



Lamdan Honored For Exploring Jewish Roots

08/10/2013 - 21:57

By Douglas Bloomfield

Amb. Neville Lamdan, who served Israel in top posts in Washington, at the United Nations in New York and Geneva, and at the Vatican before leaving the diplomatic arena to explore Jewish roots, was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the International Conference on Jewish Genealogy in Boston this week.

Well-known on Capitol Hill and among pro-Israel activist here, Lamdan followed up his Washington service as Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva and Ambassador to the Vatican. Since retiring he has focused on his life-long interest in Jewish genealogy.

He is the founder of the International Institute for Jewish Genealogy at the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem in 2006, and was its director until last year. The award was presented by the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies in recognition of his promoting the vision of an academic research center for Jewish genealogy.

The Scottish-born Lamdan has a doctorate in modern history from Oxford and briefly served in the British Foreign Service during the late 1960s before making aliyah and joining the Israeli foreign service. After a posting to the United Nations in New York he was assigned to Washington in the 1980s.

His personal quest into his roots began in the 1970's and he became a leading proponent of academic Jewish genealogy in the 1990's. He is now the chair of the Genealogical Institute's Executive Committee and, among other things, is overseeing two "mega" research projects, one a Genealogical Profile of Scottish Jewry and the other on the Lives and Lineages of Village Jews in the 19th century Minsk Gubernya.

The Institute he founded aims to advance the status of Jewish Genealogy within the realm of Jewish Studies, principally through research and teaching at the university level. In parallel, it seeks to inspire and enrich the work of Jewish genealogists and family historians. Since its inception, it has sponsored 15 scholarly studies in Jewish genealogy, elaborated "Academic Guidelines" for BA and MA courses on the subject and developed various tools and technologies for family historians working in the field.