

# Obituary: Patricia Rose Goldring – The Jewish Chronicle



The former Executive Director of the Jewish Deaf Association, Pat Goldring, who has died aged 86, worked at the very heart of the Jewish Deaf community in London for 29 years. Born Patricia Wakeman in Greenwich, the youngest of four siblings, she married Monty Goldring at Egerton Road Synagogue in Stamford Hill in 1959. In her 20s she worked for the former Moss Empires Group, a chain of music hall theatres, where she was responsible for booking such stars of the day as Frankie Vaughan, Danny La Rue and Sammy Davis Junior.

Her first contact with the Jewish Deaf community came in September 1970, when she was interviewed for the post of a “very, very part-time” assistant to Dora Margulies, JDA organising secretary, at its Stamford Hill headquarters.

Pat’s job grew as she came into increasing contact with JDA members and took on more welfare work on their behalf. She became friends with the members, exchanging stories about their lives and, while communication wasn’t such a problem, she decided to take a British Sign Language course at the London City Lit.

Following Dora Margulies’ retirement in 1983, Pat was appointed JDA Executive Director. Under her leadership, the organisation and its welfare work for the Deaf community went from strength to strength. JDA’s Friendship Club became a Day Centre, where members could enjoy a hot lunch and afternoon activities. During the 80s, JDA began to sponsor members’ participation in sporting events and educational projects. A BSL course was launched, attended by many, including Stoke Newington police officers. Pat’s work touched many people’s lives. She celebrated simchas with members and shed tears with them when they suffered bereavement.

Always looking for ways to improve JDA services, Pat saw that profoundly deaf and hard of hearing people have different needs and she decided that an advisory service was required. In March, 1992, the first Resource & Technology Centre opened, with guest of honour broadcaster Desmond Wilcox, the late husband of Esther Rantzen, who confessed that he himself had severe hearing loss. Many hard of hearing people and professional social workers visited the Centre, and staff were invited to take their portable equipment to give talks and demonstrations, which continue to this day. In June, 1998, JDA moved to its present, purpose-built Community Centre in Woodside Park. Here Pat's initiatives continue to flourish, with sign language classes joined by computer classes, lip-reading and discussion groups. The Technology Centre has expanded, with advice for people of all ages, faiths and all degrees of hearing loss.

Pat retired in 1999, aged 68, with JDA by now a successful and respected organisation. She could reflect on having substantially increased awareness and support services for the deaf community.

Never one to sit still, Pat joined a U3A (University of the Third Age) reminiscence group and became Secretary of a local JACS group. The family's world fell apart in March, 2011, however, just after Pat's 80th birthday, when her daughter Deborah was diagnosed with aggressive cancer and passed away in Israel. Following her husband Monty's death three years later, Pat moved into Jewish Blind & Disabled accommodation at Frances and Dick James Court in Mill Hill East, where she made many friends.

She passed away peacefully, with her younger daughter Gaynor and her niece Tracey by her side. One JDA member, upon receiving news of Pat's death, wrote to Gaynor: "I am the only deaf person in my family. I only knew hearing people. Pat was always so warm and welcoming to me, she gave me the courage and confidence to walk into the deaf world. Because of her I now thrive in it. There is always someone in one's life to give inspiration to others. Pat was one of them in my life." She is survived by her daughter Gaynor.

Patricia Goldring: born March 17, 1931. Died November 27, 2017