

WISCONSIN

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Ramah has had an important place in my life and the life of my family for fifty-seven years; almost as long as it has existed. My first summer at Ramah was as a co-counselor of the oldest girls cabin at Ramah Wisconsin in 1950. I had completed my first year of college at Hunter College in New York City and at the Teachers' Institute at The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS). I had met a wonderful fellow student (Rabbi Alex M. Shapiro, z"l) whom I would later marry. It was his idea that we both work at Ramah that summer as counselors; I knew of Ramah's reputation as a leading Hebrew-speaking camp with high educational standards and was eager to work there. Naomi Cohen, Evelyn Greenberg, Moshe Greenberg, and other JTS students and faculty were also on staff. Rabbi Hillel Silverman was camp director. It was an extraordinary summer of intellectual and social stimulation for us all, and we made lifelong friendships. The *hanichim* were a special group who signed on willingly and enthusiastically to the ideas of study, *ivrit*, and *tefillah*. Ramah Wisconsin was a beautiful camp located on a large, beautiful lake in a very rural area. The setting added to the specialness of that summer. We returned for three more summers, each similarly enjoyable and special in many ways.

In 1951, Louis Newman, z"l, became *rosh mahaneh* and embarked on what was later termed the "Newman Revolution" at Ramah Wisconsin, which eventually sparked significant changes and creative ideas in all the Ramah camps. Many of his students went on to have a significant impact on the educational philosophy and practices of Conservative Judaism, not only at Ramah but also throughout all the educational institutions of the movement. Among the many we worked with and learned from in those summers at Ramah were Seymour (Shlomo) Fox, Sara Fox, Shalom Segal, Shalom Spiegel, and Dani Elazar.

The beloved camp song ends with *mi yittenech lehofet le'alfei revavah* (at least, it used to). Ramah has been for me, my family, and thousands of others an example of all that is good, valuable, pleasurable, and inspiring in our tradition, as lived in the macrocosm of a complete Jewish life. All that can be said looking ahead is *kol hakavod; mehayil el hayil*.