

## David Berger Memorial

David Berger died in Munich, Germany on September 5, 1972. His death was a symbol of sickness, frustration and violence. David Berger lived 28 years in the United States and Israel. His life is a symbol of strength, hope and love.

We remember David Berger for the purpose he gave to his life and how he gave of himself. Although we cannot forget the way he died, there is much more to be gained in remembering the way he lived.

David Berger showed ability, determination and self-confidence early in life, and he never lost those traits. He was a National Merit Scholar at Shaker Heights High (Ohio) and a graduate of Tulane University. He received his MBA and law degree from Columbia cum laude, and became a member of the New York Bar. He also found time, every day, to prepare himself to become an international weight-lifting champion.

As a member of the United States Maccabiah Team in both 1965 and 1969, David competed in Israel and there he found a new purpose for his life. He fell in love with the land and its people. And he saw that his strength and training could help in Israel's struggle.

David volunteered to work with the physically handicapped when he settled in Israel in 1970. It was a demanding time, for he also began serious training to make Israel's Olympic Team. Eventually he won a spot on the team and a trip to Munich.

Just before the 1972 games, David visited the Dachau concentration camp, where so many had died a generation before. A few days later, he and ten teammates would also die, as senselessly and savagely as those martyred at Dachau.

The world was, and is, horrified at the 20th Olympiad. Yet, the tragedy of David's death should not overshadow the quiet strength of his life, because we remember David Berger. David Berger, the athlete, the scholar, the man, the friend, and the Jew

## THE DAVID BERGER MONUMENT

A monument in the memory of David Berger stands as both a reminder of violence and a hope that man will one day overcome violence. The Olympic emblem of five interlocking rings has been broken to symbolize the stopping of the '72 games. But there is an upward motion in the broken rings to suggest the peaceful intent of the Olympics, a search for understanding, and hope for the future. The ten semi-circles rest on eleven steel segments, representing the eleven who died at Munich. One of the segments is slightly different from the rest to symbolize the unique events in David's life that led him to the Israel Olympic Team and to his death.

The monument, commissioned by the friends of David Berger, is the work of David E. Davis. Mr. Davis is a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Art and holds a masters degree from Case Western Reserve University. He is a prominent Cleveland sculptor and a constant contributor to local and national group shows. In 1976, at the invitation of the State Department, he held a one-man exhibition in his native Romania.

The monument is located at the Jewish Community Center, 3505 Mayfield Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio.



# United States Department of the Interior

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL RECREATION AREA  
POST OFFICE BOX 158  
PENINSULA, OHIO 44264

IN REPLY REFER TO:

A22  
CUVA

April 28, 1980

### Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Midwest Region

From: State Coordinator, Ohio

Subject: David Berger National Memorial

As requested, and pursuant to *Public Law 96-199*, on April 24, 1980 I visited The Jewish Community Center of Cleveland to view and photograph the David Berger National Memorial and to make initial contact with officials of the Jewish Community Center to consult with them regarding monumentation and commemoration of the National Memorial status recently conferred on this monument by Congress.

Enclosed are photographs which will provide you with some idea of the David Berger monument and the immediate surroundings. Also enclosed is a copy of the *Fall/Winter 1979-1980 Program Book* of The Jewish Community Center of Cleveland which outlines some of the programs of this organization, the owners of the site of the David Berger National Memorial.

I visited the office of Mr. Stanley Ferdman, Executive Director of The Jewish Community Center, to introduce myself as a representative of the National Park Service and to confer with him regarding the location and nature of a plaque to mark the National Memorial and to discuss initial plans for arranging a suitable establishment ceremony. Mr. Ferdman was extremely pleased to learn that the David Berger monument had been designated as a National Memorial. He was aware that an effort to have this designation conferred by Congress was being made through Senator Howard M. Metzenbaum, but he indicated that no official notification had been received by his office that this had been accomplished. As this was during National Secretaries Week, a reception was being held for all employees of the Community Center. Mr. Ferdman invited me to announce to the employees that the national memorial designation was official and to explain to them the significance of this distinction. This announcement was extremely well received by the approximately 50 employees attending this function. It was evident that this organization is very proud of having the David Berger monument under their care.

Mr. Ferdman and I agreed to meet soon to discuss arrangements and details for the development of a plaque and appropriate ceremony. I will keep you advised of further developments regarding these initial arrangements.

  
William C. Birdsell

Enclosures

## DAVID BERGER NATIONAL MEMORIAL

The Jewish Community Center of Cleveland  
3505 Mayfield Road  
Cleveland Heights, Ohio

The David Berger National Memorial is located on an island of grassed area directly in front of the entrance to The Jewish Community Center of Cleveland. This area is bordered on the north by the driveway which arcs in front of the main entrance to the Community Center and on the south, east and west by parking areas provided for that facility.

Mayfield Road, which passes in front of the Community Center, is a main thoroughfare through the City of Cleveland Heights, an eastern suburb of the City of Cleveland and a part of the greater Cleveland metropolitan area.

Immediately across Mayfield Road from this location is the Severance Center, a major shopping center/shopping mall complex covering several city blocks. This shopping mall was built on the site of the former Severance-Milliken estate (John L. Severance, partner of John D. Rockefeller in establishing Standard Oil, etc. and one of the major early old guard of Cleveland). It is one of the nicer shopping centers of the area.

The grassed area surrounding the monument is landscaped with a short hedge of yew on three sides, with a flowering ornamental fruit tree in the south center of the open area and short yew shrubs surrounding the monument base. On the open side of the grassed area facing the entrance to the Community Center there is a marker which identifies the David Berger Monument. This marker reads:

*A monument in the memory of David Berger stands as both a reminder of violence and a hope that man will one day overcome violence. The Olympic emblem of five interlocking rings has been broken to symbolize the stopping of the '72 games, but there is an upward motion in the broken rings to suggest the peaceful intent of the Olympics, search for understanding and hope for the future. The ten semicircles rest on eleven steel segments representing the eleven who died at Munich. One of the segments is slightly different from the rest to symbolize the unique events in David's life that led him to the Israeli Olympic team and to his death.*

*The monument, commissioned by the friends of David Berger, is the work of David E. Davis.*

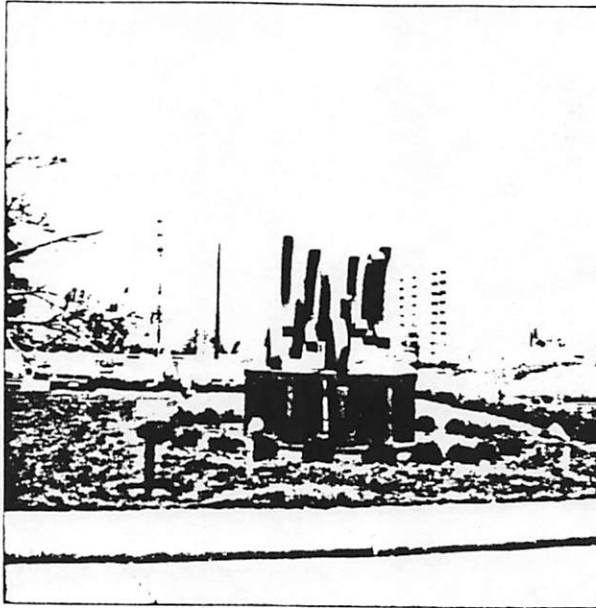
Sept. 5, 1972

DAVID BERGER NATIONAL MEMORIAL



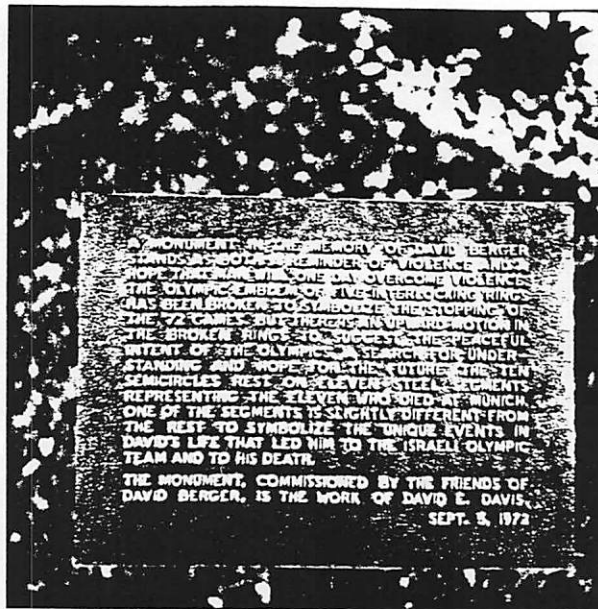
VIEW OF MONUMENT FROM THE  
ENTRANCE TO THE JEWISH  
COMMUNITY CENTER.

DAVID BERGER NATIONAL MEMORIAL



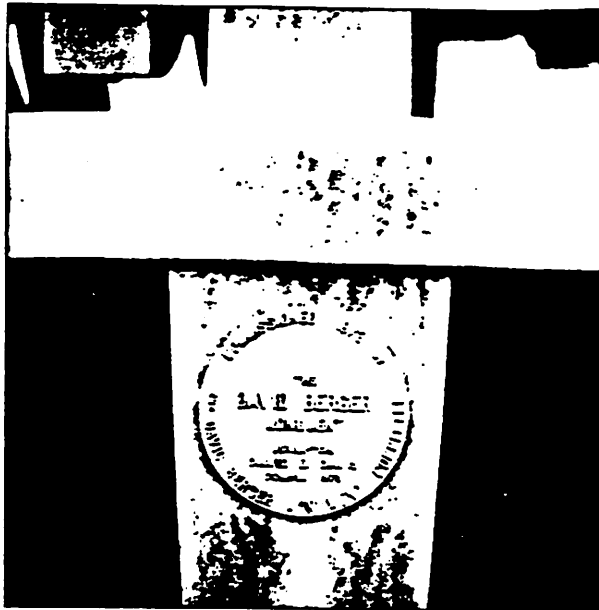
VIEW TO SOUTH FROM DRIVEWAY  
WHICH PASSES IN FRONT OF THE  
JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER.  
NOTE IDENTIFYING PLAQUE JUST  
TO LEFT OF THE MONUMENT.  
BRONZE MEDALLION ON BERGER  
SUPPORT SEGMENT IN THE CENTER  
OF THE MONUMENT.

DAVID BERGER NATIONAL MEMORIAL



IDENTIFYING PLAQUE MOUNTED  
TO LEFT OF MONUMENT ALONG  
WALKWAY.

DAVID BERGER NATIONAL MEMORIAL



BRONZE MEDALLION ATTACHED TO  
THE STEEL SUPPORT SEGMENT WHICH  
SYMBOLIZES THE LIFE OF DAVID E.  
BERGER.

DAVID BERGER NATIONAL MEMORIAL



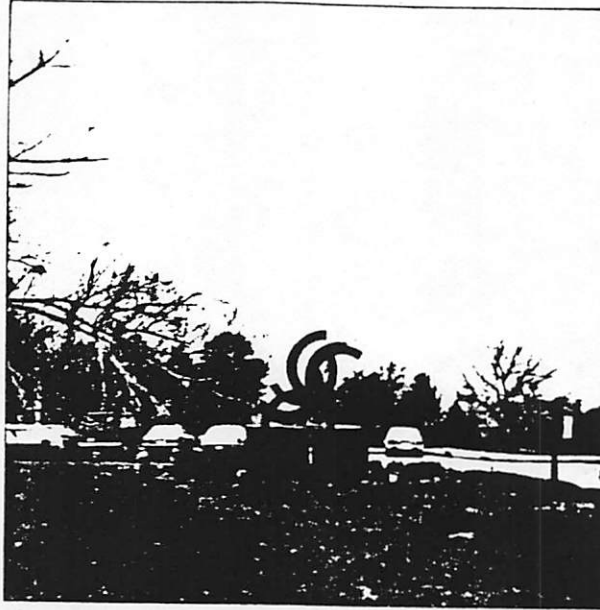
VIEW SOUTHWEST FROM LOCATION  
OF IDENTIFYING PLAQUE.

DAVID BERGER NATIONAL MEMORIAL



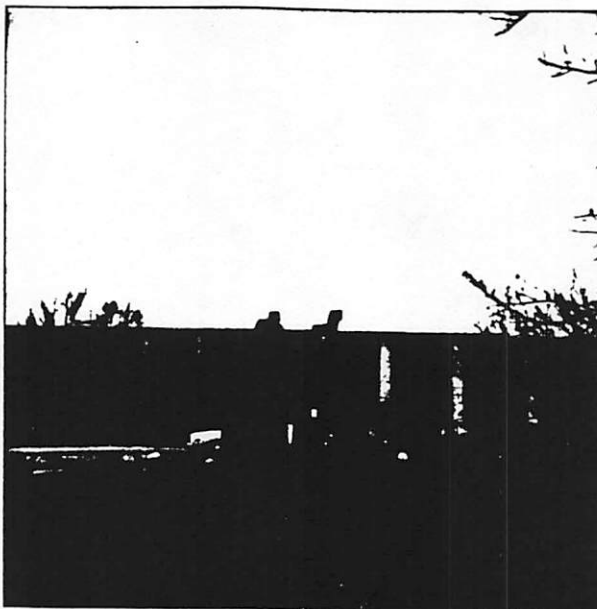
VIEW SOUTHEAST FROM NORTHWEST  
CORNER OF GRASSED AREA.  
PARKING AREA IN BACKGROUND.

DAVID BERGER NATIONAL MEMORIAL



VIEW TO WEST FROM EAST SIDE  
OF GRASSED AREA.

DAVID BERGER NATIONAL MEMORIAL



VIEW FROM SOUTHWEST CORNER OF  
GRASSED AREA. FRONT ENTRANCE  
OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER  
IN BACKGROUND.