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## **New foundation established**

*Mark Gurvis returns to Vancouver as head of the new Ronald Roadburg Foundation. (photo from Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver)*

Feb. 1 was Mark Gurvis's first full day on the job as chief executive officer of the Ronald Roadburg Foundation. A newly established Vancouver-based organization, the foundation aims to bolster Jewish communities locally and internationally while developing innovative solutions to challenging societal issues.

A fixture in the community when he headed the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver from 2002 to 2013, Gurvis is excited to be back in town.

"I had a wonderful professional experience and my family had a wonderful life experience being part of the community," he told the *Independent*. "We had a great run with the Federation. It is great to come back to a fresh opportunity. We are looking forward to getting involved again."

At the outset, Gurvis will be busy doing many of the things needed to get a young foundation up and running: sorting out technical matters, getting the office organized, and reaching out to and reconnecting with people to determine the needs of the community.

“This is a complete start-up,” said Gurvis. “As with any new organization, an awful lot goes into the beginning to work out vision, goals and priorities. We have all of that ahead of us. We have a lot to learn about the current state of affairs in each area of focus we want to dive into and explore how we can best make a difference with the resources that will become available. There is a lot of organizational development stuff to tend to as well in starting up an organization from scratch.”

The foundation will be active in examining and assessing the needs of the community. “It’s too early to be putting oars in the water and say this is where we are going,” Gurvis stressed. “I encourage everyone to be patient as we do all the things to get the focus of the organization in place and then see how we can have a positive impact on the community and the region.”

Gurvis has had a full schedule since leaving his job at the Jewish Federation. He was executive vice-president of Jewish Federations of North America through 2020. In 2021, he created Community Network Consulting, a venture that focused on the strategy of nonprofits, community planning and organizational development.

Upon learning of the new position opening up, however, it seemed like the right opportunity to return to Vancouver, he said.

The Ronald Roadburg Foundation was founded by Jack Bogdonov, Stephen Gaerber and Bernard Pinsky, all of whom serve on its board. Gurvis, as CEO of Federation, worked with Gaerber, who was chair of the Coast-to-Coast partnership with the Galilee Panhandle in Israel, and with Pinsky, who was involved with the Jewish Federations of Canada (JFC-UIA).

“We recognized Mark’s intellect, creativity, calm demeanor, and ability to build consensus among constituencies as second to none among all Jewish professionals we had encountered,” said Pinsky. “When Jack, Stephen and I looked for a CEO that could help us accomplish the transformational change we aim for, there was only one person we reached out to: Mark Gurvis.”

Pinsky added, “Our board agrees that we are very fortunate to have Mark join us and, in our view, Mark gives us a big leg up on other start-up foundations because of all of the qualities mentioned above, as well as Mark’s depth and breadth of knowledge of the Jewish community, in Vancouver, Canada, the United States, Israel and the world.”

Ronald Roadburg, the foundation’s namesake, was a local businessman who passed away in 2021. Born and raised in Vancouver, he learned business from his father, Al Roadburg, who also headed the family enterprise, Broadway Properties.

“Two things his father taught him that he especially took to heart were: own property that is where people immediately know its location; and try not to sell properties, ever. These two princi-

ples led to the Roadburgs' great success in the property business. Ron's will left most of his assets to charity, and the foundation named after him will carry out his intention," Pinsky said.

To those who knew him, Ronald Roadburg stood out for his sense of humour and compassion. "He loved helping people and he loved animals. He loved art, supporting local artists, and he collected many whimsical and unusual pieces," Pinsky recalled. "During the last 10 years of his life, he was a director and participated wholeheartedly in making donations to worthy causes through a foundation established by his father."

Roadburg commissioned numerous murals, which still appear on buildings that he owned around town. He championed several causes to help the less privileged in society and was an unwavering supporter of Israel.

The Ronald Roadburg Foundation will be situated on West Broadway. Over the next few months, the leadership will be honing its focus on specific areas of philanthropic investment and establishing its grant-making policies and practices. To learn more about the foundation, visit [roadburgfund.org](http://roadburgfund.org).

**Sam Margolis** has written for *the Globe and Mail*, *the National Post*, *UPI* and *MSNBC*.

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Image February 11, 2022 Sam Margolis Local Bernard Pinsky, continuity, Jack Bogdonov, Mark Gurvis, philanthropy, Roadburg Foundation, Ronald Roadburg, Stephen Gaerber

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