

Kate and Max Louik with daughters Emilia, age 4, and Mavis, age 5, have established their Legacy with Temple Emanuel.

Through what could have been a tangled path, but instead worked so naturally, blissfully as if a preordained plan Kate and Max joined their lives in matrimony in 2008.

Both Kate, through education and social action, and Max, through the Law, have had a strong underlying current of social justice and social action in their work and in their lives. It has geared their lives from early on and may have, in some way, led to their intertwining!

Kate grew up in Connecticut, then matriculated at Brandeis University (a predominantly Jewish school), because of its impressive reputation in Social Justice. Already studying at Brandeis, Max, a Pittsburgh native, had started his college studies at Brandeis a year before Kate. Kate was pursuing a double major in philosophy and gender studies. Max majored in Politics and History. He had applied for early decision to Brandeis after he had participated in Genesis, a Jewish summer enrichment program there while in high school. It still exists today.

The two met while studying at Brandeis, and found that they both had a common bent toward social justice at their core.

Both went into service organizations after graduating Brandeis. Max served with City Year Boston, an AmeriCorps program, where he tutored kindergarten students in the neighborhood of Roslindale in reading, ran after-school programs for elementary school children, and created and managed City Year's first corporate-sponsored student-mentorship program. While at City Year, Max also worked at the Genesis office with Rabbi Bradley Solmsen, who directed the program. Rabbi Bradley Solmsen is one of the most influential and important leaders of the Reform movement, involved in Mitzvah Corps and Social Justice, and is currently the Director of Youth Engagement for the Union for Reform Judaism. He's also the Rabbi who married Max and Kate.

Meanwhile, Kate was a senior at Brandeis, and president of the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance. A year later, after Kate graduated and entered the Teach for America program in Harlem, they both moved to NYC. Max worked as a paralegal with the New York County District Attorney's Office, helping to prosecute sex crime offenders and drunk drivers. While teaching Kindergarten and first grade special education, Kate pursued her Master's degree in Early Childhood General and Special Education from Bank Street College of Education.

After Kate's two years of service, the two married and prepared for a move to Ann Arbor, Michigan where Max would pursue a law degree from the University of Michigan. While in Michigan, Kate served as the director of a preschool and later as the Infant and Toddler Supervisor for a NAEYC accredited early childhood program. She also became a DONA trained birth doula during this time, and volunteered her doula services with an organization called Doula Care, which provided services to low-income women in the Ann Arbor area.

During their time in Ann Arbor, though not yet formally deciding to be Jewish, Kate ventured into the mores of tradition. After thorough research, Kate completely and wholeheartedly mounted the awesome endeavor of hosting the Passover Seder, possibly her first real move into Judaic custom, after the wedding. She avidly read the Haggadah, her first Jewish learning experience, on her lunch breaks and successfully hosted their first Seder together, noting that most of the guests were not Jewish! She continued to host the annual Passover Seder observance from 2008 through 2011, when they moved back to Max's home town, Pittsburgh.

They first resided in Shadyside for 9 months, then moved to Mt. Lebanon in 2012, and they joined Temple Emanuel of South Hills, where Max had grown up! Kate noted that though she had not yet committed to Judaism, she was very interested in the traditions..... Kate never intended to convert, but decided to raise Jewish children, and liked the Jewish community. The Temple community welcomed her with open arms and included her in activities....things like delivering Shabbat bags for the Caring Community and serving on the ECDC advisory board. They included her in so many activities even though they knew she was

not Jewish. She "started to enjoy the routines, especially the pause for Shabbat, an intentional pause in the week and routines, a time for family and one's own thoughts." Judaism was becoming very important to her, a part of her. Services brought her peace and helped her to relax. She took an Introduction to Judaism course. Then, on her own initiative, pregnant with her first child, Mavis, Kate decided to convert. In January 2014, Kate converted to Judaism. One month later, in February 2014, Mavis was born to a Jewish Mother! Judaism and being a part of the community held the utmost importance for Kate. She liked the feel of this Community.

In summer of 2014, Rabbi Locketz asked Kate to teach in the Torah Center. Then pregnant with Emilia, her second child, Kate taught 6th grade at Torah Center (2014-2015). Presently, since 2017, she teaches Torah Center grades 6-7, and 4 year old preschoolers in ECDC, where she finds Judaism enfolds "really universal values in very meaningful ways."

Kate personally remembers her Introduction to Judaism course and knows "You can't go back in time...[!] will never have the experience of Jewish camp, or the smell of Matzah ball soup filling your childhood home"... but, she can enjoy making such memories with Max and their family. Kate reflects that "In many ways it's a challenge, but I get to learn and absorb along with my kids and Torah Center kids preparing for B'nai Mitzvah."

She currently serves as a member of the Worship Team, ECDC Advisory Board, and the Temple Emanuel Board of Trustees. Kate was honored to be a part of the Settled Rabbi Search Committee, and volunteers her time with the Larry and Brenda Miller Caring Community. She and her daughters love contributing to Family Promise dinners with the Social Action Committee.

Max now practices law at Reed Smith. He concentrates his practice in complex commercial litigation and international arbitration, with a focus on insurance recovery on behalf of policyholders. He also works with the Name Change Project, which provides pro bono legal name change services to low-income TGNCNB (transgender, gender non-conforming, non-binary) people. From 2016-2018 he served on the Temple Emanuel Board of Trustees and currently works with Temple's LGBTQ+ Task Force.

Kate and Max proudly see what the broader Jewish Community is doing and how Jewish voices in the larger community are taking the lead on key issues for all humanity... on such major issues facing the USA and the world as: Immigration, LGBTQ+, Environment, Poverty, and more.

Always upbeat, Kate remarks that the **"Temple Emanuel Community has become a core part of our life as a family and provides a framework for how to live our lives and feel part of something bigger than self.... A meaningful continuation of family"**.

Kate is the South Hills Ambassador for the PJ Library program.

They also practice sustainable living, with routines such as composting and growing many of their own vegetables, including "two types of tomatoes" as the girls proudly proclaim.

Max's grandparents Dean and Melva Hirschfield were founding members of Temple. Dean was a Temple president, and their daughter, Max's mom, Dr. Betty Jo Hirschfield Louik was a president of Temple. Now, their kids, Mavis and Emilia Louik are 5th Generation Temple members.