The Sidney H. Closter Outstanding New Staff Member Award 2021
Sidney H. Closter served B’nai B’rith International for 48 years, two-thirds of those as director of development. Upon retirement in 1996, he continued in a volunteer capacity as director emeritus of the B’nai B’rith Foundation and a member of the organization’s International Board of Governors, lending his years of expertise to fundraising and ensuring the general well-being of B’nai B’rith.

The 1984 recipient of the organization’s Julius Bisno Award for Professional Excellence, Sidney Closter was the consummate Jewish communal worker. His devotion to fundraising was enhanced by his vast encyclopedic knowledge of B’nai B’rith history, personal recollections of the organization’s notable leaders and friendships with key volunteers from around the world.

In March 1977, Closter was one of 123 hostages held for 39 hours at B’nai B’rith’s former Rhode Island Avenue headquarters. He often remarked that this experience helped strengthen his resolve and increased his commitment to Jewish continuity.

A graduate of New York University, Closter served in the U.S. Army from 1942-1946, where, under the command of Gen. Douglas MacArthur, he earned a Bronze Star for meritorious service. After the war, he resumed his law studies, earning a juris doctor from the George Washington School of Law. Shortly after completing law school, an Army colleague invited him to join the staff of B’nai B’rith as associate director of the B’nai B’rith National Youth Services Appeal. Over the next half-century, Closter helped to raise millions of dollars for B’nai B’rith programs and services.

Sidney Closter believed in the importance of service to the community. Utilizing his fundraising expertise, he devoted many hours to his neighborhood school board, local universities, his synagogue and other charitable organizations.

Few elements of his job gave Closter more enjoyment than the opportunity to mentor new staff. In tribute to his exceptional service, and in order to perpetuate the memory of his notable accomplishments, B’nai B’rith proudly established the Sidney H. Closter Outstanding New Staff Member Award, and salutes its recipients as esteemed bearers of his enduring legacy.

The Sidney H. Closter Outstanding New Staff Member Award is presented to a member of the B’nai B’rith staff, who is in the early stages of his or her B’nai B’rith career and embodies the dedication to B’nai B’rith and Jewish communal service that were epitomized by the career of Sidney Closter.
The award is presented to an individual who, in the opinion of the judging committee, embodies creativity, personal initiative, ambition and hard work.

11th Recipient of the Sidney H. Closter Outstanding New Staff Member Award

Alex King
Director of Digital Strategy

December 19, 2021
Shortly after the death of Sidney Closter in May 2005, family members and friends, looking for a way to preserve Sid’s memory, established the Sidney H. Closter Memorial Fund. Recognizing Sid’s love for mentoring new staff members, an award was created to perpetually honor his memory by presenting annually a monetary stipend and a beautiful plaque to the most outstanding new staff member of B’nai B’rith International.

Additional contributions may be made to:
B’nai B’rith Foundation of the U.S.
Attn: Sidney H. Closter Memorial Fund
1120 20th St. NW, Suite 300 North, Washington, DC 20036