

BJ Rosenfeld, B.S.'68, M.S.'73

Life as a Chameleon

Parents learn through their children. BJ Rosenfeld's recently completed memoir, *The Chameleon in the Closet*, clearly documents that learning process.

The work was inspired by Rosenfeld's experience of "raising children who have turned out to be more 'religious' than their parents." She and her husband, Peter Rosenfeld, B.A.'69, M.B.A.'80, are Conservative Jews who "always kept a somewhat secular home. But our house has always been kosher. And we always observed a lot of the traditions."

At college, however, the Rosenfelds' sons delved deeply into their religious roots. While at Princeton, older son Zalman took a Judaic studies course and "wound up spending a lot of time with the Orthodox rabbi who taught it." Fearing that her son had "joined a cult," Rosenfeld discussed the situation with the rabbi, who "assured me that Zalman was just becoming more Jewish." Zalman went on to study at several yeshivas in Israel, including Mir (known as "the Princeton of yeshivas"). He also began dating the woman he would marry.

As her son learned more about his faith, Rosenfeld herself "started finding out about matchmakers, wigmakers, the rules of Shabbos ... I learned so much. That's what the book is about: learning through my kids. At some point, our kids make their own decisions, and we have to decide whether or not to follow them."

After the birth of their first child, Zalman and his wife moved to Israel. Now married almost nine years, they have seven children; the family resides in a suburb of Jerusalem.

Younger son Chaim followed a similar path to Orthodox Judaism. He and his wife live in New York City with their two children.

The Chameleon in the Closet derives its title from Rosenfeld's two wardrobes. One includes slacks, shorts and the other attire "I wear in my everyday life." The second consists of the hats, long-sleeved shirts and long skirts Rosenfeld wears when visiting her sons' families. When she switches from one wardrobe to the other, "my persona changes along with it."

Rosenfeld, who earned degrees in Spanish and reading at UAlbany, is a retired teacher. Her freelance work has appeared in the *Albany Times Union*, *Saratoga Business Journal*, *Glens Falls Business Journal*, *Boom Magazine*, *Kasbrus Magazine* and *The Jewish World*, and on Northeast Public Radio.

The Chameleon in the Closet is available at www.amazon.com. Rosenfeld's Web site is www.readbj.com.

— Carol Olechowski



graduate in educational studies, Miss Ham is focusing on special education and literacy, maintaining an outstanding academic record. This year's award reminds us that our 55th anniversary gift to the University is a rededication to the Class of 1955 Award Fund, and we hope our class will again support our mission. The award program and the methods by which you can give were outlined in our last newsletter. You may also consult www.albany.edu/giving for ways to donate.

Class notes counselor: John Orser, jsorser@stny.rr.com

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counselor: Erin Potter and Sarah Casano, two outstanding students pursuing careers in teaching, received the Class of 1956 scholarships given at the School of Education's 2010 Awards and Scholarships Ceremony May 11. Keep the contributions coming in for the Class of 1956 Scholarship Fund. **Virginia Hilfiker Ahart** chairs the Community Preservation Committee for the Town of Southampton, Mass., a committee that oversees open space/recreation, community housing, and historic-preservation projects. In addition, Virginia supervises social-studies student teachers for Mt. Holyoke College. Virginia and her husband enjoy their widely spaced six grandchildren, ranging in age from newly born to early 20s. In 2008, **Claudette Rudolph Bolakas** and her husband went to Paris for 10 days, staying in an apartment on the Avenue de Malakoff, 16th Arrondissement, not far from the Arc de Triumphant. In September 2009, they took a short trip on the Norwegian Cruise Line up the coast of New England to Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Class notes counselor: Arnold Newman, fish7hill@aol.com

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recipient of the New York State Mathematics Educators Hall of Fame Award. Do you believe it?!? Fifty-five is right around the corner! Several class members have suggested a get-together to mark the occasion. Class reunions at the University are now held in the fall during Homecoming Weekend. However, some of the "older" classes from the State College for Teachers still plan their reunions for June. We can celebrate in