

JEROME B. MANN

In the summer of 1987, Jerome B. Mann, his wife, Lillian, and his sister and brother-in-law, Beth El members Rhoda Kreiter-Levine and Major General William Levine, donated these stained glass windows of the Twelve Tribes to Beth El in memory of their parents. The windows were installed adjacent to the new main entryway into the renovated sanctuary.

Born in Chicago, "Jerry" Mann (1921-2016) earned a degree in aeronautical engineering. As there was no aircraft industry in Chicago at that time, he launched a successful career in insurance. When he retired, with no formal training, he began painting, made engravings, and designed stained glass windows that he donated to local synagogues. From his basement in the town of Golf, he created colorful windows of Biblical themes for Congregation B'nai Tikvah (Deerfield), Kesser Maariv (Skokie), Beth Hillel Bnai Emunah (Wilmette), and others.

Mann's stained glass windows were removed during the 2016 renovation of the corridor around the sanctuary. Beth El plans to install the windows in a new, permanent location sometime next year.

THE TWELVE TRIBES: THEIR FLAGS & STONES

Stained glass windows created and designed by Jerome B. Mann

Artist's Statement

There are indications that banners or emblems were in use among the Israelites in biblical times. The expression "the banner of their patriarchal house" appears to denote the physical emblem of a tribe, a patriarchal house, or a family, and it was thus understood in the Midrash, which gives the following description of the flags of the 12 tribes. There were distinguishing signs for each prince; each had a flag (*degel*) and a different color for every flag, corresponding to the precious stones on the breastplate (lit. "heart") of Aaron. It was from these that governments learned to provide themselves with flags of various colors. Each tribe had its own prince and its flag whose color corresponded to the color of its stone. Because of the medium used, certain colors, like black and white, had to be altered to be "nearly so." The use of antique stained glass, even in ordinary or twilight, helps the viewer imagine the tribes of our fathers with considered embellishment and joy. Some source material was found in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* and other classic Judaic literature. Interpretive artistic expression is the result of these sources.