



Gratz Insider, November 2012 - Story Continuation

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### **Meet a Member of the Board**

Michelle Portnoff has been instrumental in the growth of Portnoff Law Associates, Ltd., a firm dedicated to the collection of delinquent real estate taxes and municipal user fees from property owners on behalf of municipalities, school districts and other authorities throughout Pennsylvania. The firm currently handles over 50,000 delinquent accounts per year for approximately ninety municipalities and school districts. For more on Portnoff's professional accomplishments, see the [press release](#) in The Times Herald.

Because Portnoff's practice often takes her to small towns throughout Pennsylvania, she knows that there are Jewish communities in some areas that have limited or no access to Jewish programming. She believes that with technology, Gratz could extend its reach to help supplement programming in these communities. Such outreach would strengthen Gratz's reputation as "the brand name for community Jewish education regionally," says Portnoff.

For generations, Gratz has also been the brand name for Jewish education in Portnoff's own family. Her grandmother, among other relatives, was a student in one of the Gratz supplemental school programs. Portnoff herself is a proud 1977 graduate of the Hebrew High School of Gratz College, where she later worked as a teacher. This Hebrew High School program was the most demanding of the three tracks offered by Gratz to high school students at the time and one that Portnoff hopes can be reintroduced as an option for students in the future.

In more recent years, Portnoff has attended Gratz continuing legal education courses as well as adult education programs. She also has three sons who graduated from the western branch of the Gratz Jewish Community High School (JCHS) and a daughter who is expected to attend JCHS when she is old enough.

Given her family's long history with Gratz and her own ideas for the future, Portnoff is looking forward to her tenure on the board. "I am pleased to be on the board of governors," she says, "because Jewish education is important to me. Dedication to

lifelong learning is a Jewish tenet, and we are fortunate to live close enough to benefit from the excellent programming offered by College staff.”