



December 2, 2005

Fishman Celebration
c/o Professor Nancy H. Hornberger
3700 Walnut Street, 3rd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6216

Michael H. Steinhart
Chairman

Rabbi Irving Greenberg, Ph.D.
President

Rabbi David Gedzelman
Executive Director

Jonathan J. Greenberg ז"ל
Founding Director

Dear Professor Hornberger:

My wife, Blu, and I have been admirers and friends of Professor Joshua Fishman for decades. Unfortunately, we cannot join you on Sunday, September 10, 2006 for the celebration of his 80th birthday. We would like to be included in the circle of friends and followers who honor him at this time.

Professor Joshua Fishman has been a major scholar for decades now and he does not need our blessing because his achievement is recognized worldwide. Nor do we have scholarly standing in his field, so our words of praise would not add much.

However, from a distance, we have seen two other aspects of his work. One is in the revival and advances in Yiddish literature, language and scholarship. It is not only that Yiddish long consigned to the dustbin of history has made a remarkable comeback. It is the fact that his scholarship has been mainstream and recognized in the general culture. Thus Yiddish culture is honored not as a ghetto shtetl that must be preserved but as a field of humanities and of universal scholarship.

The other aspect we admire is his personal role model. Shikl is a pacesetter in his field and he is also a mentor to up-and-coming generations. He represents standards that recognize no favoritism but uphold the broadest measures of humanistic scholarship. He represents a personal model of the engaged and committed professor whose scholarship remains objective and outstanding. In this light, too, he is one of a kind. In honoring him we honor the best possibilities in ourselves.

The Psalmist says that to attain 80 years represents *gevurot*, i.e., extra strength, extra vitality and extra power. In Joshua Fishman's case this means not only that his extra energy has brought him to the wisdom and strength of 80 years but that his vitality and his scholarly power continues. May he live and contribute until 120.

Sincerely,


Yitz and Blu Greenberg

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