

A LEGACY OF LOVE

Kitty Jacobs carries on
her late husband's community spirit

By Julie E. Bloemeke

In 1991, Kitty Jacobs unexpectedly lost her husband of nearly 40 years. Harris Jacobs had been a lawyer, past president of the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta (MJCCA), and an influential member of the Atlanta Jewish community. Kitty Jacobs immediately knew that she wanted to honor his memory through events that carried on in his name.

"He was so beloved," the 86-year old said of her late husband. "He was a go-getter and he cared about everyone and everything. He was so caring and so giving." And, with a twinkle in her eye she added, "He was so good looking."

Putting together the Harris Jacobs Dream Run and the Harris Jacobs Softball League, both in their 25th year, were two of the ways that she coped with her grief.

This year will mark the 25th anniversary of the race, and Jacobs is already wildly enthusiastic about her role.

On Sunday, May 6, runners will gather for the 5-kilometer road race and walk that follows a certified and family-friendly course through Dunwoody neighborhoods.

Jacobs will give a short welcome speech, shoot the starting gun, cheer on runners and visit sponsor tables to offer her gratitude. She also will make the rounds to thank volunteers, many of whom have served since the inception of the race, and who have been "just remarkable" in their dedication and service.

As this is the 25th year for the race, Jacobs also has something special in mind. "My daughter wants us all [the whole family] to participate, so they will probably push me in my wheelchair for about a mile," Jacobs said.

This year's proceeds from the race will benefit the MJCCA's Blonder Family Department for Special Needs, an organization known for specialized programs geared toward fostering independence and community for those with disabilities. It is an organization Jacobs believes in, and she said, "We are so grateful to have the opportunity to help in some way."



PHOTOS BY JULIE E. BLOEMEKE

Kitty Jacobs proudly shares the wedding photo of her and Harris, 1952.



A treasured photo of
Harris Jacobs.

But the race is not Jacobs' only focus. After a bout of breast cancer at 38, and a reoccurrence later in her hip socket, Jacobs became a long-time volunteer for Reach to Recovery for the American Cancer Society. She was known for lending compassionate support to those who have struggled with a cancer diagnosis.

Jacobs shared the way she got through both illnesses: "You have to have a sense of humor. That's what's gotten me through a lot. Attitude played a big part."

Though these days her support is more of an independent mission, she frequently makes phone calls and occasional visits to cancer patients to offer advice. "[People need to know] cancer is not a death sentence," she said. "You have to fight it."

Even though she currently has shoulder trouble and copes with a condition that places pressure on the spinal column and surrounding nerves, she believes strongly in continuing to be of service.

I've lived through two bouts of cancer, blood clots in both lungs, heart surgery," Jacobs said. "God spared me so I could help people. I'm convinced."

HARRIS JACOBS DREAM RUN

- The 5K Road Race and Walk is set for Sunday, May 6, starting at 8 a.m.

- The race begins and ends at the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta Zaban Park campus, 5342 Tilly Mill Road, Dunwoody, 30338. The course is also a 2019 Peachtree Road Race qualifier.

- Cost is \$30 for adults, \$35 on race day.

- For more details, visit atlantajcc.org/HJDR, or contact Pam Morton at 678-812-3981 or pam.morton@atlantajcc.org.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MJCCA
Harris Jacobs Dream Run.

SENIOR DAY AT MJCCA FEEDS MIND, BODY AND SOUL

Older adults aged 60 and up are invited to participate in Senior Day on Monday, May 14, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta (MJCCA). The program is presented by MJCCA in partnership with Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta, Jewish Family & Career Services and Jewish Homelife Communities.

"We have an exciting day planned with a wide selection of activities so local seniors can spend a meaningful afternoon learning new skills, exercising their minds and bodies and spending time with friends—old and new," said Earl Finley, Active Mature Adults Coordinator.

Participants may choose three activities from a list that includes cooking, art, exercise, Israeli Folk Dancing, a sample Lisa F. Brill Institute for Jewish Learning class and more. The registration fee of \$5 includes a kosher meat or vegetarian lunch. For details and to register, call Earl Finley at 678-812-4070 or visit online at atlantajcc.org/seniorday.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MJCCA
MJCCA Seniors participate in cooking class at its Kuniansky Family Center.