

Bosse Honored by Beth Jacob Congregation

BY CLARA HARTER

Mayor Lili Bosse felt the spirit of her parents beside her last Sunday when she received the Distinguished Leadership Award from her childhood synagogue of Beth Jacob. Bosse was selected as the first-ever recipient of the inaugural award for her dogged devotion to fighting antisemitism, her compassionate leadership as mayor, and her commitment to fostering an inclusive city for all community members.

Such accomplishments are everything her parents had dreamed for her after

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Mayor Bosse received the award from Rabbi Topp (left) and Executive Board President of Beth Jacob Congregation Jonathan Stern.

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surviving unimaginable horrors during the Holocaust and forging a new life in Beverly Hills.

“They moved to Beverly Hills as immigrants because they wanted to provide the American dream for their only daughter and they wanted me to give back and to learn from what they had to go through,” Bosse said. “Accepting this honor was really my way to honor them and to honor everything that I have grown to be.”

Bosse was granted the award at the congregation’s annual Tiferet Gala, which took place at the Peterson Automotive Museum on March 19, or as it’s known in the Jewish calendar, the 27th of Adar. The gala is a celebration of the community and an important fundraiser for the congregation.

For Bosse, accepting the award was a “full-circle moment.”

The Orthodox synagogue is the congregation where her parents Rose and Jack Toren attended services every Saturday. Its members became like a second family to the Toren household, welcoming them with kind and open arms when they settled in Beverly Hills.

Jack never missed a Sabbath service and had even attended morning prayers on the day he passed in 1993. The congregation’s former Rabbi Abner Weiss married Bosse and her husband Jon over 30 years ago.

Although Bosse doesn’t identify as an Orthodox Jew – she and her husband prefer to attend a synagogue where they can be seated together – the Beth Jacob Congregation nevertheless holds a very special place in her heart.

“That was an extremely emotionally powerful evening for me,” she said, referring to the gala. “It was a very full circle moment

considering that my parents literally shaped me at that particular synagogue.”

“That synagogue has been part of the fiber and the fabric of our community for decades and decades,” she added.

As mayor, Bosse has tried to embody the values that her parents and the congregation instilled in her: bravery, compassion, kindness and faith in humanity.

After all, it was these very values that allowed her parents to both survive the Holocaust and overcome the great grief of knowing that the rest of their family members had perished.

Bosse’s mother Rose was among the very few survivors of Auschwitz. She escaped during the death march that took place from Jan. 17 to 21, 1945, when Soviet forces were approaching and the Germans decided to evacuate the remaining 56,000 prisoners out of Auschwitz.

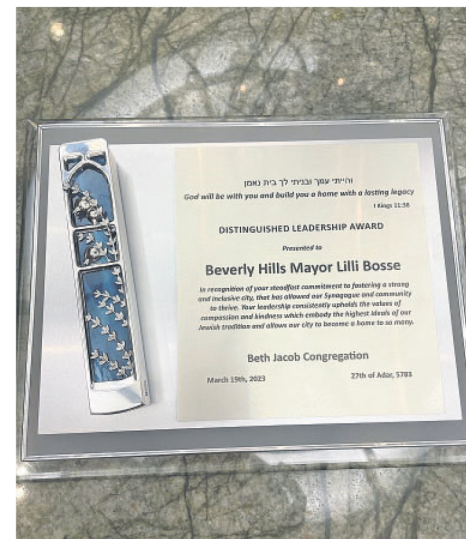
“They were taking the prisoners out to march and die right before liberation and she decided to have the bravery to walk out of the line and hide behind a tree,” Bosse said.

At the time Rose was just a teenager, but because of that moment of courage she was able to survive and watch with great pride as almost 70 years later her daughter was sworn in as Mayor of Beverly Hills in 2014. A year later Rose passed at the age of 91.

Growing up, Bosse’s parents always encouraged her to speak out against injustice. And that’s exactly what she has done as mayor, be it presenting at the Mayors Summit Against Antisemitism in Athens, Greece, or marching in the name of Justice for Mahsa Amini in the streets of Los Angeles.

Bosse has also appeared on “Dr. Phil” to speak about the importance of fighting antisemitism and called for accountability after antisemitic fliers were found in Beverly Hills in October 2022.

“I constantly speak out regarding hate and human rights,” said Bosse. “The fact that they (the Beth Jacob Congregation) acknowledged that, it really touched my soul in the deepest way. ●



The plaque given to Bosse from Beth Jacob