



**IAJGS Annual International Conference on Jewish Genealogy
Sheraton Hotel, Philadelphia, PA / August 21, 2024**

**Gala Banquet / Awards Announcement
by Jane Berenbeim, President
IAJGS (International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies)**

The next award goes to a pioneer in this field whose career spans 5 decades and 40 years, **resulting in her 4th major award from IAJGS, a record in itself.**

The award goes to:

"Miriam Weiner for her expanded and innovative Routes to Roots Foundation (RTRF) website. Renowned as a unique resource for Jewish genealogy, RTRF provides invaluable information about Jewish records from archives across Eastern Europe. Miriam's efforts reflect her lifelong passion for uncovering and sharing unique Jewish family history resources. She has significantly diversified RTRF's offerings, adding a wide array of maps, surname lists, articles and documents from various locations and time periods. With over three million records, RTRF now offers researchers both information and context to better understand their ancestors' lives."

Miriam's Acceptance Speech

Thank you, Jane, and to the *Awards Committee* for recognizing my work and the **Routes to Roots Foundation** website. Also thank you to **Phil Goldfarb** for nominating my website for this award. Phil is the president of the Tulsa JGS and author/creator of the *Weekly News Nosh*.

This website was created in 1994, as an outgrowth of my two books and the recognition that digitizing my work would enable more people to know about it and to hopefully benefit from it.

In my long career, many people have helped me and contributed their expertise and financial support, but today I want to recognize several of them for their specific involvement with this website.

In the beginning, I worked with **David Kleiman** who got the website up and running for many years until his untimely death in 2014. Stepping up then was **Steve Morse** who continues to this day in providing his genius abilities in maintaining and expanding the website into new heights with his creative ideas. Also, in the beginning, **Gary Mokotoff** was and is continually supportive of my work and the website, promoting it through his "*Nu, What's New*" publication.

Also, on this team in **no** particular order are:

Jay Osborn, living in Lviv, who is known to many of you for the wonderful maps he creates for the Geshet Galicia website. He has done the same thing for me for the last 7 years with the hundreds of maps that I have collected from large and small towns throughout Eastern Europe and that now appear on the RTRF website because of Jay.

Next, I am eternally grateful to **Stanley Diamond** for his collaboration with me and interest in my work for the last 20+ years. Stanley shares updates with me for my website and also asks for documentation of various data sets that conflict with his data. Stanley has a group of volunteers and staff that is equal to none in my opinion. Among them is **Mark Halpern** -- we have worked together in many ways for at least 15 years and this collaborative effort has evolved into a friendship that I treasure!

Next, I want to recognize **Logan Kleinwaks** for his help and expertise with my Ukraine telephone books and my various business directories. The originals of this material were donated to the Library of Congress and Logan was helpful to me during that process and also his working with Steve to get them up on my website.

Another team member is **Paul Zoglin**, who manages the databases at the Belarus SIG at JewishGen and also has been instrumental in adding my Belarus material to the RTRF website as well as collaborating with me on other projects.

During the last 5 years, I have been working with probably 10- 12 people at **Family Search** where they decided to feature the RTRF website and have created individual Wiki pages for each of the 6 countries where I work; they also have added many of my business directories and telephone books to their digital library collection as part of creating a place for me among their library contributors. In particular, I am delighted to work with and grateful to **David Rencher** and **Todd Knowles**.

During COVID, we all discovered Zoom presentations and I had to do two of them for two IAJGS conferences. Both of my presentations featured this website and I was blessed to have **Hadassah Lipsius** as the lecture moderator because she was able to jump in and fix any little technical issues I had, she knew the subject matter and was a great source of calmness and security to me during these lectures. As many of you know, I prefer a "live" presentation anytime!

None of this would have been possible without the extraordinary cooperation, friendship and caring from archivists throughout Eastern Europe and I enjoy the continuing collaboration and their friendship to this day.

Throughout these many decades, there was always one person I could depend upon as an avid listener and supporter of my work – thank you to my sister, **Keren Weiner**, a genealogist in her own right, who is here tonight.

I promise to keep adding to this website and finding new name lists, as long as I am able to do so. Frankly speaking, I love what I do