

# Women Business 2018



A special advertising section of the Jewish Light



70

years of  
service

Seventy years ago, as the nation of Israel was being born, the Jewish Federation of St. Louis was creating an entity that has proved crucial to the promotion of Jewish life in St. Louis: the Women's Division.

Now known as Women's Philanthropy, the Women's Division would change names a few times and evolve through the next seven decades, but the overarching goal has been the same: to connect community and inspire social good. They accomplish this by providing an opportunity for women to connect with each other while learn-

ing about and supporting the needs of the Jewish communities in St. Louis, Israel, and around the world.

The women who gathered in 1948 were, by and large, traditional wives and mothers living in post-WWII America, and the group they created reflected that. The women met during the day when their husbands were at work and their children in school. Meetings were a dress-up occasion, women came in their suits and hats.

They made a difference beyond raising money. In the 1950s, the division undertook a vast "Jewish Historical Project." In this project, they set out to collect biographical data of all the Jewish families in St. Louis, a vital part of their mandate to provide and maintain information about the community.

The division grew quickly and their undertakings grew as well, in various ways. During a nursing strike in the 1960s, they helped out at a Jewish home for the aged, and they brought Betty Friedan to town to talk about her feminist manifesto, "The Feminine Mystique."

As the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary neared, many of the Women's Division members realized they needed to create a new division for the many women who were now working outside of the home. Thus began the very successful Business and Professional Women's Division group. Meetings for this group were held in the evenings instead of mornings when the original Women's Division met. Different programming was established to satisfy the needs and interests of each group.

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Women's Division and the Business and Professional Women's Division were combined to

create Women's Connection so that they could work together to achieve philanthropic goals and leadership roles as one group.

In 2011, Women's Connection became Women's Philanthropy to reflect the impact of women's giving and leadership in the Jewish community. They continue to work in the areas of community engagement, education, leadership, community service, and development. Women's Philanthropy engages more than 1,000 women annually.

In 2015, Women's Philanthropy launched a new fundraising event, L'Chaim! The event grew from its initial attendance of 600 to more than 800 women in 2018. This past November, more than half a million dollars was raised toward the Annual Campaign in that single night.

For more than 70 years, Women's Philanthropy has grown and evolved, and its impact on Federation has grown as well.

