ELUL STORIES
Sharing our stories, sharing lives, creating community

_Elul is the month leading up to Rosh HaShanah. Each day during the month, a different Temple Beth Torah congregant will respond to the question:_

*What is the best gift you have ever received?*

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**The Promise**

*Sandy Berland*

My father died while I was still in college, but he has been my guidepost throughout my life. Despite - maybe because of - a severe case of rheumatic fever as an infant, which nearly took his life and left him with a life-long heart murmur, he went on to box and fence at the University of Alabama. He was in the ROTC and earned a degree in engineering, and after graduation he wanted to join the Seabees, but because of the heart murmur, the Navy wouldn't take him. But when war was declared against Germany and Japan, the Army was eager to have him in the officers' corps, and just a few days after D-Day, he landed in Normandy, where he earned the Bronze Medal. After the war, he became a lawyer and dedicated his life to public service and to raising a family. He was only 58, awaiting surgery to replace his failing heart valve, when he died.

My father passed on to me his love for literature and history and for justice, and he instilled in me his singular belief that all people deserve to be treated equally and that above all else, we must always strive to do the right thing. He taught not by words, but by example, an example against which I have always tried to measure my own conduct. And it is an example I think about especially at this time of year.

Sandy Berland, and his wife Susan, and their 4 kids have been members of TBT for over 20 years. Sandy is our immediate past president and a wonderful lawyer. He is also a regular at our Shabbat morning Torah Study and Friday night services.