

through oral histories, the National Book Festival, and the Gershwin Prize for Popular Song. Dr. Billington's brilliance, devotion, and vision throughout his career is unparalleled and incredibly appreciated.

Marcelle and I were happy to welcome Dr. Billington to Vermont in 2012, to celebrate the sesquicentennial of the historic Land Grant College Act, authored by Vermont Senator Justin Morrill in the 1800s. Like Justin Morrill, Dr. Billington and I share a profound regard for the importance of Federal investment in access to education. I have deeply appreciated Dr. Billington's commitment to preserving and advancing the incredible resource that is the Library of Congress. Marcelle and I both thank him for his service and wish he and his wife Marjorie well as he begins this new chapter.

THE LOST SHUL MURAL AT OHAVI ZEDEK SYNAGOGUE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am proud to recognize Aaron Goldberg, Jeffrey Potash and the greater Ohavi Zedek community for their tireless efforts in relocating a treasured artifact in our State's Jewish community. For nearly two decades, the historically significant Shul Mural—a 105-year-old rare mural—has sat hidden behind the walls of Chai Adam Synagogue in Burlington's north end district. In May, after years of careful restoration and planning, the mural was safely moved to its new home, where it will finally be displayed to honor a prominent period in our State's Jewish history.

Burlington's Jewish history dates back to the mid-1880s, when a large influx of Lithuanian Jews traveled from Eastern Europe to settle in Vermont. Ohavi Zedek Synagogue was established in 1885 by the Lithuanians, and has since remained a thriving community stronghold for Burlington's Jewish population. In 1889, the Chai Adam Synagogue was created by a group of Orthodox Jews previously aligned with Ohavi Zedek. It is here the Shul Mural was created.

Stretching floor-to-ceiling, the Shul Mural depicts two lions and the Ten Commandments, two iconic symbols in the Jewish faith. The Shul Mural, painted by Ben Zion Black, uses a rare artistic style, one that dates back to before World War II and was prevalent in wooden synagogues across Eastern Europe. At that time, vast murals of iconic, hand-painted images sprawled entire walls and ceilings to capture the imagery held in Jewish Torah readings. The Shul Mural presents a rare folk design mixed with modern painting techniques, yet little is actually known about its genre, as most of these works were sadly destroyed during the Holocaust.

In 1939, Ohavi Zedek and Chai Adam rejoined, and the old Chai Adam was sold and used as retail space and later a rug store. It was here that Adam

Goldberg, a volunteer and historian of Ohavi Zedek Synagogue, discovered the mural. Through the years, the Shul Mural sat uncovered and ill-preserved, until 1986 when the space was renovated to an apartment complex, and Mr. Goldberg along with Ohavi Zedek archivist, Jeffrey Potash, pleaded with the new owner to cover the mural with a false wall so that it would not bear further decay.

Over two decades later, when the apartment building was again sold in 2012, its new owner, Steven Offenhartz, agreed to donate the mural to Ohavi Zedek. The false wall that had covered the Shul Mural for more than 20 years was lifted, and the construction team worked with Constance Silver, a conservator from Brattleboro, to stabilize and recover what was lost. At that point, decades of deterioration had taken their toll, and the once vibrant paint began to dull and flake away. Piece by piece, Constance reinforced and restored the painting.

On May 6, 2015, after decades in hiding, the mural was successfully transported to Ohavi Zedek where it will be cleaned and further restored. The hard work and dedication of the entire team with the support of Burlington's community—which raised over \$400,000 to support the restoration and transportation of this historic piece of art—made this incredible feat possible.

Adam Goldberg, Jeffrey Potash, Steven Offenhartz, Constance Silver, and the many other members of the Ohavi Zedek and greater Burlington community should be congratulated for their support and dedication to protecting and restoring one of our State's most significant treasures. This important piece of Burlington's Jewish history will finally be on proper display for all to enjoy.

I ask unanimous consent that that an article on the Shul Mural from the Burlington Free Press be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Burlington Free Press, May 14, 2015]

“LOST” JEWISH MURAL FINDS NEW HOME
(By Zach Despart, Free Press Staff Writer)

When the project was done, it might have appeared to onlookers that a construction crew had no difficulty moving the Lost Shul Mural to a new home in the Old North End.

After all, the construction crew only had to remove the roof of a Hyde Street building, lift via crane a brittle, multi-panel, 105-year-old rare piece of art, place the mural on a flatbed truck, drive it nearly half a mile uphill and, with the strength of many workers, push the artwork, on rollers, into Ohavi Zedek Synagogue.

All in a day's work for a volunteer group of local residents, who for almost three decades have been trying to find a way to move the historic artifact from a hidden alcove on Hyde Street to more suitable location.

“I had hoped to someday move the mural, but it's been over 29 years we've been waiting for this time,” Ohavi Zedek archivist Aaron Goldberg said Wednesday. “It's a remarkable achievement for the community to have this here.”

The story of the lost work begins in 1910, when Burlington's Jewish community commissioned Lithuanian artist Ben Zion to paint a mural within the Chai Adam synagogue, which was built on Hyde Street in 1889. The floor-to-ceiling mural contains three panels that depict Jewish iconography, including two lions and the Ten Commandments.

In 1939, Chai Adam merged with Ohavi Zedek and vacated the Hyde Street building.

Congregants, in an effort to preserve the mural, hid the piece behind a false wall. The ownership of the building changed hands several times in the following decades, and a private owner in 1986 converted the building into apartments.

That year, Goldberg and other archivists persuaded the owner to wall off the mural permanently with Sheetrock, so the art would be safe for a later move. Many tenants over the next two decades never knew the mural was there.

But Burlington's Jewish community never forgot about the lost mural. In 2012, some 26 years since the mural disappeared from public view, the archivists of Ohavi Zedek worked with the owner of the building to uncover the artwork.

They decided to move the artifact to Ohavi Zedek and proudly display the mural in the lobby. For the next three years, a dedicated group of congregants developed a plan for the big move, and raised more than \$400,000.

“This is a very innovative job,” Goldberg said. “This took two and a half years of planning.”

THE BIG MOVE

The moment Goldberg for decades had waited for arrived Wednesday. Shortly after 8 a.m. on the warm, calm morning, crews used a crane to lift off a pre-cut section of the roof of the synagogue-turned-apartment-building on Hyde Street, exposing the old cupola that held the mural.

The mural itself was not visible to onlookers. For protection, it was encased in cushioning made of Chinese silk and other materials. Bob Neeld, the structural engineer, said this project required special attention to minimize any vibrations that could damage the mural.

“Even a three-story building can be built to handle several inches of movement,” Neeld said. For this move, Neeld added, the crew was hoping to limit movement “to a couple thousandths of an inch.”

The mural itself is made of less than half an inch of plaster on a wood lathe. To stabilize the century-old material before the move, crews reinforced the artwork with mortar.

After the roof was off, the crane lifted the fragile mural, encased in a specially built steel frame, from the second floor of the structure and placed the artifact onto a flatbed truck. The mural and frame stood about feet tall and 15 feet wide, and weighed about 6,500 pounds.

Next came a slow parade through the Old North End, as the truck crept north on Hyde Street, east on Archibald Street and south on North Prospect Street, onto the lawn of Ohavi Zedek. A crowd of congregants, many of them with cameras, followed the informal procession. Burlington police blocked the intersections along the way. Perplexed motorists scratched their heads.

In front of the synagogue, another crane lifted the mural onto a makeshift bed of rollers on a wooden “landing pad.” Once there, about of dozen laborers pushed the 3-ton mural through an opening into the lobby. Next week, crews will hoist the mural above the lobby, where the art will hang for visitors to see, much as it did on Hyde Street 105 years ago.

Organizers planned the move to take 12 hours, but it took just three—a result engineers chalked up to good weather and meticulous planning.

COMMUNITY SIGNIFICANCE

Thousands of European synagogues—and the ornate murals within the places of worship—were destroyed by the Nazis during the Holocaust. The Lost Shul Mural is one of the few remaining murals from that time period in existence, said Goldberg, the Ohavi Zedek archivist.

Rabbi Joshua Chasan said the restoration of the lost mural was important not only to Burlington's Jewish community, but to Jews around the world.

"It's a benefit to the Jewish people internationally to have a piece of folk art from the world the Nazis destroyed," Chasan said. "In that sense, it's a memorial to those who died in the Holocaust and . . . to that Jewish world that perished."

Goldberg said that in addition to being a Jewish relic, the lost mural is an important connection to Burlington's rich history of hosting immigrants. Among the European immigrants who settled in Burlington during the 19th century were a group of Lithuanian Jews who moved into the city's North End, a neighborhood that for decades came to be known as Little Jerusalem.

"This is immensely important to the preservation immigration history in Vermont," Goldberg said. "It is the only example of its kind we know of in the U.S., and one of the few remaining remnants in the world."

Janie Cohen, director of the University of Vermont's Fleming Museum, said having such a rare piece of art in Burlington is remarkable.

"The fact there are so few of these left in the world, and we have one in Burlington—it's phenomenal," said Cohen, who watched the move Wednesday.

Former Vermont Gov. Madeleine Kunin, who helped raise money for the move and the restoration, walked with the crowd that followed the mural as the truck traveled through the Old North End.

"Today is so exciting, because many people thought it would never happen: How can you move something that's part of a wall?" she said.

One man on the synagogue lawn had a special connection to the lost art. He remembers seeing the mural 76 years ago. Mark Rosenthal, 84, grew up in Burlington and remembers seeing the mural as a child at Chai Adam in the 1930s.

"My father and I would go on holidays," Rosenthal said. "I remember the whole scene where the mural was, and I'm moved and touched by what is taking place today. I can't believe it's happening."

REMEMBERING NORMAN RUNNION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to honor the memory of a longtime journalist and true friend, Norman Runnion, who passed away in a Vermont hospital last month at the age of 85. Norm was many things to many people, but as they say of those in the newspaper business, he had ink coursing through his veins. Norm was born into a news family and he loved to tell stories of his early days spent in newsrooms, watching his father work the trade. But when tragedy struck home—Norm's father was killed after falling under a train—the younger Runnion dedicated himself to the profession.

From his gritty beginnings working the night cop beat on Chicago's South Side, Norm worked his way up as a reporter and editor with United Press International, covering the biggest stories of the day, including the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Warren Commission report. By the mid-1960s, Norm made the wise decision to ply his skills in Vermont and settled in at the Brattleboro Reformer. He soon made his way to the managing editor post, where he earned deep respect from his community and his State over the next two decades. When newspapers lost a bit of luster for Norm, he turned to the seminary and became an Episcopal priest, further dedicating his life in public service.

In retelling the path of his colorful news career, Norm suggested that fate led to his successes. "I was really incredibly lucky," he told a younger reporter who he once mentored. "Everywhere I went was one after another of the biggest news stories of the world. Those were the most monumental news stories of my generation."

I believe it was far more than luck that made Norm Runnion the talent that he was. It was devotion to a trade that he believed was worthy of that commitment. And his readers were incredibly lucky for that. I feel fortunate to have spoken with Norm shortly before his passing. Although weak, his spirit was still very much evident. In honor of that spirit, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a remembrance of Norm Runnion, which appeared on VTDigger.org.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From VTDigger.org, June 22, 2014]

VERMONT JOURNALIST NORMAN RUNNION DIES AT AGE 85

(By Kevin O'Connor)

Ask Norman Runnion for his life story and he'd point to a newspaper.

Take the old Kansas City Journal-Post, where he played as a child while his father pounded on a manual typewriter.

Or the Evanston (Ill.) Review, where he broke into journalism pasting up the sports page for \$5 a week.

Or Vermont's Brattleboro Reformer and The Herald of Randolph, where he capped a globetrotting career covering the world for wire service desks in New York, London, Paris and Washington, D.C.

"I'm a newspaperman, my father was a newspaperman—I love that word, I grew up on that word. It would never have occurred to me to be anything else."

"I'm a newspaperman, my father was a newspaperman—I love that word, I grew up on that word," he said in 1989. "It would never have occurred to me to be anything else."

Except an Episcopal priest, which he tried for a decade at midlife. But Runnion eventually returned to writing, which he did until shortly before his death Friday at Randolph's Gifford Medical Center at age 85.

When Newfane mystery novelist Archer Mayor wanted an interesting character name for his 1993 book "The Skeleton's Knee," he borrowed Norm Runnion's. But fiction was no match for the real man's feats.

The lifelong scribe made his own headlines as recently as two years ago, when he wrote

a widely circulated column recalling his work as Washington night news editor for United Press International when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated Nov. 22, 1963.

"For those of us who were around on that searing day in American history, it could have been yesterday, not 50 years ago," he recalled of an event for which UPI's coverage won a Pulitzer Prize. "I can hear today the haunting sounds of the muffled drums as they passed below our windows, leading the solemn procession past the thousands of people who jammed the sidewalks to watch and mourn."

Runnion went on to write the main story about the 888-page Warren Commission report on the shooting.

"The report was embargoed for a later release to give journalists time to absorb the contents instead of rushing out with the first available tidbits," he wrote. "But the stark principal finding was right there: Oswald, acting alone, had murdered America's beloved president."

Ask Runnion what sparked his interest in journalism and he'd rewind back to his birth in Kansas City, Mo., in 1929. His mother was a teacher; his father, like his grandfather, was a newspaperman.

"I grew up in a newsroom—quite literally," he told this reporter in a 1989 interview.

For Runnion, home was wherever his father worked. At age 12, his family moved to St. Louis and the Star-Times; in 1941, it was Chicago and the Sun.

Life changed in 1945 when Runnion's father fell underneath a commuter train and was killed. The next day, Runnion, then a high school junior, enrolled in a journalism course. Eventually receiving a degree from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism in 1951, he worked "four god-awful months" at the Chicago City News Bureau, servicing a half-dozen metropolitan papers with crime reports.

"I was covering the night police beat in the south side of Chicago, which had the second highest crime rate in the world outside of Singapore at that time," he recalled. "Earned 25 bucks a week for approximately an 80-hour week."

Runnion went on to join United Press International, reporting and editing in New York starting in 1953, in London in 1955 (where he covered Winston Churchill), in Paris in 1957 (where he covered Charles de Gaulle) and in Washington, D.C., in 1960.

"Came in on the tail end of the '60 elections, spent the next three years covering Kennedy, the civil rights movement, covered Martin Luther King's march on Washington, got assigned to cover the space program, covered Alan Shepard's flight, covered John Glenn's flight," he recalled.

Runnion was also the lead writer of UPI's coverage of the Cuban missile crisis.

"I was really incredibly lucky," he said. "Everywhere I went was one after another of the biggest news stories of the world. Those were the most monumental news stories of my generation. What the hell more do you want?"

In 1966, Runnion decided he needed a break. Moving to Vermont, he joined the Reformer in 1969 and became its managing editor in 1971. Working in Windham County for two decades, he both reported and made state news.

In 1983, for example, Runnion was the only journalist invited to the wedding of the then Vermont House Speaker Stephan Morse—a ceremony presided over by then Gov. Richard Snelling—with explicit instructions not to write a word.

If the bride and groom didn't suspect Runnion had other thoughts when he arrived