



Israel Peace Award Acceptance Speech

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg
On December 8, 2010**



This speech was presented to attendees of the Israeli Bonds fundraiser (benefiting FIU's First Generation Scholarship) on December 8, 2010 where President Rosenberg received the Israel Peace Award.

Thank you all for being here! Thanks to Greg Wolfe, Leo and Marian Goldner.

This is a season to remember blessings! I have the blessing of leading this incredible institution called Florida International University! Today we are 42,200 students, nearly 7-8% are Jewish. Within ten years we will have grown to 62,000 students - counting on us to get it right!

There is a Jewish proverb as it relates to FIU. This proverb personifies Israel, the Israeli people and the purpose of Israeli bonds: *I ask not for a lighter burden, but for broader shoulders.* There are some striking similarities between Israel and FIU that I want to outline here.

We are both startup organizations! Israel's birth was too long in coming, and of course against all odds. There was first talk of FIU in the early 1940s. It took way too long to get the institution open – in 1972.

Israel was intended to be a haven for refugees, displaced, and down and outers in a spit of land that was otherwise barren. Remember what Gold Meir said:

*Moses dragged us for 40 years
through the desert to bring us
to the one place in the Middle East
where... there was no oil.*

FIU was intended for exotics (minorities, Jews, African Americans) or refugees and immigrants located at the end of a long peninsula, from a region that did not matter. Both Israel and FIU refused to accept the stereotyping.

Today, in part thanks to Israeli bonds, investments that you and your families made – Israeli science and technology, Israeli innovation and entrepreneurship, and Israeli chutzpah – are known and respected worldwide.

Israelis, like Jews worldwide, understand that education is an important driver of well-being, progress, and peace. FIU and Israel have much in common:

- First we have you, one of the most dynamic, create and generous communities in the world.
- Second, we are a haven for the sons and daughters of people who are either newly arrived in this country, or first generation here.

- We have growing support from members of the community who, like you, recognize the importance of a world-class education right at home.
- We are particularly proud of our new medicinal school. It has a strong support from the Jewish community, because there is a recognition that a public university in a dynamic city like Miami, must have full access to world-class education and learning opportunities.
- You know our value and quality because your sons and daughters are either enrolled at FIU or giving active consideration to our ideally located institution.
- Finally, we, like Israel, have chutzpah:
 - When we were told we could not offer a full four-year education to our students, we turned the impossible into the inevitable and made it happen.
 - When we were told that we could not offer graduate programs, we made them happen.
 - When they said no to a law school for our community, we made it happen.
 - When they said no to a medical school, we turned the impossible into the inevitable and made it happen.
 - When they said no to a football team, we said yes.
 - When they said no to a league championship, we said yes.
 - When they said no to a bowl game, we said after years of trial and error, *watch us* on national TV on December 26, 2010!

Like Israel, FIU has never, ever wanted a lighter burden! That would be unacceptable. We are more than willing to carry more than our fair share because the “burden” is really an opportunity and a sacred obligation.

Your support for Israel bonds can now meet the same objective: to broaden the shoulders of two very important institutions that have so much more to do - Israel and your FIU!

Have a Happy Holiday Season.