Umesorah in 1944, Torah Academy was one of the first day schools to be established under the auspices of that organization. Since that date, Torah Academy has been *mechanech* hundreds of *talmidim* and *talmidos* in the Minneapolis community, guiding them to a life dedicated to Torah and *shemiras hamitzvos*.

In honor of this auspicious occasion, *Hamodia* spoke to two early students of Torah Academy, who were happy to share their warm memories of this *mosad* that had a major impact on their lives.

### Recollections of Mrs. Baila Stern, Wife of Harav Meir Stern, *Shlita*, *Rosh Yeshivah* of Yeshiva Gedola of Passaic

My father, Rabbi Chaim Ginzberg, zt"l, was Rav of Congregation Ahavas Achim in Minneapolis, and a scion of the family of Harav Mordechai of Nadvorna, zy"l. My older sister was attending public school, and one day she came home from school, all excited, and told our parents, "Today is the happiest day of my life," as she had been chosen to play a main role in the school holiday play in December.

My parents, of course, were aghast. My mother wrote a very polite and respectful letter to the principal, stating that my sister could not take part in the play. The next day in school, the teacher grabbed my sister by the shoulder, brought her to the principal, and proclaimed, "It is people like her parents that start the

wars in the world!"

My sister was traumatized, and vividly recalls the incident to this day. She still tells me, "You did not have to go through what I went through, because you went to Torah Academy."

After that terribly disturbing episode, my father knew he had to take action. I was two years younger than my sister and had not yet started school. My father had heard that Torah Umesorah had been founded and had advertised that they would help communities open day schools. Wanting to ensure that I would not go through what my sister was enduring, he wrote to Torah Umesorah for assistance.

And so, Torah Academy of Minneapolis was founded with a kindergarten and first grade for the following school year. The first principal was Rabbi Sholom Himmel, z"l. For the first few years, the school struggled greatly, both financially, and academically, as the principals and teachers kept changing. After a few years, the Telshe Yeshivah in Cleveland began sending *bachurim* to teach in the school, which provided them with experience in *chinuch*.

I greatly enjoyed going to school at Torah Academy. I remember the playground on Logan Avenue and the station wagon with the wooden panels on the sides that picked us up every day to bring us to school. Over and above everything else, I enjoyed the warmth and friendliness of the teachers.



Shevach Goldfein (L) and his cousin Benjie Sannel during their years at the Torah Academy of Minneapolis.