

A Tribute to Stephen Neuwirth

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Rabbi Hayyim Angel

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As my father has noted (at <https://www.jewishideas.org/article/stephen-neuwirth-memorial>), we deeply mourn the loss of our dear friend, Stephen Neuwirth.

I wanted to add a few reflections specifically about his critical role in our Institute and in promoting our ideas and ideals.

Stephen saw immense value in our goal of promoting Jewish unity without conformity. A broad grounding in authentic Jewish tradition embraces a wide variety of valid avenues and opinions, enabling Jews who disagree with one another to still respect and admire one another. He celebrated our efforts to promote this ideology in the broader community, and was pleased when Jews of many different backgrounds attended our classes and programs and shared ideas.

Stephen also espoused our core value of having a deep connection to humanity and its wisdom as a means of enhancing our connection to God, Torah, and society. Our university network is a particularly important vehicle to engage students all over the country and beyond with meaningful religious content.

Finally, at our Board meetings Stephen regularly challenged us to “break the plate.” He loved and supported our publications and programs, and concurrently demanded that we explore new horizons. Thanks to his prodding, we have significantly improved our ability to impact the community over the years.

Thanks to the singular support of Stephen and his beloved wife Nataly, we at the Institute have reached many thousands of people worldwide and have provided a positive model of Torah teaching and community building. We will miss him dearly as a friend, and as a true partner in our vision.