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HOLLYWOOD TEMPLE BETH EL CELEBRATES 70TH ANNIVERSARY -- HON. MEL LEVINE (Extension of Remarks - March 20, 1992)

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HON. MEL LEVINE**in the House of Representatives**

FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 1992

- Mr. LEVINE of California. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to honor Hollywood Temple Beth El, on the celebration of their 70th anniversary. This occasion is particularly special to me, as my family has been closely tied to the temple since its inception. As a tribute to the temple, I would like to include in the **Record** a small piece of their rich history.
- Seventy years ago, on January 26, 1922, Hollywood Temple Beth El was founded to serve the needs of the fledgling Jewish community that had arisen as a result of the burgeoning cinema industry in Hollywood. The first Friday evening services were held in a bungalow on Wilton Place just south of Sunset Boulevard. An improvised Ark, two Torah scrolls and some folding chairs transformed the living room into a house of worship.
- A few months later a lot was purchased at 1058 North Wilton Place and plans for the erection of a temple were under way. In September of that year, services for the High Holy Days were held in their new building. Despite the fact that the interior was unfurnished, temple members began to give of themselves by donating among other things memorial lights, a Torah, and their time and energy. Rabbi Alstead was the first to occupy the pulpit and the little 600-seat temple began to attract men and women from all walks of life.
- Although the temple struggled through the days of the national economic depression, its members held tough. At times it was necessary to collect a few dollars at board meetings to pay for gas, electricity, and other utilities. Yet the doors were always open and the Jews of Hollywood knew they could depend upon Temple Beth El for a "minyon" three times daily.
- Many of the congregation's young men left to fight for freedom's cause when World War II broke out. Some never returned. Boys who but a few years previous had recited their bar mitzvah speeches from the pulpit became names on the memorial tablet in the temple's foyer. Also during the war years, the temple Sisterhood worked countless hours sewing garments for the Red Cross. The product of their fingers kept many a soldier warm in the foxholes on the battlefronts of Europe and Asia. So faithfully did they perform their duties that the American Red Cross honored them with certificates citing their extraordinary service.
- Recognizing that the new Hollywood Freeway was compelling many worshippers, whose homes were in its path, to move from the district, and that the new generation needed a more modern building, Hyman Levine activated a plan to construct a new temple. In April 1948, a large lot was purchased on Crescent Heights Boulevard and the new Hollywood Temple Beth El was soon in the blueprint state. In 1949, through the leadership of Harry Sherman, president of the temple, a gala fund-raising show was put on at the Biltmore Bowl. Over \$40,000 was raised at this event in which Eddie Cantor was master of ceremonies. While this event revitalized the whole organization, only through tireless effort and dedicated leadership, was the congregation able to help make the new building possible.
- Today, Hollywood Temple Beth El provides a focal point for the community, a vehicle for the teaching of ethical and spiritual social values to our youth and a spiritual haven for refugees from oppression. Rabbi Norbert Weinberg, teacher and spiritual leader, presently guides the congregation, not only with respect for the rich history and traditions of the temple, but with foresight and vision for the future, helping to create a new chapter in the temple's history.
- This year the temple is celebrating its 70th anniversary on April 5, 1992. At that time the congregation will honor two dedicated and committed members for their civil, humanitarian, and religious causes--Frances and Arthur Linsk. Arthur Linsk, is chairman of the board and past president. Frances Linsk is currently a member of the executive board and past president of the temple sisterhood. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. and Mrs. Linsk for their contributions. The honorees are exemplary of the purpose and function of this temple.
- I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring Hollywood Temple Beth El on its 70th anniversary and to wish its members continued success for the future.

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