

Chapter 1 - 0:55

Introduction

John Erling: Lynn Schusterman was born in Kansas City, Missouri and raised in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. It was at an early age that her father taught her the importance of helping others. Lynn is the widow of Charles Schusterman founder of Samson Investment Company, a Tulsa gas exploration and production company. Charles was 65 when he died in the year 2000 from complications of leukemia. Established in 1987, The Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation was formed to support Oklahoma charitable groups that focus on education, children and community service. The Foundation is also one of the largest funders of programs that enhance Jewish life locally, nationally and internationally. Listen now to Lynn tell the Schusterman story and how the spirit of giving started with a \$500 loan. This interview is brought to you by the Founding Sponsors of VoicesofOklahoma.com.

Chapter 2 - 5:38

Family

John Erling: My name is John Erling and today's date is September 14th, 2010.

Lynn Schusterman: My name is Lynn Schusterman. I was born January 21st, 1939. I am 71 years old. I have the pleasure of visiting with John today in my home in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

JE: Where were you born?

LS: I was born in Kansas City, Missouri in Menorah Hospital.

JE: Did you have brothers and sisters?

LS: I have two younger sisters.

JE: Let's talk about your mother—your mother's name and maiden name and where she was born and reared.

LS: My mother's maiden name was Amelia Muir she was one of six children born to Helen and Mo Muir. She was born in Saint Joseph, Missouri. My grandfather Mo was in the clothing business. His family came over from Germany in the 1800s.

JE: What was your mother like? Can you describe her a little bit?

LS: My mother was a very artistic, creative person. She loved to garden and design and knit clothes. She was very involved in the Jewish community in Oklahoma City. She helped put on a lot of shows for Temple Israel. She was just a wonderful, warm, vivacious woman.

JE: Your father's name and where he came from?

LS: The person who raised me was a man named Harold Josey. He was born in Lillian, Texas and his parents were from Denmark. Actually it was from him that I really got involved at a very early age in philanthropy.

JE: You said, "the man who raised me"...was he your father?

LS: He was my stepfather.

JE: Your stepfather.

LS: Right. My real father's name was Wes Rothschild and actually his brother Louis Rothschild was in the Eisenhower Cabinet.

JE: Your stepfather, what was he like? Describe him.

LS: My stepfather was really just an amazing man. We lived in New Orleans during World War II. He was Commander of the Waterfront in New Orleans. He worked for Oklahoma Gas and Electric and when he came back after World War II, he started his own investment company called H.I. Josey & Company in Oklahoma City. As I mentioned previously, I really got involved at a very early age, around five years old going every Saturday and Sunday to visit what I called at the time little old ladies, they were probably my age. I also called them "maiden ladies" because a lot of them never got married. They were widowed or divorced. And in those days, women, a lot of them did not know how to drive. They didn't even know how to write a check. And so my dad and I, we would come over and we would take them to the grocery store. We would bring them flowers. My father helped them with their finances. And that's how I got involved in giving back to others, because my stepdad, I call him really my dad, because he is the one who raised me, had a philosophy of those that had so much, needed to share with others. So, he thought that we needed to give back.

JE: In your household then, would you consider it a religious household? Were you taken to one faith or another?

LS: It was not a religious household. It was very much what we call today unaffiliated, but we never lost sight of the fact that we were Jewish. I did go to Sunday School and I was confirmed. I went to a Sunday School called Temple Israel in Oklahoma City.

JE: Is there a German influence here? German-Jewish?

- LS: Yes, there is a very strong German influence from my real father, my stepfather and my mother's family. And in those days, there was also I have to say, a religious intolerance within the different communities because the German Jews didn't speak to the Russian Jews. So growing up in Oklahoma City, I never really spoke to or met anyone that went to the synagogue. In fact, there are two funny stories. One is that when I got engaged to Charlie, since he was a first generation Russian Jew whose family kept kosher, my mother took to her bed because it was like I was almost marrying out of the faith. And then secondly, at our wedding, where we had to get married in my parents' backyard because the Rabbi at the Temple at the time in Oklahoma City which was very, very German-reformed did not allow a chuppah, a breaking of the glass or Charlie to wear a yamika, so we got married in my parents' backyard. My mother knew that kosher meant fish so we had shrimp, lobster and crab all of which are trayf and Charlie's family was not able to eat any of it.
- JE: Isn't it true that there is some influence from the German side apparently where you actually observed a Christmas and an Easter?
- LS: Yes. Growing up as I said I went to Temple Israel and I was confirmed, but we also celebrated Christmas and Easter, which a lot of German-Jews at the time did.
- JE: Okay. All right.
- LS: There's a very famous book that goes in to all of that. In fact if you go to the Museum in Berlin that has the history of Jews in Germany, you will see a Christmas tree.

Chapter 3 - 4:08

Jewish Community in Oklahoma City

John Erling: How long did you live in Kansas City?

Lynn Schusterman: Not very long, two and a half years.

JE: So then your first elementary schooling was where?

LS: It was in Oklahoma City.

JE: What school was that?

LS: If memory serves me correctly, I probably started at Putnam Heights and then went to Wilson then Harding, then Central, then Northwest Classen.

JE: What was it like then growing up Jewish in Oklahoma City?

LS: Especially in grade school it was very difficult growing up in Oklahoma City because there was a lot of anti-Semitism and I was very, very conscious of being Jewish. I used to be taunted and chased home from school. And then later on in junior high and high school all of the social clubs and things were closed to anyone who was Jewish. So, it was

hard and not very pleasant.

JE: So you would come home with these concerns and you would gain strength at home?

LS: Yes, you know in talking to my parents who were very loving and supportive. It was difficult though.

JE: Even maybe in your learning, it had to affect the way you viewed school? You probably didn't want to go to school?

LS: No, it didn't really affect the way I looked at school because I've always loved learning, so it didn't affect the school. It was more like running home from school so I wouldn't be taunted and stuff, because in those days you walked to school.

JE: Did you have any children in the Jewish community that you could be with? Or were you really alone?

LS: I was really alone because in my class, Stanley Rosenfeld is in California, he's made it in the PR part of the movie industry and Max Weitzenhoffer is in Norman, Oklahoma and teaches at OU. And then the other person besides Stanley and Max that was in my class was someone who is deceased, Alfred Goldman, and it was his father and uncle who developed the shopping cart, and they had a grocery store called Humpty Dumpty.

JE: Yes.

LS: These were all men, so there were no girls in my class.

JE: But it probably made you stronger as a young person to go through this.

LS: It did, it really did and maybe that was part of what helped me learn to cope with Charlie's illness.

JE: Yes. December 7, 1941 the bombing of Pearl Harbor and you were only about two years old at the time, but looking at the world at that time...1933 the Jewish population of Europe stood at over nine million. By 1945 the Germans had killed nearly two out of every three European Jews as part of the so-called "final solution" the Nazi policy to murder the Jews of Europe. So, then by 1945 you are six years old. And I mention all of this to say what is your earliest memory of hearing your family talk about the Holocaust?

LS: Actually, I really don't have too many early memories of my family talking about the Holocaust per se, what I do have early memories of is the end of the war, because I remember being in my parents bedroom and listening on the radio to that announcement. And then I also remember vaguely and briefly living in New Orleans because we lived in the French Quarters and as I mentioned my father was Lieutenant Commander of the Waterfront. I remember the iceman really coming to deliver ice, and the mold that grew on our shoes and the rats. So that's kind of my little vague remembrance of the war. And then especially, I remember my uncle Myron coming home from the war and then listening to him, just very briefly, because people...they didn't talk in front of children as much in those days as they do today. Just talking a little bit about

liberating and I can't remember if it was Bergen-Belsen but I have it on tape of which concentration camp he was involved in liberating.

Chapter 4 - 5:18

Charles Schusterman

John Erling: You were only six years old then in 1945...

Lynn Schusterman: Right.

JE: But then as you became an adult and reflected then on the Holocaust, how did that affect you?

LS: It's interesting that you would ask that question. Of everything that I have been involved in Jewishly, the Holocaust affected me the most. Charlie decided in 1978 before we went any place in the world that we would go to Israel. And at that time I didn't totally understand the implication and the ramification that this trip would have. Growing up, I wanted to be anything but Jewish because I was so taunted and so isolated in my Jewishness. So from the time we hit the El Al terminal in New York City, to the time we returned to Tulsa 10 days later, I didn't stop crying. I started reading everything that I could. I must have 600 books by now in my library of the Holocaust. I felt that if I didn't get involved, how could I expect other people to be involved? And the rest is history. But as I look at the world we live in today and we look at what's going on right now, whether the mosque should be built or it shouldn't be built. There's still anti-Semitism, it just takes different faces and different voices today. It makes me very sad that people haven't learned lessons from history. But that's how I basically got involved. It's really interesting, I spent time helping people learn to deal with loss and with illness because I am a firm believer that you really can't understand something until you've walked in someone's shoes. When you go through a drastic illness or a sudden loss, you have to have coping mechanisms. One of the coping mechanisms I developed when people got sick was that if people could live through the Holocaust and go on and have productive lives like Elie Wiesel and Ruth Gruber and other people, that I could learn to deal with Charlie's illness. It was a huge help for me and I share that today with people.

JE: That is an amazing thought isn't it, that the Holocaust actually gave you strength and that these people survived. Wow. Well let's talk about Charlie. How did you meet your future husband?

LS: I met Charlie on a blind date. I was dating a friend of his who I liked as a friend but not romantically. So he said to me, "If you don't like me, maybe you'll like my friend." So Charlie called me and I thought that it was somebody else so instead of saying "Hello" I

said “Hi” and he said to me, “Do you always say ‘Hi’ to strangers?” And I almost knew then and there that I was going to fall in love with this guy. That’s how we met. We dated for about nine months. At the time I lived in Oklahoma City and Charlie lived in Tulsa. So what we would do during the week is read a book, some classic of some sort. And then we would discuss it on the weekends and that would kind of keep us together. And nine months later we got engaged.

JE: What was it about him?

LS: I’m not totally sure. Part of it was his sense of humor. And then my nickname when I was two was “Fireball”. And I have kind of calmed down since then, or worked on calming down. But both of us had a huge sense of adventure and a love of history and a love of learning. On our first date I knew that I was going to marry this man.

JE: And he probably knew it too right?

LS: I don’t know about that, it took him a long time.

JE: He grew up in Tulsa. Let’s talk about his parents. His mother?

LS: His mother’s name was Sarah Goldstein. Her parents came from Riga, Latvia and she came over as a child. She never had a lot of education and she was not a very secure person. I don’t think she ever really totally adjusted to life here. But his father was named Sam. In fact that’s how Charlie developed the name Samson. When he and his brother broke off in business together, he started his own oil and gas company. When we were working on a name we came up with Samson because Charlie was Sam’s son and Samson in the Bible durst is strength and integrity. Sam came over from Minsk, Belarus and was in the used oilfield pipe equipment business. He had a tin shack on the old Sapulpa highway that Charlie was still involved in when I met him. His father passed away when he was 19, so I never really met his father.

JE: Do you think obviously Charlie drew a lot from his father?

LS: Right. Charlie learned a lot and had an amazing relationship with his dad. Then also he was in college and had to grow up very rapidly when his father passed away and assume a lot of responsibility.

Chapter 5 - 5:40

The Gamble

John Erling: Your college work was done where?

Lynn Schusterman: At the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida.

JE: And then Charlie’s was?

LS: At OU. He was funny. He talked often about how he never thought about where he was

going to go to school. In fact, he forgot to test or anything. He just got in the car and drove to OU and the rest was history. He absolutely loved OU and he loved football. In fact, we were in Israel in October for a dedication and Charlie really grew ill. He was hemorrhaging and the paramedic did not want him to get on the plane. He was bound and determined to return to Tulsa, because OU was playing Nebraska and he had been invited to sit in President David Boren's box with Senator at the time Don Nickles. So we flew across the Atlantic with him bleeding and we came home. And he got up and went to the office on Friday, and on Saturday morning he got up at like six in the morning and drove over for that football game. He loved his OU Football and OU and he loved Oklahoma. Tulsa was home. He grew up on the north side of Tulsa, graduated from Central and then went on to go to OU. He took a huge gamble when oil was three dollars a barrel and started Samson.

JE: So when you got married, you came here then to live with Charlie in Tulsa?

LS: Right.

JE: Did you notice a big difference in the way you were treated from Oklahoma City to Tulsa?

LS: Well, also that was 1962. So there was a very warm and welcoming Jewish community here in Tulsa that I did not have in Oklahoma City. I attribute part of it to Charlie in going to OU and a lot of the friends that he had in college became my friends, plus, the fact that a lot of the young men from Tulsa that Charlie grew up with had brides from other places than Tulsa. So we all moved here with our husbands but without our immediate, close family, but their family. So we kind of formed a little close network.

JE: Charlie's personality, it sounds like he was outgoing?

LS: He was very outgoing. He had a great sense of humor and he was brilliant. I mean people talk about how really smart he was. He won all kinds of awards at OU and everything. Our second date, and this again goes back to philanthropy—they had at the time what was called United Jewish Appeal or UJA to help those in need. Our second date was here in Tulsa and Charlie was working his UJA cards. So very early on I also knew that we both shared a love of taking care and making other people's lives better.

JE: In the 1970s then, Charlie made a big bet. That's when he raised capital.

LS: Right.

JE: Tell us about that.

LS: I really can't, you know, because I was not involved in it nearly as much. The only thing I helped him do, we worked together to create the name Samson. And it was really funny I had to co-sign the loan and I said to him, "I'll have to make a lot of chocolate chip cookies to pay that one off." I thought it was interesting that the bank wanted my co-signature. And for a while Charlie had a Limited Partnership and I was involved in the entertaining

part of the Limited Partnership. It involved taking people out and talking them to the oil fields to see. Charlie really had a lot of investors because his honesty and integrity, his reputation preceded him. But I was not really involved other than that.

JE: But when he raised the capital it was to buy Amerada Hess' oil production in California.

LS: Right.

JE: Shortly after that the price of oil tripled as a result of the Arab Oil Embargo against the United States.

LS: Right. He had the foresight. He did a tremendous amount of reading and research. But again, like I said, he was a huge gambler. I mean, because when we first got married we lived on, I don't know what's there right now on the corner, but behind 21st and Sheridan in a little two-room duplex. And then we moved to 5819 East 53rd Street, where our first house was \$32,000 and we weren't sure where we were going to get the money because everything Charlie did make really went back in to build Samson.

JE: Yes. His brains were working for him but he had a business sense or should I say a gut feeling about decisions too so when he made that bet, he had a natural sense didn't he?

LS: Right, it was totally a natural sense. There's a story that he liked to tell and it's written in one of the books about him. As I said, they started on the old Sapulpa highway with used oil field equipment. One day he stayed after work to close a sale of some used oilfield equipment where the pipe was \$3 and he said to his Dan, that was his brother, "I don't care what you do, but I'm moving uptown." And I am not sure exactly when that took place, I think it was right before we got married. So, he always had a sense of wanting to improve and to learn and to grow. It started out being S&S Pipe and Supply, and then the Schusterman Oil Company and then he and Dan split up and it became Samson.

Chapter 6 - 3:48

Philanthropy

John Erling: Again it's interesting to review, the two of you lived almost hand to mouth when you were first married.

Lynn Schusterman: I can't call it hand to mouth, but everything went back in to building the company.

JE: And at that time was the scrap iron business.

LS: Right.

JE: How would you describe your living conditions at that time?

LS: As a lot of young couples even today, it was very simple. But I never felt deprived of anything because we had each other and it was fun. I mean when you are 23 years old

life's a little different than when you are 73 years old. We were starting our family. We were all there together so it was fine.

JE: The thing that jumped from that living to another level was this big so-called bet that I'm calling to buy Amerada Hess' oil production.

LS: Right, that was the first thing.

JE: That was the big kick wasn't it?

LS: Right. Yes.

JE: And when he realized, oh now I have funds where I then can help others.

LS: Well, actually that took a little time because we did not actually start our Foundation until 1987. In 1987 we sat down and we started our family foundation, the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation. I remember sitting in the basement of our home then on 2142 Forest Boulevard and making the decision to start the Foundation. Our kids then were still in high school and we were talking to them and trying to involve them a little bit in starting the foundation because we thought that it was very, very important to give back to others. The story that I so vividly remember is in 1967, sitting in Temple Israel in Tulsa, Oklahoma listening about the needs in Israel about the '67 War and going to the bank and borrowing \$500 so we could give to Israel. As I said, starting with the second date with UJA, the two of us have always cared about giving back and being involved.

JE: That's remarkable to borrow to give away.

LS: Right.

JE: Most people give away out of what they have. But that's how strong you felt about it.

LS: Right.

JE: We should say here that Charlie decided to convert Samson Investment Company into a company that drilled for natural gas, so that was another business sense that he had.

LS: Right.

JE: Then it grew into one of the largest independent companies in America, headquartered here in Tulsa.

LS: Right.

JE: So now it's in I don't know how many states.

LS: I don't know either. I mean I'm very lucky in that there's still a division of labor. I used to joke with Charlie about it, but now Stacy, our daughter runs Samson.

JE: And you are in many states and other countries as a matter of fact so that's where it's grown.

LS: Yes, right.

JE: You've already addressed this...in 1987 you formed the Schusterman Family Foundation. You stated then, I would imagine, your focus of the foundation.

LS: The focus of the foundation and it still is to a large extent today is the philosophy of

helping someone to be able to cross boundaries from which they were born. We are very much involved and supportive of education. But there's the story, if you give a man a fish you feed him and it's very important to feed him. But if you give a man a fishing pole, he can feed his family, he can create an industry and he can start a company and feed lots of families. So that was what we really based our foundation on, was to create that so other people could really learn and improve their lives and other peoples' lives because of the foundation.

JE: That focus would be distributed both here in Tulsa and in Israel?

LS: Right and to some extent we got involved in the former Soviet Union also.

Chapter 7 - 4:10

A Death Sentence

Lynn Schusterman: Let's go back to 1983 when Charlie is diagnosed with chronic myelogenous leukemia and given six months to two years to live. We decided that we did not like that prognosis and...

John Erling: Let me just jump in and say that he was only 47 years old. He was a very, very young man.

LS: Right.

JE: So when he was diagnosed, let's talk a little bit about that and the shock that it had to be for both of you and how you handled that.

LS: The first week or so, there were a lot of tears and just trying to learn to cope with being handed at the age of 47 a death sentence. I said to Charlie, "I don't think I like this prognosis. Let's try to go see if there's something we can do to maybe add a few years to that." You know this is before you could use Google and do all of that stuff. Charlie did go around and did some checking and talking to people and to Dr. Schnetzer who was the one who gave him the prognosis. We looked at the time in Seattle, they were doing bone marrow transplants very early on. But Charlie, because he was 47 was too old for that. The cut off was 40. We also went to Sloan-Kettering but they were only at that stage with CML in the Petri dish. We were told about a man by the name of Dr. Talpaz at MD Anderson Clinic and we went to see him. He at the time was working with human interferon, which had a lot of impurities. But we decided to again gamble and go with Dr. Talpaz until Charlie started on human interferon. And we even went to Finland to see the whole process of how it was gathered and everything and to thank them. It was sent into this country, because it wasn't totally legal by the Finnish Red Cross. But then, Charlie developed, because the human interferon had a lot of impurities, a second fatal illness. I

used to jokingly say that one wasn't enough. He had interstitial lung disease. We went to National Jewish in Denver and he was put on steroids. So it became a delicate balance between the steroids and the interferon and then he developed a third illness called auto-peripheral neuropathy where he had to keep his body temperature at 62 degrees. I never heard him complain and he never felt sorry for himself. He had this wonderful boo that he always read. It was a Dr. Seuss book and the book was called I Had Trouble Getting to Solla Sollew. I have a copy that I keep by my bed at all times. It was about how you really have to give your troubles trouble. The only time I ever heard him complain was when he said to me, "Do you know what it's like never to be able to be warm?" because he always had to keep his body temperature so cold. So I would go to the door, if you would come in July to see me, in sweats, because my house was always between 58 and 62 degrees.

JE: Wow.

LS: But he was an amazing person.

JE: Probably in the wintertime he would be outside in his short sleeves?

LS: Right. In fact the funny story is he always traveled in Bermuda shorts, Birkenstocks and a short-sleeved shirt. Someone ran into him once dressed like this in the airport in New York City and they said, "If you're so rich, why do you look like that?" (Laughter) Not knowing the whole history.

JE: But he wasn't feeling cold he was comfortable at that temperature wasn't he?

LS: Yes.

JE: What was the prognosis? How many years was he given?

LS: At the time that he was diagnosed, because there was no cure, he was given six months to two years to live. He lived 17 years.

JE: His life was prolonged by...

LS: Interferon.

JE: Interferon. And so the medical world learned a lot from this, his case?

LS: Yes. Right. They did. He worked very closely with Dr. Moshe Talpaz. He helped fund his protocols and everything so the world could learn from this.

Chapter 8 - 3:53

NASCAR

John Erling: At first Charlie asked, "Why me?" and then he changed that.

Lynn Schusterman: Well, he believed that somebody had to be that statistic. So he said instead of "Why me?" "Why not me?" And he would say somebody does need to be that

statistic, and that's how he looked at it. As I told you earlier, I looked at it that if people could survive the Holocaust and go on, I could survive this. This was a time that Charlie was on human interferon and also chemo. So I learned how to mix medicine and give shots and everything and I used to say to him, "If I wanted to be a nurse I would have gone to nursing school." But I learned how to do all that.

JE: He was battling this and yet he could focus on business and manage business as well?

LS: Yes. There was a time that's really all he did, but sometime in the 1980s he would go to the office around 11am and come home around 5pm and he would eat a very little dinner because you don't have an appetite when you're on chemo and we'd watch TV. But he really did focus on business and being with our kids.

JE: He lived for 17 years (after being diagnosed) and when did he pass on?

LS: December the 30th of 2000.

JE: And would have been 65 then?

LS: He was 65 the first on September. So this birthday he would have been 75. And in those last two months, he flew to Israel for a dedication, went to the football game, where he sat with the president and senator and he went to NASCAR Racing School.

JE: (Laughter)

LS: Yes. I have a picture. I have to go get it John. (stands up and goes to find picture.) He was so excited. He went with Donald Newman who is a good friend of his who is also deceased.

JE: And here it is, so he went to NASCAR Racing School.

LS: This was in November and he died in December.

JE: Isn't that remarkable? And he went through the whole school?

LS: Yeah.

JE: Because he loved the joy of driving fast.

LS: Yes.

JE: Isn't that something. That is a great picture.

LS: Thank you.

JE: Did he know, and did you know then that the end was near?

LS: I think that both of us had like a premonition. But you know, I guess that it was that Charlie so fully believed in living life to its fullest, that we didn't talk about, is this the end or not the end. We both looked to the future. We had all kinds of plans. And that's how we lived this life, so no. I mean when Charlie was first diagnosed, we made certain plans and like I said, four years after his diagnosis we set up the foundation. One of the things I said to him was, "I don't want to do this in your memory, I want to do it with you while you are alive." Of course, one of our first big gifts was to OU-Tulsa. Charlie called David Boren and David Boren tells the story of how unusual it was that somebody called and said, "I

hear that you want to buy this property and I'm here to give you the money."

JE: Didn't you actually see that in the Tulsa World in a newspaper story and you brought it to Charlie's attention?

LS: Yes. Right. We were in British Columbia where we had to go in the summer because it was cool and Charlie felt safe there. His third disease, with this auto-peripheral neuropathy, if he stayed warm for too long, it could mean brain damage. So in the summer, we would go to this island off the coast of Vancouver called Tofino, British Columbia, that was a little fishing village. I was reading the Tulsa World and I saw the story and I called Sandy Cardin who is still our executive director and president of the foundation. I talked to him briefly and then took the story upstairs to Charlie and he called David Boren and the rest is history.

Chapter 9 - 5:20

Schusterman / OU

John Erling: I want to get into more of that, because I have that further on, but under the heading of "to repair the world", what does that mean to you? There's a word for that.

Lynn Schusterman: It's called Tikkun Olam, which means to repair the world. It's a story of Honi and the carob tree. It means, as my parents planted for me, so I plant for my children. That is the logo of our foundation. Part of it was Tikkun Olam, which means to repair the world, to try and make the world a better place for other people and for the next generation and the generation after. That was one of the reasons that we also got involved in the Parent Child Center, which was to try and help children who had been physically and sexually abused go on to have a better and a productive life and to help their parents understand and learn to deal with it. But the OU gift really, when Charlie looked at what that gift would accomplish, and what it would bring to the city of Tulsa, because he felt very strongly because he felt like there were times that Tulsa was treated as a stepchild in comparison to Oklahoma City and he wanted to help that. Plus, in creating OU-Tulsa, the people who needed indigent care and everything would be able to be treated. And I think for him today to see this campus, and to see all of the teaching and the learning that goes on there, he would be thrilled beyond words. It's kind of like the gamble when oil was three dollars a barrel.

JE: And we should say that property at 41st and Yale is 60 acres of land. It's no secret you donated \$10 million dollars to form the Schusterman Center at the University of Oklahoma.

LS: Right.

JE: Up until that time, Tulsa really had no idea that OU really had much of a Tulsa presence?

LS: Right. They had no idea whatsoever. Part of the impetus behind it was to bring OU to Tulsa and for Tulsa to not be a stepchild to Oklahoma City. And then the second \$10 million dollars was kind of a challenge after Charlie died that I made because the bond issue had been defeated twice. I felt that if maybe we had this challenge a third time, it could pass.

JE: What was that bond issue?

LS: It was lots of things, but one of the things was to help OU-Tulsa grow.

JE: And that was voted down by the voters?

LS: Yes, twice. And the third time, I like to think...rightly or wrongly that because of the challenge grant and other people's involvement that it did pass the third time.

JE: And so, in that school now, you've already referred to it, we've got a medical college, we are training pharmacists, doctors, there's also community-based healthcare as a result of that, and that's what you envisioned to be happening.

LS: Right.

JE: And there are many other disciplines there on the campus as well.

LS: Yes, there are.

JE: And research too, they are looking now for the campus to produce research that will have enormous effects later on. In fact, classes are taught between distance-learning technology between Norman and Tulsa. So some of these things you didn't even see when you made your donation.

LS: Right. David Boren has done an incredible job, as has Dr. Gerald Clancy. Both of them are real visionaries. I look at this...Charlie and I decided when we started the foundation, since Charlie did have such a strong business background, that the foundation should be run like a business, where people are accountable and OU-Tulsa is beyond our wildest dreams.

JE: While the company became really successful, with financial success there comes a tremendous amount of responsibility, tell us your feeling about that.

LS: That's true. Well, as I have said, I have always felt learning very early on from my dad that those of us who are so blessed need to learn to give back. One of the things that we have been very involved with, particularly in Tulsa is education. And four years ago, I had the pleasure of meeting Wendy Kopp. I had heard about Wendy and a program called Teach For America, where very talented young people sign up for two years to go into schools in all kinds of areas where very strong teaching is needed. I was able to persuade Wendy with help from other philanthropists and foundations in Tulsa to bring Teach For America to Tulsa and I think again it is beyond our wildest expectations. Last year we had 88 teachers. I am not sure how many, if it's 112 or 118 that we have here this year.

But the fact that they go into these schools like into the Head Start, Early Childhood, Gilcrease, Hale—their dedication to trying to educate those that are less fortunate has been tremendous. And then we are also involved in a presentation called KIPP, which is Knowledge Is Power. That's been very rewarding also.

Chapter 10 - 4:10

Foundation Funding

John Erling: We might point out that when Charlie died, you had to prove yourself as a woman in the world of philanthropy, because, it was generally, mostly directed by men. Talk to us a little bit about that. You actually had to bring a man with you to some of these meetings.

Lynn Schusterman: Right. I was involved in a day school project in New York City. There were certain rules that they wanted to pass that I totally didn't believe in, because it would have excluded people and I very much believe in being inclusive and including all kinds of people from different walks of life and different persuasions. So, even though I was giving equally to the other men on the board, they did not listen to me. So I was able to bring to a board meeting a man who is a very good friend of mine, but who had never previously been to a board meeting. And he came with me and backed me up and they understood that I meant business and I haven't had that problem since.

JE: (Chuckle)

LS: They know that I will put my money where my mouth is. But they also have learned to understand that I look at the bottom line. I'm very focused and I don't need my name in lights. What I care about is the betterment of the organization and to really make this world a better place and to help people.

JE: Well, making this world a better place is interesting here because is it true that you give 75 percent to Jewish causes in Israel and 25 percent to secular causes here in Tulsa, is that accurate?

LS: Yes, it's accurate in that the 75 percent is to Jewish causes basically around the world, not just Israel and the 25 percent that we give to non-Jewish causes stays in the state of Oklahoma because I feel a huge responsibility to this state and to Tulsa. This is where the money was initially made and this is where Samson is located and I so appreciate all of the people involved and working at Samson because without them this wouldn't be possible. So, whereas I think the Metropolitan Museum and some of these things are wonderful, my heart is in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and so is my money I should add.

JE: You are building leadership among the youth in Israel. You have a "Charlie Award"?

LS: That was started about eight years after Charlie died and it was an award to encourage

leadership among young people to get involved in their local communities to try to again make this world a better place. Here in Tulsa, Oklahoma we started something called TPI - Youth Philanthropy Initiative, and that is to bring young people from different high schools in Tulsa together once a month to learn about philanthropy and to be able to create what resonates with them. The first cohort of YPI was five years ago, and they had worked on a program that had dealt with teenage suicide and they brought in John Hopkins University to teach about and to be able to recognize symptoms and to be able to prevent teenage suicide. The second cohort has a program about safe relationships and safe dating. The third cohort is working on the negative influence of the media on young people today and how young people are so swayed by the media. And the fourth cohort has not picked their group yet. But I really believe that young people learn by their own examples and experiences. So, what resonates with them today is not what's going to resonate with me, but I believe in them and I have faith in them and I think with mentoring and guidance they can learn. So we are very much involved with teaching service. For Rosh Hashanah last week, we had 10 of the young people who are involved in Teach For America come to spend time with them.

Chapter 11 - 4:45

Making a Difference

John Erling: Thinking a lot about making a difference, you have passed this on to your children. Let's name your children. You have three children.

Lynn Schusterman: Yes, the oldest is a son named Hal who lives in Israel. Stacy, who lives in Tulsa, who along with her husband Steven Dow runs Community Action Project, which is very involved with working with the working poor. And then the third is Jay Schusterman, who lives with his wife Mary Lee in Boulder, Colorado. I have six granddaughters, no boys.

JE: So at an early age you passed on to your children what was passed on to you when you were a child. In the Jewish tradition, Friday evening dinner, talk about that.

LS: Okay just briefly, every Friday night I'm in town, we had a family Shabbat dinner. The Shabbat welcomes in the start of 24 hours of rest in the Jewish faith. So we have Shabbat dinner and we light the candles and say the blessings then over wine and challah and we all sit down together and talk about what we've done that week, or what we are going to do, and then we also have on the table a little blue Tzedakah, which is a charity box the children put money into. And when the Tzedakah box is filled up they vote on where they wanted their Tzedakah to go. Each one of them has been very, very involved. Abby goes to Booker T. Washington and she's involved in the Key Club and they do different things

there. Rachel has trained a service dog. So I'm passing on to the kids and they are passing on to their kids, involvement, and commitment and caring.

JE: You made sure when you have a young family, that no matter how late it was the day that they all sat down and had dinner together.

LS: Right. We had philosophy, because Jay played soccer and football, Stacy played soccer and softball, Hal played football, that we all sat down and had dinner because it was vitally important to us.

JE: You took family vacations together?

LS: Right.

JE: Often Charlie would be involved in business late into the night but you made sure that...

LS: What Charlie did that was so great, he believed in quality time. So he took each one of the kids on a ski trip by themselves so he'd have an opportunity to spend time with them. I think what you are referring to is a story, and it's really funny. We picked up the kids at camp in St. Louis and we were driving to Chicago. He was working on a deal at the time and that was before cell phones, BlackBerrys and all of that. So we would stop at every payphone between St. Louis and Chicago on our family vacation because Charlie needed to make a call in to work on his bid. (Laughter) It was funny, but we were in this together.

JE: Is it drawn from the Jewish faith that importance of family?

LS: You know I look at it, and I think that it is because the Jewish faith has always looked at the importance of family. But last summer, I took Rachel my middle granddaughter to China. I looked at the importance there of family. So, there are certain countries, religions, and nationalities that place a huge importance on family. And I think that today to some extent, when I spend time with young people, I think that what they are looking for is a sense of community and roots. And I have to say John, I think that to a large extent that's why this program is so important and one of the reasons why I agreed to do this. One of the things that I try to do is to spend a great deal of time with young people. Last Friday I was with the YPI group and I try to spend time during the year with each one of them, or the "Charlies" and now we have another group to try to give them mentorship. Young people learn by example. They need people they can look up to. And so, that's why I think this program that you are doing is so important. Because they can listen to these people and understand a little bit what went into them. I think that all of this modern technology is really great, but communication and a sense of community is vitally important and when you're tuned in, which I don't do, to YouTube or Twitter, you are sitting there isolated. And I think that sometimes you lose a sense of giving back, and of community, and of your roots, and of your heritage. And I think that's important that people have that.

Chapter 12 - 5:00**Projects**

John Erling: Maybe I can just skim through a list here of some of the things that you have done. In 1990, as Communism collapsed, anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union gained force...

Lynn Schusterman: I started Hillel in the former Soviet Union. Actually in 1985, I went to visit Refuseniks, because I wanted them to be aware that the outside world was aware of their plight and were willing to help them, so that was in 1985. In 1990, Charlie and I went back to witness the fall of Communism. In 1993, I sat at the first Jewish University and started Hillel then. There were three in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kiev, and now there are 27 across the former Soviet Union. In 1985, St. Petersburg was Leningrad. One of the families that we went to see as Refuseniks now lives in Israel.

JE: In 1991, he began to support the Israel Museum?

LS: And we just saw the grand opening and the expansion of the Israel Museum, which is truly magnificent. It's been written up now a few times in The New York Times, which is wonderful.

JE: In 1992, you made your first grant to the Oklahoma School for Science and Mathematics?

LS: Right, which I think is a wonderful school, and we have the Samson building there now.

JE: I'm just jumping in here...in 1996 you dedicate the Emergency Center in Jerusalem for at-risk children and their families?

LS: Right, Sukat Shalom, yes. These were children that had to be taken out of the house within the first 24 hours that were so badly physically, sexually and mentally abused.

JE: And you have done that here in Tulsa too.

LS: Right with the Parent Child Center. And, I have to say, going back for a moment that we didn't talk about... you know, people ask sometimes how you make decisions and how you make certain grants. And one of the things that precipitated that grant, was when I first married Charlie and moved to Tulsa. We got married on June 17, 1962. The following fall I got involved in an organization called the National Council of Jewish Women. They were working in a police shelter here where children had to be taken out of the home within the first 24 hours also. Sometimes they were covered totally with cigarette burns, broken limbs, all kinds of things. And I vowed then, that when I was able I would get involved with the treatment and prevention of child abuse, so that's how that came about.

JE: You announced in 1999 the major grant to the University of Oklahoma. We already talked about that.

LS: Yes.

JE: In 2001, you opened an office in Washington, D.C. What was that about?

LS: A lot of the organizations that we were working with at the time are on the East Coast.

But I'm a huge believer as I said, and Charlie always joked that he hadn't gone far. He could look out of his window and see north Tulsa and Morningstar Hospital where he was born, and Central High where he graduated and he took great pride in that. But a lot of the organizations, Jewish ones that we worked with, had this is in New York and Washington. So we opened an office there run by a wonderful woman named Lisa Eisen, who was Stacy's roommate at Yale. And part of what we took on at the time there was being involved in Israel advocacy, to try and present a fair and balanced picture of Israel.

JE: In 2006 the Schusterman Family Foundation established a Schusterman Foundation in Israel and the Center for Leadership Initiatives. What is that?

LS: Again, I talk about the "Charlies" and the "Ro'ehs" and Ro'eh is shepherd in Hebrew, to teach leadership to other people. And then we also, I think it was in 1997 maybe, opened Sukat Shalom which is the emergency shelter that you spoke of in Jerusalem. And also, then the board of the Parent Child Center here has made a trip to Israel and a group of Israeli social service people has been here to work with the Parent Child Center, and CAN, the Child Abuse Network we started based on the concept, CAN the Child Abuse Network is here. I try to form partnerships between my two cities, Jerusalem and Tulsa.

JE: Right. In 2007, responding to the dearth of Israel studies, programs and scholars on U.S. campuses you established the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies at Brandeis University. Comment on that and what that means.

LS: People can get undergraduate and graduate degrees in the study of modern Israel, whether it be a whole history of Israel, Hebrew or learning about Israel and Judaism at Brandeis University, under the guidance and leadership at the time of Jehuda Reinharz, who was then president of Brandeis.

Chapter 13 - 5:23

The Joy of Giving

John Erling: Right now, here we are in September 2010, there are so-called peace talks with Israel and Palestine... do you have any comment about what you see if that's ever going to be settled in say 10 or 20 years from now?

Lynn Schusterman: I really don't, I mean there's people like the Prime Minister who have far greater knowledge of this. All I can talk about just very briefly is (inaudible) which is based on the Child Abuse Network, which is where kids come with their families to be treated for child abuse and examined and everything. We treat anyone who walks in that door, whether Israeli Arab, a Palestinian, a Druze, we have an inclusive, open policy. I think that if you saw the size of that country and understood the proximities, you would

understand the problems a little more. But one of the things that Israel does need is security. I spend a great deal of my summers in Jerusalem. I know that people criticize the wall, but I sleep at night a little safer. And when I walk in Jerusalem and I pass a bus, I don't worry as much as not a bomb as I used to. I'm hoping that in somebody's lifetime there is peace, but I'm not sure when or where or how, because there are so many problems. You know if two kids could sit down at a table like you and I are sitting now, and have a discussion, it could be possible, but I don't think that will ever happen. So again, I don't know. I can't even answer it factually.

JE: Right. Through your philanthropy, you should have the feeling that you are repairing the world to some extent. Tell about the joy that you must have making a difference, if you can think of specific stories or just generally.

LS: I can't think of specific stories right now, I mean I can think of all the letters that I've received, whether it's from a child that was able to go to Quartz Mountain because of our involvement there, or somebody with the Parent Child Center or somebody going to the Schusterman-Benson Library here, or just walking the campus and OU-Tulsa, or talking like I did last Friday to the YPI group and listening to what they've learned over the past three years. I just feel very blessed and what I'd like to pass on to people is that if people could understand the kind of joy and pleasure that you get when you help somebody else—one of the stories that I tell people is something that has nothing to do with money, it's taking just a little bit of time. I was running around the streets of New York City a couple of years ago late for a meeting as usual and I saw a young man getting ready to cross a very busy street who was blind. I stopped him for a moment because traffic was coming and I said to him, "Where are you going?" and he was headed in the total opposite direction. So I turned him around and he and I walked together to where he needed to go. And just the feeling of bringing him safely to where he needed to go was such a sense of purpose. And if you have a problem, or you are feeling sorry for yourself, or you are feeling blue that day, or feeling stressed, if you just take the time to reach out and even smile or say hello to somebody, I cannot begin to tell you the joy and pleasure I get, and how I feel so blessed and fortunate to be able to do this, to make this world a better place.

JE: Right and in that instance you didn't have to have wealth to do what you did. And so the importance of teaching our children to be able to share with the community of whatever resource they have is important.

LS: Totally. I think it's vitally important. There's a group of children that I help in Israel, who live below the poverty level, and they have afterschool care. It's called a Kadima Club. They were so excited and so proud of themselves because they were able to do a soda pop can collection and turn those cans in for money, so they could help those people

who were less fortunate than themselves. I think it's something that we all need to learn and it's called Victory Garden. I look at the young people that are working there to grow vegetables to help the food banks and all the other needy people in Tulsa and I think right now when you open up the paper like I did yesterday to the Tulsa World and you see the needs, to realize that there are people here in Tulsa that are going hungry. You can look at how you can get involved with the Day Center for the homeless or the Food Bank or Goodwill or some other organizations. It's really easy to make a difference, and what a difference it can make in someone else's life.

Chapter 14 - 5:19

Foundation Goals

John Erling: It seems like balancing business and family life and all of this, it's kind of like we have to step back and say, okay, we've got to concentrate on giving because we are so busy with building our business and families.

Lynn Schusterman: I do think that, and again something that I do talk about to everyone is that if you will take the time to do this, what it will add to your life. Also, as you talked about John, doing it as a family. As a family then, when you do something like this together, it brings you closer together. It gives you something that you're sharing. You can share it with your kids. You can talk about it with them. It makes a huge impact. And these are memories, as I said, at 71 · (years old) I still remember going with my daddy almost 60-some-odd years ago to take someone to the grocery store, to take them some flowers, to make their life a little better. And I think that these are memories that children will carry with them all of their lives, and it's something that teaches them how to do, and how to give back, and I think it's vitally important.

JE: You are a young person right now, and you have 20 or 25 years to live, are there goals that you are working on?

LS: One of the main goals that I'm working on is trying to pass some of this on to others. To try to get people more involved. One of the things with YPI that I hope to accomplish, is to get people to understand not only the importance of giving back and being involved in a project, but also how to go into the not-for-profit world, how rewarding it can be. That not everyone needs to be a hedge fund dealer, that you can get huge rewards from heading the Red Cross or the Day Center for the homeless, or Family and Children Services and how rewarding that can be.

JE: Yes, it's a career that's often overlooked isn't it?

LS: Right. I am looking at trying to implement programs to try to encourage that, to reward

that, and how you get more people involved. That's one of my main goals. And then, how to work on this whole thing to get people to understand Judaism, the study of modern Israel and to understand how we have to work together. And then one of the other projects that the foundation is involved with locally, on February 16th, we are getting ready to do a Conference for Change here in Tulsa. To be inclusive, to look at the GLBT community, to understand that they are people and that they have to be treated with dignity in order to have same-sex marriages, certain coverage of insurance and things like that.

JE: Let me just bring you back, what is GLBT?

LS: Gay, Lesbian, Transvestite, Transgender, Queer and Questioning Community. We want, like the Tulsa Public Schools and libraries and TU and OU to have certain inclusive policies, and to recognize same-sex marriages had to have it inclusive in insurance and maternity leave and things like that.

JE: Didn't you take some criticism maybe from Orthodox Jews in that area?

LS: Yes, I took some very strong criticism from some Orthodox Jews because we did a Conference for Change a few years ago in New York City on this same issue in Jewish community. And we have an inclusive policy of funding organizations that do include that both in the Jewish and non-Jewish community. Several Orthodox rabbis took me on to say that I was not being inclusive just by having that statement. On the other hand, there were a few Orthodox rabbis who came to my defense and explained that God really, I look at this that God would not want us to inflict that kind of pain on another human being.

JE: What brought you to this group? Why were you focused on that? Did somebody bring it to your attention?

LS: Growing up, and again it was a long time ago both in grade school and junior high I had two friends that the time I didn't know where gay, are because in those days it just certainly was not talked about. But I remember them being different and their pain. I guess because I always felt so different being Jewish and isolated. The three of us kind of got together and bonded, and I remember them and again maybe it's going back to the child abuse, working at the police shelter here, you remember certain things. And when you have the opportunity to look at a project and get involved, I really initially got involved about nine years ago in Jerusalem. There's an organization they are called Open House. They came to me because the high rate of suicide among young men in particular in Jerusalem. That's how I initially got involved was making a grant so they could hire a psychologist to work with young people. Then I got involved here also, and because again I try to connect the two and do involvement. And then we got involved on a national level Jewishly and then on a local level here in Tulsa.

Chapter 15 - 5:45**Feeling Lucky**

John Erling: About the future, the future of the Jewish people, the 2000 national Jewish population study indicated that conflict a significant number of all Jews are now marrying non-Jews. Is that of concern? Is there anything that is done to reverse this trend or, is that a, I don't know if the word is threat, or is that of concern?

Lynn Schusterman: It's a huge concern to me, so one of the things is that the logo of the foundation is the carob tree and the story of Honi and the story of my parents planted for me and so I plant. And the motto is to create the joy of Jewish living, giving and learning. So, one of the things that we're really focused on is let's say the 14 to 35-year-olds to try to engage them to want to be Jewish. And one of my two major grants, BBYO, which is the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization, young people in high school to get involved in all different kinds of programs to learn about Judaism, Israel and the Holocaust. My granddaughter Abby went on March of the Living last year, which goes back to Poland and all of the camps and then goes to Israel to celebrate Israel's independence and Memorial Day. And then Birthright, I'm very involved in Birthright, which is the 10-day free trip to Israel for somebody that has just one Jewish grandparent. I'm again, going back to being very inclusive, I think that everybody has to create what resonates with each one of them in the way of religion and spirituality. But I'm trying to very much encourage young people who are of the Jewish faith or who want to convert to really care about being Jewish.

JE: What is the lasting impression you would want the public to have of the Schusterman Foundation?

LS: Well, first of all, I'm very lucky and very blessed that I have probably 27 people that work at the foundation that really care and take a great deal of time and effort and energy to give back to their various communities and various projects that we are involved in. So that's vitally important to me. And I look at all the young people whose lives we've touched, or one of the things that we do because I'm a huge romantic person is that we serve lunch at the Day Center for the homeless on Valentine's Day. Because I think that those people sometimes don't know that there are other people out there who care about them. I think that I just would like people to know that we are a foundation that's here and that we care. We are growing and we are learning and that we are behind you to help.

JE: Is there anything that you would like to say that we haven't talked about?

LS: I don't think so. As I've said, I'm very humbled to be included. When I look at this group and I look at someone like Wilma Mankiller of blessed memory and everything that she has accomplished, I feel very honored to be in this group. The one thing about me, when

I talk to young people, I look at them as my children. And I felt very blessed to be able to be out there. And the one thing I hope to accomplish is to get other people when I'm not here to want to be me.

JE: And that's great. So when you get up in the morning is your mind constantly going about the foundation? And you've got so many irons in the fire going and all of that. Is that driving you every single day when you get up?

LS: Yes, it is. But it's really funny you know, people jokingly talk about the lucky sperm club. They use that loosely sometimes or crudely as an example. But every morning when I get up I really do, I meant first of all, I look at Charlie and I look at the two of us taking a gamble. And I really am very much aware of how lucky, how blessed I am and how much I miss Charlie. But also I do look at it, Benjamin Franklin used to wake up in the morning and he would say, "What good can I do in the world today?" At night he would say, "Did I do it?" I really do try each day and maybe it's part of what sustains me because I am to some extent alone like I was when I started in grade school and maybe it has served me well. But I do spend a lot of time with all of these wonderful people that I have, thinking about what we can do, how we can improve education in Oklahoma and what we can do to address the needs of the homeless. I do spend a great deal of time reading and learning about that. I just think that I am one of the luckiest people alive.

JE: You sound like someone who almost has to have something going on in your mind, you'll have that until you are almost 100 years old.

LS: Well, once I was asked to do a job and I said to them, "I don't know people in New York. I don't know people in Palm Beach. How can I do this job?" And he said to me, "Well, your passion and your commitment will keep it." As I said, my nickname when I was two years old was Fireball. I am definitely a Type-A personality, but I feel very blessed that it has served me well to be like that. So, fortunately or unfortunately my mind doesn't stop and I am always thinking and going (laughter). I don't know how to relax. I think as you get older it is something you really should try to learn how to do, but it's not easy and I am working on it.

JE: Just to get away and have fun?

LS: Yes.

JE: Well, thank you for this time.

LS: It was my pleasure.

JE: It was very, very nice of you to welcome us into your home and give us this time because your story will be inspirational, as it has been already but now it's another avenue where it can be inspirational.

LS: Thank you.

JE: Thank you very much.

Chapter 16 - 0:30**Conclusion**

John Erling: You have just heard Lynn Schusterman and her story of philanthropy through The Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation. Lynn has recommended books on philanthropy, Jews and Judaism in America, Israel and the Holocaust. Please consult our For Further Reading section and our Bookstore. Lynn's story promises to teach philanthropy at a very early age. Her story was brought to you through the generosity of the Founding Sponsors of VoicesofOklahoma.com.