



Photo by: Peter Halmagyi

## Beverly Hills gets Herzl Way

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Mayor and consul-general of Israel rename street to celebrate 150th birthday of Zionism's founding father.

The 300 block of North Clark Drive in Beverly Hills is now officially known as Herzl Way.

At the joint initiative of Israeli Consul-General Jacob Dayan and city Mayor Jimmy Delshad on Sunday, the street that houses Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills is now named in honor of the father of modern Zionism, Theodor Herzl. The naming ceremony and subsequent celebration occurred on what would have been Herzl's 150th birthday.

The gesture was prompted by the existing relationship between the city and Herzl: Herzliya is the sister city of Beverly Hills. This is the first time a street in Beverly Hills is being named after a Jewish leader.

"It gives me tremendous pride to stand here today on Herzl Way and join the city of Beverly Hills in saying that Herzl Way is our way!" said Dayan. "We believe in the strong, vibrant, innovative country of Israel; we believe in the movement that paved the way for millions of Jews to return to their homeland after 2,000 years in the Diaspora. We believe in this vision! Our vision is that Herzl Way will be more than a street sign – but also a sign in our hearts and minds that Israel is and will always be the homeland of the Jewish people."

Delshad declared that "Herzl's work made possible what others had only dreamed about. He was a man of great courage and conviction, who believed in tolerance and benevolence. Today, on behalf of the Beverly Hills City Council, we pay tribute to that spirit by renaming this block of Clark Drive in his honor."

He added, "This is by far one the best days of my life," according to the *Los Angeles Independent*. "As a young man, I never dreamed that one day I would be here, as the mayor of Beverly Hills, recognizing the visionary of the state of Israel, Theodor Herzl."

Delshad recounted how he had worked as a janitor in Israel as a youth and how Herzl "was behind me, talking to me, saying, 'Nothing is impossible,'" inspiring him to his future business success in the United States.

According to the *Independent*, Delshad said he had received letters and e-mails saying the name change gave people "who hate Israel and hate Jews... a target," but added that he wasn't afraid of an attack.

The celebration also included a specially delivered message from Herzliya Mayor Yael German.

Children from the Temple Emanuel Academy Day School performed an original song called "If You Will It," written by Roy Zu Arets especially for this celebration. The Beverly Hills High School marching band, as well as Israeli Scouts, accompanied Dayan and Delshad as they officially unveiled the street sign.