



Lowell Nigoff

LOWELL NIGOFF was born in 1945 in Cleveland, Ohio. After graduating from high school, Nigoff served in the US Navy for almost four years. He was stationed at various bases in California before being sent to a base in Japan. Nigoff worked in the engine room of his destroyer class ship, The Ernest G. Small, which operated predominantly off the coast of North Vietnam. After his military service, Nigoff attended Ohio University to study psychology. Nigoff met his wife, Betty (nee Zuckerman), while in college. They eventually settled in Lexington, Kentucky when the opportunity arose for Nigoff to open his own auto repair shop there in 1979.

Lowell's Bluegrass Automotive became a well-respected establishment in the Lexington area. In 1982, Nigoff decided to limit the garage to servicing only Toyotas, and Lowell's subsequently became the area's premier Toyota specialists. Through his discussions about religion with his employees at the auto shop, Nigoff began exploring his Judaism in more depth. He and Betty decided on a trial membership at both the Conservative synagogue, Ohavay Zion, and the Reform temple, Temple Adath Israel. Nigoff became involved in the Temple's leadership, serving on its board and as the president of the Temple's Brotherhood. As co-chair of the Temple's archives group, Nigoff helped organize the donation of the Adath Israel archives to the University of Kentucky in early 2017.

"And I was very interested in the archives, we're in just a mess. So, a friend of mine, that I had breakfast with this morning, Gary Hoover, and I went through all of the archives and indexed everything. We came up with the system to index everything. We did all that. Gary has made copies of the, uh, photographs, and we did oral histories of which you also have."

Nigoff considers himself a strong Zionist. He and Betty have traveled to Israel several times to undertake volunteer service work in Israeli communities. Were it not for his family ties in the United States, Nigoff says, he would love to make *aliyah* and become a citizen in Israel.

"And you go to these holy places like the wall or tombs and things like that, and I don't get as much out of it than I do just being there, just walking down the street. It's an experience."

Lowell's children have followed in their father's entrepreneurial and philanthropic spirits: his son, Brian, owns Brian's Bluegrass Automotive, while his daughter, Amy, now owns Lynaugh's Irish Pub, both of which are located in Lexington, KY.

"You know, your children have good points, they have not so good points, they have bad points. No matter what, you still love your children and support 'em. I think that would be my description of my Zionism."



Lowell's business off North Limestone