

Isidore Goldberg 1916 – 1995

'The Kimberley Diamond'

Issie Goldberg was a colourful character. He was a man of many parts, a man of motor cars and of the law, investor, singer, orator, playwright and prolific poet - writing both political and personal poems which were frequently published in the local newspapers.

His most significant work was as an economist. He was a shareholder and the shareholders' champion, an acknowledged expert on the Companies Act, Government Commissioner in law and tax, the scourge of the country's fat cats and constant friend of the underdog, also, a devoted son and a concerned citizen.

He had a magnificent tenor voice, and at an early age was groomed as a potential chazzan-cantor. In later years he often sang at charity events, being accompanied on the piano by his musical sister, Gertie. See [Haas, Gertie, Ivor & Family](#)



Here in this picture he is seated on the left in the front row of **Cantor A Rudy's Choir of the Griqualand West Hebrew Congregation 1930-1932**. Issie was listed as 'the soloist'. The choristers are:

Back Row: Lionel Apter, S Klein, A Goldberg, I Levin, G Fine, M Lazarus, H Mehl

Front Row: Issie Goldberg (soloist), Harry Klein, M Want, Cantor the Rev A Rudy, N Brayton (Choirmaster) M Rudy, Mendel Apter. **Centre Front:** Shimon Maresky

Born in Kimberley 1916

Issie Goldberg was one of six children of **Solomon Goldberg** (at one time called Peletz) and **Deborah Taube** Goldberg (née Hyams).

He and his siblings were all born in Kimberley: Sarah Goldberg (b. 1912 - died in infancy 1914)

Abraham (Abe) Myer Goldberg (b 1914 – d 2017) [Goldberg, Abe](#)

Isidore (Issie) Goldberg (b. 1916 - d. 1995)

Gertie (Haas) [Haas, Gertie, Ivor & Family](#)

Hyman (Hymie) Goldberg (b. 1920 - d. 1998)

Molly (Emdin) (b1922 – d 2004)

Here is a picture taken in Kimberley in 1924 of all five Goldberg Children

Abe

Issie

Gertie

Hymie

Molly



And below left is another picture taken in Cape Town in 1986 They all seem to have turned out more or less the same height, Molly, Hymie, Gertie, Issie and Abe.

Issie helped his father Solomon Goldberg in his dairy business in Kimberley until he volunteered for service in the South African forces during World War II. He served in the **Air Force** as aircraft maintenance sergeant.



At the end of the war, he was demobilised in Pretoria where he met and married Florence Lief on 12 November 1945. (see wedding picture below)

He studied law in Cape Town and London. In 1954 they made their home in Sea Point, Cape Town. Once settled in Cape Town with his family Issie devoted his energies to financial investments and became widely known as the watchdog on behalf of minority shareholders.



He and his wife Florence had 2 sons. Joel – who lives in Israel, married to Sharon, with two daughters and David – who lives in Irvine, USA, married to Philemena, and has one son.

ISSIE GOLDBERG passed away on 29 June 1995. and is buried in Cape Town at Pinelands No 2. On his tombstone it is written: 'Champion of the littleman. He fought tirelessly for their rights'

ISSIE GOLDBERG

1916 - 1995



THE KIMBERLEY DIAMOND

In this eulogy below, his nephew, Raymond wrote:

There has not been an occasion either family or business over the past years where my Uncle Issie did not rise to speak, to entertain or to express with beautiful thoughts and words the feelings of the crowd.

It is only fitting that on this occasion he himself should be the subject of the thoughts and the words.

Issie Goldberg was one of the special diamonds to have been produced by the diamond fields of Kimberley. Flawed certainly, but many faceted and with a brilliance that could dazzle. When he frowned and fumed you could hear the thunder roll but when he laughed and smiled his smile the world sparkled.

With Issie's death there is the passing of an icon – not just of Sea Point and of Cape Town but also of the whole South African business scene. The familiar sight of him and his trusty beret will be gone forever from the streets of the town and the back rows of the Marais Road shul.

He was a man of many parts, a man of motor cars and of the law, investor, singer, orator, playwright and poet, economist, a shareholder and the shareholders' champion. He was an acknowledged expert on the Companies Act, a Government Commissioner in law and tax, the scourge of the country's fat cats and constant friend of the underdog. He was also a devoted son and a concerned citizen.

Issie was a man of immense talent, of great sensitivity and, alas, of great idiosyncrasies and eccentricities. At times he felt too much and at times too little.

Despite all his activities and numerous achievements, and whilst he rubbed shoulders with all the major politicians and businesspeople in South Africa, I believe he derived greatest pride from his 50 years of married life to his ever loyal and supportive wife Florence, from his son the doctor, Joel, and his family in Israel and his son the Professor, David, and his family in America.

This extra-ordinary gem from Kimberley, brilliant, multi-faceted and flawed – this unique man will be missed by so many in oh so many different ways. A son of whom South Africa, and the Jewish community, can be justly proud.

With his beautiful voice I am sure he will soon be invited to join the heavenly choir. Life down here will never be the same without him.

Uncle Is, I hope you find peace at least. We will always remember you. We will always miss you

RAYMOND

02 July 1995

The Cape Argus wrote in their Obituary

Tributes as a defender of the little man dies

Tributes have flowed in for Issie Goldberg, chairman of the Shareholders' Association and tireless fighter for the rights of small investors, who has died in Cape Town, aged 78.

Company directors, so often the butt of Mr Goldberg's relentless questioning, were unanimous in their praise. "We will miss him at our company meetings, both for his compliments and for his criticisms" said Arthur Jacobson, financial director of the Seardel clothing chain. "His comments were always incisive, but also well meaning. He only had the best interests of shareholders at heart".

Mr Goldberg, who died last week, was a familiar sight at the company meetings all over Cape Town in his black suit and beret. As soon as the chairman had finished speaking, he would seize the first opportunity to ask questions on behalf of minority shareholders. "Mr Chairman, allow me to fill the pregnant silence" he would say before subjecting the directors to a comprehensive grilling on the company's financial results.

"He was a man with high integrity" said Clicks' company secretary Willie Gouws. "If things were going well, Issie would always acknowledge it. But if the company wasn't doing well, he was quick to point it out."

Insurance giant Old Mutual came under fire for "secretive" overseas operations; Bergers directors were closely questioned about the effects on shareholders of the take-over by foreign investors; the huge Rembrandt group was invited to give details on assets – barely a company in the Western Cape escaped Mr Goldberg's scrutiny.

"He always gave credit where it was due" said Santam management director Jurie Geldenhuys. "He'd fight with you right through the meeting and then at the end he'd find something good to say".

"We'll miss him sorely".

Born in Kimberley and trained in law and economics, Mr Goldberg battled to change the law to secure better protection for shareholders. He was a member of the standing committee on Company Law for 12 years and then served on the Securities Regulation Panel.

He played a key role in the struggle of minority shareholders against the controlling shareholders in Micor Holdings and Racy Holdings in 1993, cases which highlighted inconsistencies in the Companies Act. More recently he took on the cause of several thousand Supreme Group investors threatened with the loss of their savings when the group was liquidated.

Mr Goldberg tried to persuade insurance companies to set aside part of their annual cash flow for investment in low-cost housing. Just five percent of the companies' investment income

would finance up to 250,000 low-cost houses, he argued, claiming that policyholders' money would be better invested in socio-economic stability than in blue chip shares or commercial property.

He liked to watch cricket and rugby. He also wrote poetry and his thoughts on the future of the country became a regular feature of the Argus at New Year.

Mr Goldberg leaves his wife Florence, sons Joel and David and three grandchildren.

Below is a poem Issie wrote to Nelson Mandela: in April 1994

Election's babe — Christened April

By ISIDORE GOLDBERG

OUR nation's destiny lies poised in tremulous disarray, upon this fateful April 27 day — When suddenly the voteless homeless multitudes, miraculously invested with a new-found strength and hope, Become indoctrinated, courted darlings, of political intrigue, festooned with promises of wondrous things Like homes and jobs and schools, through magic of a childish drawing of a recently discovered X, Whose secret powers, our politicians say, will instantly consign to History's secret vaults a fearful past, Which inexorably will be extinguished, and extinct from all our lives, and a future dawns that will Never Never be the same. It seems the foetus of our Democratic Babe named April — for too long trapped in fetid womb of agony — Demands from all a frightful price, payable in currency of violence and blood and hate, As essential prelude to a ravaged birth. Our nation — rich and poor alike, prays and ponders — "Where is Blessed Peace? By far the most important attribute of life worth living?" "What hope and hate will germinate in fate, for me — for mine, for saints and sinners of our race? Who will live, and who will die? Who will prosper, who will fail? And why? "As though our April's babe should know!"

PEACE!

The magic garlands of the Nobel prize for peace, now grace deservedly two lofty brows of noble vision'd architects Of our nation's destiny: two brilliant, dedicated, moral, men. Armed heavily with multi-party promises of trust —

The one a truly messianic penitent, the perspicacious champion of reform, publicly expressing sorrow and remorse For past involvement in philosophies of politics, that manufactured misery in millions, which drew repugnance from a civilised world, Has earned from Heaven those sacred blessings,

reserved for special pleading penitents — the other one, a prisoner Of cruel inhuman politics, condemned to lifetime martyrdom in rocky island cell — And now unshackled from his chains fo bitterness, the modern martyr preaches passionately for tolerance and peace, In paradox, so bitterly denied to him and millions of his satellites, and born ironically of personal suffering and pain. Each architect now firmly shakes the other's consensused proffered hand, and begs the nation's millions for their April votes, To experiment with peace, instead of murderous blood and internecine strife, to endure, and understand the process Transmuting violence and hate, to dignity and peace, assured progenitors of a prosperous plenty, shareable by all, they say. But politicians and the privileged minority of our tortured land must at their peril fail to understand That new exciting visits by expectant millions to the ballot box — Pandora's Box of promised miracles — Without prerequisite concomitants of jobs and homes and family life — make dignity and peace No more than dangerous evanescent dreams, that can turn to frightful nightmares, and spawn devouring hate.

□□□□ April is appointed Harbinger of Autumn — inevitably prognosticating season's change, When even tired and disillusioned leaves of trees, surrender glady to a greedy gravity's embrace, To satisfy omniscient Nature's Plan for cleansing of the past, as prelude to a new sustaining growth. Our election too, can learn from Nature. Let many millions of our nation, vote their choice in peace, And from the cleansing of our Augean stables, let us pray, that peace and dignity and growth With Heaven's help, become the lodestar of a metaphoric Spring in this our troubled land, Sculpted by the Mighty Hand of God in singing loveliness and majesty.

Poet ISIDORE GOLDBERG

Cape Town

Many enjoyed this cartoon below: of Issie in his role as Don Quixote tilting at the windmills (in his case high finance).



Issie Goldberg, compiled by Geraldine Auerbach MBE, London April 2021, from texts and pictures supplied by his nephews.