



Joel Fink

January 22, 1943 - March 24, 2024

Joel Fink, 81, died in Saco, Maine on March 24, 2024 after a long illness. A resident of Hamilton, Ohio, for three decades before moving to nearby Oxford and then to Maine, he was an educator, philanthropist, and self-effacing man of integrity. Born Jan. 22, 1943, in Boston, Massachusetts, the son of Blanche and Ralph Fink, he grew up in Dorchester and Milton. As a boy he played baseball in the streets and was a diligent pupil at Hebrew school. Educated at Boston University and Harvard University, with a Ph.D. in philosophy, he was an assistant professor of education at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan in the 1970s. He then worked in several education positions, including as assistant superintendent at the Ross Local School District in Ohio, where he served for 9 years. Joel was known for his probing mind and sharp intellect. After retirement in 2002 he became a grant-writer, volunteer, and board member for local charities, including the Hamilton Community Foundation and Butler County United Way. He helped redevelop the Crawford Woods Arboretum and was on the boards of the Butler County Regional Transit Authority, the Great Miami Rowing Center, Hamilton Vision Commission, SELF (Supports to Encourage Low-Income Families), Greenwood Cemetery, and the Hamilton Tree Board. He was the 2008 recipient of the Janet Clemmons Award for his work with SELF. In 2014 he received the Hamilton Heritage Award for Outstanding Community Involvement from the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce. He was described in these ceremonies as someone who was "perceptive, committed, (and)

passionate.” Joel loved running. One of his proudest achievements was completing the Detroit Free Press Marathon. He often ran, cycled and walked. He loved the ocean and the outdoors. He could play piano by ear. He was a lifelong fan of the Boston Red Sox, and as a young man once owned a Studebaker he called Herman. He visited every state in the U.S., and he and his wife, Doris Bergen, went as far as New Zealand and Indonesia in their world travels. Doris, his beloved wife of 39 years, preceded him in death in 2023. He had three stepdaughters, Ellen Creager (Chris Mengel) of Grosse Pointe Woods, MI; Holly Andrecheck (Ray) of Chicago; and Gail Burnett of Sandy Springs, GA. He also had 7 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren, whom he visited on many trips around the country. He also leaves behind a much-loved brother, Alan Fink (Elaine) of Saco, ME, nephews Jeremy Fink of Portland, ME, Daniel Fink of Bedford, NH, and Stephen Fink of Belmont, MA, plus 1 great-niece and 6 great-nephews. Per his request, there is no funeral. He was interred at Greenwood Cemetery in Hamilton. Donations in his memory may be made to the Hamilton Community Foundation (www.hamiltonfoundation.org.) Online condolences are available at www.weigelfuneralhome.com

Cemetery Details

Greenwood Cemetery

1602 Greenwood Avenue
Hamilton, OH 45011
<http://www.greenwoodcemeteryhamilton.com/>

Tribute Wall

GB

“ Joel was my mentor at Temple Israel Hebrew School in Sharon, MA. He was a wonderful teacher and taught me how to doven. I succeeded him, through his great tutelage, in teaching others and running Junior Congregation services in my teens. I remember "Herman" the Studebaker vividly, as he would come to my house in that car to tutor my brother in Hebrew. How cool was that to have my mentor come to my home! Later, he encouraged me to apply to Yeshiva University in NYC to pursue Rabbinic studies. I didn't, but will always remember and value his advice. He was a kind, gentle and soft spoken man and left a lasting influence on me. He will be missed.

Gary Blumenthal, Sharon, MA

Gary Blumenthal - July 17, 2024 at 09:21 AM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Joel Fink.



April 20, 2024 at 09:23 PM

FB

“ From Mark Brown planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joel Fink.

From Mark Brown - April 20, 2024 at 09:23 PM

GB

“ We miss you Joel so very much. Love, Gail, Connor, Leah



Gail Burnett - April 17, 2024 at 09:00 PM

DD

“ Joel always wanted to know more. He was an interesting person, but he was always more interested in the experiences of others. I miss our conversations.

Darrel Davis - March 28, 2024 at 09:39 AM

AN

“ I consider myself fortunate to have crossed paths with Joel. He was kind, insightful, and loyal. His dedication to his community and compassion for others were always evident. My family and I will always think of him fondly....Joel, you will be missed!

Amity Noltemeyer - March 27, 2024 at 09:50 PM

DR

“ Joel was Assistant Superintendent at Ross when I was hired in 1996. What a supportive and caring person. He was passionate about education and valued art education every bit as much as any academic subject. I can remember him "guarding" the door at my band concerts and not letting people to come in during the middle of a song. He demanded respect for the music and the students. He had a huge impact on many here at Ross Local Schools. Thank you for your focused leadership Dr. Fink!

Dick Roemer

Dick Roemer - March 27, 2024 at 11:36 AM

KF

“ I was so blessed that my classroom was right next door to Dr. Fink's office at Ross. He would pop over just to see what we were working on, even though he had a million things to do. At one point, Joel was the interim Superintendent, assistant Superintendent, and Director of Curriculum for Ross, all roles served concurrently. I remember his retirement in the middle school gym. That was the largest place available at the time. I got together to lunch with him about 10 years after he retired. He picked my brain about his work in Hamilton. I picked his about teaching and the direction of education. He was the best and most influential adult I've had during my long career. His memory lives on (or should I say flies by at warp speed) in many teachers and now-grown students. Thank you for your time, service, and love, Joel!

Kris Fitz - March 26, 2024 at 11:34 PM

DH

I will remember Joel with great affection. He enriched my life with brilliant insight, laughter, rich conversation, and friendship. His help adjusting to Michigan when I arrived at Oakland University nearly a half-century ago enabled me to pursue a rewarding career. He was an exemplar of decency and empathy. His character was nonpareil. Of my many fine colleagues over the years, I was most fond of Joel. My memories of him bring a measure of comfort in his absence.

David Harris - March 28, 2024 at 12:58 PM