

Biography of Irene R. Kaplan
Chair, Government Affairs
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee

Irene Kaplan, nee Emsellem, was born in Brooklyn, New York, and raised in Washington, DC. She attended the University of Maryland, where she double majored in foreign languages, and government and politics.

Irene Kaplan is a member of the Executive Committee of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and is Chair of Government Affairs for JDC.

Irene retired in 2000 from the American Bar Association, where she served for 19 years as a Senior Legislative Counsel in the Governmental Affairs Office. Prior to joining the ABA, she held various positions on the staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee during her eleven-year tenure there. These positions included Senior Professional Staff Member on the full Committee, Chief Counsel and Staff Director of the Administrative Practice and Procedure Subcommittee, Chief Counsel and Staff Director of the Separation of Powers Subcommittee, and Professional Staff Member on the Constitutional Rights Subcommittee.

Irene has held many leadership positions with the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington including President from 2006-2008. She has also served as a Trustee of the United Jewish Endowment Fund and as a Member of the Board of Trustees of United Jewish Communities (currently the Jewish Federations of North America).

In other community positions, she is currently Vice President on the Board Member of the Magen David Sephardic Congregation in Rockville Maryland. She is a past board member of the Jewish Community Council, and of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington. She previously served as the Jewish Community representative on the Citizens Advisory Committee for Family Life and Human Development for the Montgomery County Public Schools.

In recognition of her service to the community, Irene has received many community awards for leadership.