

GORDON ZACKS BIOGRAPHY

Gordy Zacks is Chairman of the R.G. Barry Corporation, the world's largest marketer and supplier of comfort footwear under the brand names of Dearfoams, EZ-Feet, and Liz Clairborne. He became president of R.G. Barry in 1965 when it was a small family manufacturer, and he retired as CEO and president in 2004.

Born in 1933 -- free. . . Jewish. . . in America. . . to wonderful parents of modest means. Gordy was born the year Hitler came to power. There was no Israel. There was a Holocaust. Six million Jews were slaughtered for the crime of being born, and hardly a blip registered on the world's conscience. The world was indifferent -- it pretended not to know. Israel was created in 1948, and Gordy decided that he wanted to be part of the rebirth of the Land and the redemption of the People of Israel. That has been his passion. . . that has been his purpose. That was his defining moment.

From this grassroots beginning, Gordy went on to hold a number of posts in the Jewish voluntary community, including general chairman designate of the National UJA, and he was also a founding member and past chairman of the Young Leadership Cabinet of the UJA. In 1973, he shifted his emphasis from fund raising to political activism, and helped lay some of the groundwork for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). He has served as chairman of the highly successful United Way Campaign in Columbus, Ohio.

Gordy has worked with three U.S. presidents and five Israeli Prime Ministers, and his political involvement reached its highpoint during the Reagan and Bush presidencies. Gordy declined an ambassadorship in the Reagan/Bush Administration, and a Cabinet post during the Bush/Quayle Administration, in order to serve as unofficial advisor and confidant to Vice President and then President Bush. Once a month, he met privately with Vice President and then President George H.W. Bush to discuss Israeli/American relations, the Middle East Peace Process, Soviet Jewry, and the political landscape of the American Jewish community.

His leadership roles on behalf of Republican causes have been numerous, and date back to 1976. In 1988, Gordy was National Chairman of the Bush for President National Jewish Campaign Committee, and Co-Chairman of the Bush for President National Finance Committee in 1987-1988. In 1992 he was Vice-Chairman of the Bush/Quayle National Finance Committee and Co-Chairman of the Middle East Policy Task Force. Gordy was named to the Board of Trustees of the George Bush Presidential Library in 1993. He also served as the Chairman of the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service Advisory Committee in 1991 and 1992. He was a member of the President's Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiation from 1981-1994.

Gordy has traveled to over 100 countries throughout the world and made over 75 trips to Israel and the Middle East. A frequent speaker at leadership forums, and a graduate of Ohio State University, Gordy has served on the boards of directors of both Haifa University and Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has been a member of the Young Presidents Organization and the Chief Executives Organization. He is also Chairman of the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School, which provides high quality, pluralistic adult Jewish education in over sixty cities in four countries, with 25,000 graduates.

Gordy and his wife Carol Sue have been married for more than fifty years. They have two daughters, a son-in-law and two grandchildren.