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Yael Penkower, 1945–2016

Esther Nussbaum
enussbaum142@gmail.com

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Yael Penkower z"l in 1982, photographed by her brother-in-law Jordan Penkower

Yael Penkower, a founding and active member of the New York Metropolitan Area (NYMA) chapter of Association of Jewish Libraries, passed away in Israel on Shabbat, Parshat Tzav, March 26, 2016 surrounded by her loving family. She was a wonderfully skilled reference librarian, having earned her Master of Library Science from SUNY-Albany and her master's degree in Judaic Studies at Brooklyn College. Yael was an enthusiastic convener and sharer of information and knowledge. She brought her talents to several institutions, including YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, the Jewish Theological Seminary, Stern College for Women, and Yeshivah of Flatbush High School. For many years, she chaired the NYMA reference workshops, which served as a basis for continuing education for the metropolitan area librarians. She also consulted for Am HaSefer, Keren Keshet—The Rainbow Foundation, and the Avi Chai Foundation. Wherever she worked her colleagues all loved and admired her.

Yael (née Goodman) Penkower, a seventh generation Israeli, graduated from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and moved to the United States in 1969 after she married historian Monty Penkower. They raised five children, all of whom live in Israel, where Yael and Monty settled in 2002. Yael served as Head Librarian at Pelech High School and then at Beit Morasha. After her retirement, Yael volunteered at the Central Zionist Archives and the Ben-Yehuda Project. In addition to articles she had written for *AJL Newsletter* and *Judaica Librarianship*,¹ she had co-authored a prayer for new mothers, which is available from the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance (JOFA). Yael's love of learning was evident throughout her life. She was an integral part of a weekly Women's Shabbat Talmud *shi'ur* in Flatbush, Brooklyn that had begun about thirty years ago, and after returning to Israel she also gave a women's Talmud *shi'ur* in Jerusalem.

As librarian in Ramaz Upper School, I had many opportunities to benefit from Yael's knowledge. Yael contributed greatly to the success of NYMA and helped produce a great program for the 1993 AJL convention in New York, which I chaired with Edith Lubetski of Stern College. While I had not been in close contact with Yael in recent years, her majestic qualities remain strong in my mind.

¹Yael Penkower, trans., "What Makes a Hebrew Book Rare? Excerpts from an Essay by Israel Mehlman," *Judaica Librarianship* 3 (1987): 102–104, 107; Yael Penkower, "Judaica in Computer Databases," *Judaica Librarianship* 5, no. 2 (1991): 214–216.