

# The West End Museum

150 STANIFORD STREET, SUITE 7, BOSTON, MA 02114

## Museum to Honor Notable West Enders of Jewish Descent During Jewish Heritage Month

**FOR RELEASE: May 12, 2015**

Boston, MA—As the nation commemorates Jewish Heritage Month, [The West End Museum](#) is celebrating notable West Enders of Jewish background. On Thursday, May 28, the Museum will host its Jewish Honoree Night from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served. The event is free and open to the public. The honorees are **Bill Margolin**, **Jack Burnes** and **Frank Lavine**. Margolin and Burnes played vital roles in the history of the West End House, about which the Museum is hosting an exhibit through August 22. Burnes and Lavine are being honored posthumously. (*Media note: Downloadable images [here](#)*)

In 1974, **Bill Margolin** became executive director of the West End House Boys & Girls Club in Allston-Brighton. The Club is the legacy organization of the original West End House, which traces its roots back to 1903 in the old neighborhood. Margolin's mother Rose, a Lithuanian immigrant, grew up in the West End and knew many of the original members. Margolin served as director for 21 years, guiding the Club through some of its most dramatic changes, including going co-ed in 1978. In 1973, he was named executive director of the West End House Camp. Many of the staff were former campers, including Margolin himself, who served as a counselor for many years. Continuing with his progressive philosophy, he established the first camping program for girls in 1990. He still visits the Club regularly and was instrumental in helping to organize the Museum's West End House exhibit, providing artifacts and historical content.

Born in 1888, **Jack Burnes** was the son of a Rabbi and grew up among fellow immigrant families in the West End. Tragically, his parents died when he was just 13, and he was forced to seek employment. In 1904, he joined the Young Men's Excelsior Association, the precursor to the original West End House. Burnes was an active and talented athlete and singer. As he grew older, he volunteered at the House and later became director of the juniors program. In 1916 at age 28, Burnes became director of the House and remained so for 40 years. He served on the national committee of the Boys Clubs of America three times—receiving their highest award—and wrote the *West End House: The Story of a Boys Club* in 1934. Burnes was also a recipient of the Eternal Light Award of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

**Frank Lavine's** parents were immigrants from Lithuania who settled in Boston's West End. In 1947, he was a crewman on the Exodus 1947, a ship that tried unsuccessfully to bring thousands of Holocaust survivors to Palestine. The Exodus traveled from Baltimore, and while attempting to run a British blockade near Haifa, was halted and boarded. Two teenagers and an American sailor were killed. More than 100 were wounded, including Lavine, who was clubbed nearly unconscious. Eight months after the incident, the State of Israel was born. The story provided inspiration for the Leon Uris novel *Exodus*. Lavine returned home and earned a Master's Degree in Library Science from Simmons College. In 1957, he was a block captain of the Committee to Save the West End. Ultimately displaced to Medford, Lavine worked for years at the Medford Public Library and served as Director from 1969 to 1989. He also served on the Board of Directors of The West End Museum.

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### About the West End Museum:

*The West End Museum is dedicated to the collection, preservation and interpretation of the history and culture of the West End neighborhood. The Museum's permanent exhibit, "The Last Tenement," highlights the immigrant history of the neighborhood through its decimation under Urban Renewal in 1959; two additional galleries feature rotating exhibits. The Museum is located near North Station at 150 Staniford St. Suite 7. Hours: Tuesday - Friday 12:00pm - 5:00pm; Saturday 11:00am - 4:00pm. Admission is free.*

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