

Brownback issues proclamation honoring founders of Unity Coalition for Israel

Kansas Governor Sam Brownback honored the late Vrem Levens and his wife, Esther Levens, founder and president of the Unity Coalition for Israel (UCI) at a special commemorative event held at the Elephant Club in Kansas City on June 22.

The proclamation states that Vrem Levens devoted his life to Kansas politics and strong public policy support for the nation of Israel. He was a member of the Sonnebom Institute, which helped prepare for an independent Israeli state and worked tirelessly to give a not-yet independent Israel the means to defend itself from foreign attack.

Vrem's efforts had a lasting effect on Esther, who, after his death, established Voices United for Israel, now known as the Unity Coalition for Israel, to bring Christians and Jews who share a common bond of freedom and justice together to work for the safety and security of the beleaguered state of Israel.

Brownback praised Esther for her public efforts on the U.S.-Israel relationship.

"I don't know of a person in America that's done more for that relationship — particularly in bringing Christians into a pro-Israel community — than Esther Levens has done," the governor



Unity Coalition for Israel founder Esther Levens receives a proclamation from Governor Sam Brownback.

said. "I mean this on a national and global basis, here is a humble woman who I've seen in numerous meetings in Washington, D.C., and she's been the organizing person."

Brownback called Vrem "a local guy," "one of ours, ... moving on a national and international basis."

Vrem was instrumental in sponsoring Israel Bond events and chaired a citywide event featuring then Amba-

sador Yitzhak Rabin and Senator Bob Dole. Among UCI's many pro-Israel activities were two major Washington, D.C., events that honored Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during his first term of office.

Esther's efforts through UCI are currently concentrated on two critical areas:

1) Enforcing the Jerusalem Embassy Act to move the American Em-

bassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, a bill passed by Congress that became law in 1995, and

2) Encouraging U.N. members to vote against a Palestinian effort to unilaterally establish a state in contradiction to the OSLO accords that require direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

The following issues, she says, must be addressed by the Palestinians:

Recognize Israel's existence as a Jewish State

Recognize Jerusalem as the undivided capitol of Israel

Renounce terrorism by changing the PLO and Hamas charters that vow to annihilate Israel

Reform their educational system that promotes hatred and terrorism

Rehabilitate Palestinian refugees by eliminating UNRWA and charging UNHCR with resettlement

Recognize equal rights for Muslims, Christians, Jews and women living under their rule

UCI provides information on current events in the Middle East through its website (www.israelunitycoalition.org) and newsletter (Today's News Summaries).