

Max I. Silber

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Max I. Silber (February 15, 1911-June 15, 2004) was an American businessman from New Hampshire who through his philanthropic works became not only a formative figure for Boy Scouting in New Hampshire, but a distinguished citizen of his home state. A devout Jew, Silber was an active supporter of religious Scouting programs, and was distinguished not just by the Jewish Committee of Scouting, but by the Roman Catholic Committee on Scouting as well. Perhaps the most famous endeavor of Silber's was the development of his "friendship gifts" which were most commonly belt buckles made of bronze. These buckles have evolved into popular Scouting collectibles.

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Early life

Max I. Silber was born in Manchester, New Hampshire, in 1911. At the age of 14, he became a member of Boy Scout Troop 1 in Manchester. Silber earned his Eagle Scout in 1936, the Explorer Ranger Award, and was recognized as a Vigil Honor member of the Order of the Arrow in 1958.^[1]

Personal life

Max married Edith Kamenske in June of 1934.^[2] Their marriage lasted 65 years until her death in May of 2000.^[3] One of their children, Allan, succeeded Max as the president of Kamenske & Company, but died after a long battle with Hodgkin's lymphoma in August of 2003.^{[4][5]} Silber passed away on June 15, 2004 in Nashua, New Hampshire^[2]. He is buried along with his wife Edith and son Allan at the Temple Beth Abraham Cemetery in Nashua, New Hampshire.

Scouting

After 1929 Max became a Scout leader, eventually becoming a Scoutmaster. During his tenure, Silber influenced the lives of many young adults including future U.S. Senator Warren Rudman. His involvement with Scouting beyond his troop was extensive, holding many positions, including unit commissioner, district commissioner, council commissioner, district chairman and council president.^[1] He was a member of the council executive board for 65 years. Silber served as the Region One chairman in 1957 and on regional jamboree committees in 1960, 1964, 1969, 1973, and 1977. He also served on the Jewish Relationships Committee of the BSA National Council and on the National Jewish Committee on Scouting.^[6]

In recognition of Silber's service, he was awarded the Silver Beaver,^[1] Silver Antelope, and Silver Buffalo^[7] awards and the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award.^[8] He was also awarded both the Jewish Shofar award, and the Roman Catholic St. George Award as testament to his hard work to promote Scouting to those of any faith.

Buckles for Friendship

Max I. Silber



Born	February 15, 1911
Died	June 15, 2004 (aged 93)

Awards and Honors

Distinguished Eagle Scout Award
 Silver Buffalo Award
 Silver Antelope
 Silver Beaver
 Vigil Honor Order of the Arrow



Photo of both posthumously issued Max I. Silber Buckles.

Perhaps the most famous contribution to Scouting that Silber has become known for were his belt buckles. In 1950, Max was chosen to be a Scoutmaster for the national Scout jamboree. He was in the metal ingot business and had souvenir buckles produced for the event which he gave out as friendship gifts. Over the next half century, he made fifty more buckles for national Scout jamboree, world jamborees, New Hampshire jamborees and other special occasions as well as recognition buckles for significant awards such as Eagle Scout, Vigil Honor, and Wood Badge. His buckles have become world famous and are considered highly prized collectors' items. Amongst collectors, some of the Silber buckles fetch prices in the hundreds of dollars as evidenced on auction sites such as eBay.^[9]

The tradition of creating buckles has been carried on by the museum he founded, the Lawrence L. Lee Scouting Museum, in cooperation with his daughter, Natalie Weil of Southport, North Carolina.

To date, they have produced two official "Max" buckles posthumously.^[10] Since the late 1990s, Silber started the tradition of offering two versions of each buckle. One version is made from white bronze, and is issued as a collector's edition of the buckle. The second, is generally offered in red bronze and is issued as a contingent version of the buckle, which for national and world jamborees are given to the contingent of the Daniel Webster Council, any buckles left over after this are also made available to the public in a limited edition. In 2007, the museum elected to change the tradition of red bronze buckles to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Scouting's founding. The contingent buckle for the 21st World Scout Jamboree was made of polished naval brass with a royal blue lacquer. There are also several collectors buckles made to commemorate specific milestones or programs such as the Exploring Division, Region One, Northeast Region, and two Camp Carpenter buckles amongst others. Some of these buckles were released in unlimited editions to act as a constant fundraiser to sustain the Lawrence L. Lee Scout Museum where they are exclusively available.

The Buckles

Buckle	Year	Event/Honor	Location (If applicable)	Editions†	Quantity
	2007	21st World Scout Jamboree	Brownsea Island, United Kingdom	White Bronze	100
				Naval Brass	150
	2005	16th National Scout Jamboree	Fort A.P. Hill	White Bronze	100
				Red Bronze	250
	2003	Daniel Webster Council Jamboree	Gunstock Ski Area NH	White Bronze	100
				Red Bronze	300
	2002, 2003	20th World Scout Jamboree	Sattahip, Thailand	White Bronze	50
				Red Bronze	300
	2001	15th National Scout Jamboree	Fort A.P. Hill	Red Bronze	300
	1999	Daniel Webster Council Jamboree	Gunstock Ski Area NH	White Bronze	125
				Red Bronze	350
	1998, 1999	19th World Scout Jamboree	Picarquín, Chile	Red Bronze	300
	1997	14th National Scout Jamboree	Fort A.P. Hill	Red Bronze	300
	1995	Daniel Webster Council Jamboree	Sunapee Ski Area NH	White Bronze	50

				Red Bronze	350
	1995	18th World Scout Jamboree	Flevoland, Netherlands	White Bronze Red Bronze	50 300
	1995	Camp Carpenter 50th Anniversary	Manchester, NH	Red Bronze	500
	1993	13th National Scout Jamboree	Fort A.P. Hill	Red Bronze	550
	1995	Eagle Scout		White Bronze	Unlimited
	1992	Silver Beaver		Silver	Unlimited
	1991	17th World Scout Jamboree	Soraksan, South Korea	Red Bronze	350
	1991	Commissioner's Buckle (Re-Release)	Daniel Webster Council	Red Bronze	200
	1989	Museum/Library 20th Anniversary		Red Bronze	Unlimited
	1989	Vigil Honor		Red Bronze	Unlimited
	1989	12th National Scout Jamboree	Fort A.P. Hill	Red Bronze	1300
	1987/88	16th World Scout Jamboree US Contingent	Sydney, Australia	Red Bronze	500
	1987/88	16th World Scout Jamboree	Sydney, Australia	Red Bronze	1200
	1988	"Adventure '88" Daniel Webster Council Jamboree	Sunapee Ski Area NH	Red Bronze	1000
	1985	Eagle Scout		Red Bronze	Unlimited
	1985	11th National Scout Jamboree	Fort A.P. Hill	Red Bronze	1400
	1985	14th Australian National Scout Jamboree	Cataract Scout Park Australia	Red Bronze	125
	1984	Daniel Webster Council Jamboree	Hopkington Fairgrounds NH	Red Bronze	1200
	1983	15th World Scout Jamboree	Calgary, Canada	Red Bronze	1100

	1981	10th National Scout Jamboree	Fort A.P. Hill	Red Bronze	1200
	1981	Commissioner's Buckle	Daniel Webster Council	Red Bronze	300
	1979	15th World Scout Jamboree	Neyshâbûr, Iran	Red Bronze	100*
	1979	Exploring		Red Bronze	100
	1977	9th National Scout Jamboree	Moraine State Park, Pennsylvania	Red Bronze	1450
	1977	All Out for Scouting		Red Bronze	400
	1976	Wood Badge		White Bronze Red Bronze	68 Unlimited
	1976	Northeast Region		White Bronze Red Bronze	125 125
	1975	14th World Scout Jamboree	Lillehammer, Norway	Red Bronze	1100
	1974	Silver Buffalo		Silver	25
	1973	Lawrence L. Lee Museum		Red Bronze	Unlimited
	1973	8th National Scout Jamboree	Farragut State Park, Idaho & Moraine State Park, Pennsylvania	Red Bronze	2000
	1972	Daniel Webster Council Boypower		Red Bronze	350
	1971	13th World Scout Jamboree	Fujinomiya, Japan	Red Bronze	700
	1970	Camp Carpenter 25th Anniversary	Manchester, NH	Red Bronze	350
	1969	7th National Scout Jamboree	Farragut State Park, Idaho	Red Bronze	1000
	1967	12th World Scout Jamboree	Farragut State Park, United States	Red Bronze	1000
	1964	6th National Scout Jamboree	Valley Forge	Red Bronze	1000

	1964	1964 World's Fair		Red Bronze	400
	1960	5th National Scout Jamboree	Colorado Springs, Colorado	Red Bronze	800
	1957	4th National Scout Jamboree	Valley Forge	White Bronze	50
				Red Bronze	750
	1955	Region One		Red Bronze	500
	1955	8th World Scout Jamboree	Niagara-on-the-Lake, Canada	Red Bronze	700
	1953	3rd National Scout Jamboree	Irvine Ranch, California	Red Bronze	800
	1950	2nd National Scout Jamboree	Valley Forge	Red Bronze	700

† There may also exist "flat casted" test samples or limited variations in metals used for testing purposes, as these were not considered "official."

* The 1979 Iran buckles were for the most part melted down. The number reflected is of those that are known to remain.

The Museum & Library

The Lawrence L. Lee Scouting Museum, established in 1969, was a place for Max to display Scouting Memorabilia that he acquired during his many trips nationally and internationally in the service of Scouting, including many items related to Lord Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of the Scouting Movement, and his wife Lady Olave Baden-Powell, with whom he was personally acquainted. In 1978, a Scouting Library was named for him to honor his contributions to Scouting and the community.^[1]

Professional Life

Professionally, Max was the President of Kamenske & Company,^[2] a manufacturer of brass and bronze ingots.

Honors

- Brandeis University in Waltham, MA confers the Max I. Silber Award to the university's outstanding female student-athlete.^[11]
- The United Way of Greater Nashua, NH confers The Max I. Silber Community Service Award to members of the community who exemplify the ideals of community service and volunteerism.^[12]
- The National Eagle Scout Association chapter for New Hampshire is named The Max I. Silber Chapter.^[13]
- Camp Carpenter in Manchester, NH has a campsite named "Silber" in his honor.^[14]
- In 2004, Just after his death, the New Hampshire Scouting Service Club acquired the Amateur Radio Callsign 'N1S' (S being for Silber) for use during its Jamboree On The Air station, and dedicated the event to his memory.^[15] The club still uses the call each October to this day.^[16]

References

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Photo of Max I. Silber's Scouting medals and honors from the Max I. Silber Library in Manchester, NH. Amongst other honors, Max's Distinguished

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Eagle Scout Award,
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George Award, Silver
Beaver, Silver Antelope
and Silver Buffalo.

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Categories: 1911 births | 2004 deaths | People associated with the Boy Scouts of America | Distinguished Eagle Scouts

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