**Lily Peyser**

**2018**

**Receiving Honorary Degree from Tel Aviv University**

Lily Peyser-Resin

Lily Peyser was born in Paris in 1939, a few months before the outbreak of World War II. Her father Emmanuel Racine who worked in the oil industry, was drafted to the French army where he served for some time.

Upon the Nazi conquest of Paris, the family fled southwards and Lily’s parents joined the Jewish underground, forging documents and smugglings Jewish children over the Swiss border. Her sister Daniella was born in Switzerland as the war drew to a close.

After the war, the family returned to Paris, engaging in private business while developing a deep connection and loyalty to the Yishuv in the Land of Israel and its leadership.

Lily was inculcated with a love of Israel from an early age. Her parents spoke often about the Land of Israel and even visited it before and after the war. In their home in Paris, the family regularly hosted members of the Second Aliya and the leaders of the Yishuv.

After Israel was established as a state, the leadership of the Yishuv, wishing to limit Israel’s reliance on foreign oil companies, turned to Emmanuel Racine, requesting his assistance in establishing a local oil company in Israel.

In 1952, Lily’s family made Aliyah to Israel. They moved to Tel Aviv where Emmanuel Racine established Delek, serving as its executive director. Lily’s mother, Sarah Racine, diligently worked to raise money abroad for Israel and was active in many charity organizations. The basis of the family’s bond with Tel Aviv university had already been laid in the fifties.

In the mid-seventies, having retired from the directorship of Delek, Racine established the Foundation for Development and Progress, its goal to build educational and medical institutions in Israel. The foundation donated money to the construction of different buildings on Tel Aviv University’s campus, including the art gallery, the School of Mathematics, and its flagship project, the Sarah Racine Root Research Laboratory in the university’s botanical garden. Both Emmanuel and Sarah were dubbed honorary fellows of the university.

In the nineties, Lily Peyser and her sister Daniella Wexler took over management of the Foundation, Lily working to deepen its involvement and activities. She joined the activities of the Friends of Tel Aviv University Association was later appointed a member of the university’s board of trustees.

Over the years she continued to work and give: she continued support of many projects in the botanical garden, providing donations and financial aid scholarships (with the goal of creating equal opportunities and societal shrinking gaps in Israel), research grants, and recently a scholarship fund for doctoral students and for purchasing equipment for the medical school.

In addition, over the years, Lily and her husband Professor Reuben Peyser have hosted guests of the trustees from abroad for an enjoyable Sabbath night meal at their home—bringing all closer together.

The Lily and Reuben Peyser plaza at the entrance of the botanical garden is soon to be inaugurated—a sign of gratitude for their generous support of the university.

In addition to her activities within the university, Lily also is as an active member of the management board of Wizo. The foundation has also supported additional institutions such as the Medical Center in Tel Aviv as well as providing for the needy countrywide.

Lily is a mother of five, a grandmother of eight and the wife of Professor Reuben Peyser who has served as director of the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department at Tel Aviv Medical center and as part of the medical faculty.