



Melvin Abbe Dow

February 28, 1928 - October 18, 2023

On October 18, 2023, Melvin Dow died at home, surrounded by his family.

Melvin Abbe Dow was born in Houston, Texas, on February 28, 1928. His parents were Lily (née Rosenbaum) and Harry Dow, both of whom immigrated as small children with their own parents and siblings to the United States in about 1905 from Tsarist Russia (Kishinev and Luptz, respectively) as part of the so-called Galveston Plan.

Melvin was educated in Houston public schools: Sutton Elementary, Albert Sidney Johnston Jr. High, and San Jacinto High, where he was Texas State Debate champion. He was a Boy Scout and an Eagle Scout (with Bronze and Silver Oak Leaves), in addition to being a Senior Patrol Leader. As a teenager, he was active in Houston's B'nai Brith Youth Program, winning the National Sermon and National Debate competitions, and serving as AZA President (Aleph Gadol) of his local chapter.

Melvin received a B.A. from Rice Institute in 1948 (Phi Beta Kappa, with Honors in Philosophy), and a J.D. (magna cum laude) from Harvard Law School in 1951, where he was an editor of the Harvard Law Review. After law school, he served as a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Army on the staff of the Army General Counsel's Office in Washington, D.C., from 1951-1954, where his responsibilities ranged from work on government-procurement contracts to

matters related to the Army-McCarthy hearings.

After his military service, Melvin returned to Houston, where he joined his father Harry Dow's law practice. They were later joined by Edmund Cogburn and then by Melvin's brother Bernard O. Dow and his brother-in-law Abraham P. Friedman, and others.

Dow & Dow became Dow, Cogburn & Friedman, a leading commercial real-estate and nationally-known boutique firm.

Melvin Dow himself specialized in business transactions, particularly real estate development and finance (shopping centers, multi-family and subdivision development, and office buildings, including Greenway Plaza and Allen Center). He did extensive legal work for Weingarten Realty Investors and served for many years on the Weingarten's Board of Trust Managers, where he worked alongside his childhood and lifelong friend and Weingarten's CEO, Stanford J. Alexander. He was board-certified by the Specialization Board of the Texas State Bar in Real Estate Law, and he was regularly voted by his peers for inclusion in Best Lawyers and Super Lawyers of Texas.

In 1958, Melvin married Frieda Katz of Laredo, Texas. He frequently said that the marriage was the best thing that ever happened to him. Frieda and Melvin had five sons: David, Mark, Steven, Stuart, and Leon. He was immensely proud of each of them.

Melvin Dow was deeply committed to Jewish identity, education, culture, continuity, and to the State of Israel, which in 1954 he visited for the first of what would be dozens of trips. Because he believed that education begins at home, for some twenty years Melvin prepared weekly Shabbat discussions, typically based on his own study of Pirkei Avot (Sayings of the Fathers) or the weekly Torah portion, among other texts, for his family's Friday-night Sabbath dinners.

Melvin served as National President of the Board of Directors of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). He was on the Advisory Boards of the University of Texas and Rice University Hillel Foundations, the Rice University Jewish Studies Program, and Houston's Congregation Beth Yeshurun. He also served as President of Beth Yeshurun. Melvin was Vice President of the Jewish Federation of Houston, a trustee of the Jewish Publication Society, and on the boards of the Anti-Defamation League and several other Jewish organizations. He was a recipient of the Humanitarian Award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews. In 1995, the Houston chapter of AIPAC established the Melvin A. Dow Distinguished Leadership Award in his honor. Melvin was also on the Board of Trustees of St. John's School in Houston and on the Harvard Law School Visiting Committee.

In his younger years, Melvin enjoyed playing softball and basketball. He played tennis into his 80s (singles only; he said he was no good at doubles).

Melvin's younger brother Bernard died in 2004.

Melvin Dow is survived by his wife Frieda; their sons David, wife Katya, and their son Lincoln; Mark; Steven and his children, Abby, Rachel, and Hannah; Stuart and his children, Eleanor, Nathaniel, and Juliet; and Leon, wife Bruria, and their children, Yael (and husband Harel Wise), Shiraz, Yifat, Yiska, and Evyatar; his sister Frances Friedman; and his sister-in-law Helen Dow.

Melvin Dow will be remembered as a man of compassion, intelligence, curiosity, humor, and integrity.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to AIPAC, American Friends of Kolot, or The Emery/Wiener School.

Funeral services will be held at Congregation Beth Yeshurun, 4525 Beechnut, Houston, TX, on Sunday, Oct. 22, 2023, at 9:30 am. Services will be livestreamed on the synagogue website:

<https://www.bethyeshurun.org/track.php?id=53e6aacad32049908c447f7232049b24&color=b3b3b5&url=https%3A%2F%2Fboxcast.tv%2Fview%2Fmelvin-dow-funeral-jptnjgg6oqhv8titjpwh&h=5681f>

Cemetery Details

Beth Yeshurun Post Oak Cemetery

7445 Awty School Ln.
Houston, TX 77055

Previous Events

Funeral Service

OCT **22**. 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM (CT)

Congregation Beth Yeshurun
4525 Beechnut St.
Houston, TX 77096

<https://www.bethyeshurun.org/>

Graveside Service

OCT **22**. 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM (CT)

Beth Yeshurun Post Oak Cemetery
7445 Awty School Ln.
Houston, TX 77055

Tribute Wall

HS

“ I just found out about your dad, he was a very good person
Hal

Hal schusterman - June 15, 2024 at 06:58 AM

ST

“ Our heartfelt condolences to the Dow family on this tragic loss. May his memory be for a blessing. Sheila and Louis Train

Sheila Train - October 22, 2023 at 12:02 PM

RB

“ Sincere condolences to the family. I am so very sorry for your loss. May God provide the necessary peace and comfort to your family and friends during this difficult time. Please remember these words of encouragement from the Bible: “ Jesus plainly told her: “I am the resurrection and the life. He that exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life.” —John 11:20-25.

Ruby Bell - October 20, 2023 at 11:53 AM

TM

Mr. Dow lived and died as a Jew. Your particular quote is not respectful of his religious beliefs. Christians and Jews have built a partnership and connection, which your choice of quote on his funeral page does not honor. Remember the Hebrew Bible and the Golden Rule of Leviticus in both its DO and DON'T mandates.
...May this great man Melvin Dow Z"L rest in eternal peace, may his mourners be comforted, and may his memory be eternally for a blessing.

T M - January 21, 2024 at 05:17 PM