

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **FIRST-TIME ROAD SCHOLAR PARTICIPANT RETURNS TO POST- REVOLUTIONARY CUBA 50 YEARS AFTER SURPRISE HONEYMOON**

BOSTON (October 21, 2011) —Bernie Klein married Shirley more than 50 years ago in New York City. As a surprise, he booked a week-long stay at the venerable Hotel Nacional in Havana, Cuba for their honeymoon. In the 1950s, Havana was a top destination for Americans. The Hotel Nacional, one of the grandest hotels on the Caribbean island, was a veritable playground for America's rich and famous.

Cuba became off-limits to most Americans in 1962, following the Cuban revolution that ended with Fidel Castro assuming power of the island nation. However, in 2011, Road Scholar was granted a People-to-People license by the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) to operate and offer cross-cultural, lifelong-learning experiences in Cuba. Road Scholar now provides Americans like Shirley the opportunity to travel to Cuba to learn about and interact with the people and culture of this incredible country.

Several weeks ago, Shirley returned to Havana with Road Scholar as a first-time participant in its new *Shalom! Cuba* program. Her beloved husband Bernie has since passed away. However, once she discovered that she could return to the country where she and Bernie honeymooned in June 1952, she didn't hesitate to enroll.

"Bernie researched and planned the entire trip on his own," Shirley said. "It was my very first time outside the United States, and my first impression of Havana was that it was like a dream. It was Las Vegas times 10! The Hotel Nacional was just magnificent and the city was so beautiful and full of life. What I remember most was the music, the dancing, the beautiful people, and great food and music. The Cuban people were so warm and friendly and the nightclubs and casinos would put Las Vegas to shame!"

*Shalom! Cuba* centers on the lives of Cuba's nascent Jewish community. Once a thriving community of more than 15,000, most Jews left Cuba during the revolution and settled in several countries, including South America, Israel and the United States. Today, approximately 1,300 Jews remain in Cuba, with the vast majority residing in Havana.

Shirley's first impressions of post-revolutionary Cuba were mixed, but she says she felt privileged to have had the opportunity to return.

"It's dramatically different here today than it was when I was here before the revolution," she said. "It's really sad to see the decay because it was such an incredibly beautiful city. But the people are still as warm and friendly as they were 50 years ago, and I learned so much about the country. They have an incredibly high literacy rate, a great health-care system, and many high-quality performing arts schools. Raul Castro seems to be granting citizens more freedoms, so things are said to be improving slowly for the Cuban people."

Shirley resides in Broward County in Florida, which has a large Cuban population. She has Cuban friends and neighbors who were intrigued by her plans to visit Cuba. She says the program did not disappoint, and she is eager to get back and share her observations.

"I told my two kids, my friends and my neighbors that I was coming to Cuba," she said. "They all said, 'Go for it! I travel a lot with friends and family but this trip was for me. I'm really glad I went. And if Bernie were alive, he would have been the first to book.'"

To learn more about Road Scholar's Shalom Cuba program, please visit our website at:  
<http://roadscholar.org/programs/programdetail.asp?rowid=1%2D5SYY2N>

### **About Road Scholar**

Road Scholar is a not-for-profit organization with a mission to inspire adults to learn, discover and travel. Our learning adventures engage expert instructors, provide extraordinary access, and stimulate discourse and friendship among people for whom learning is the journey of a lifetime. Since its inception, more than 5 million people have enrolled in its more than 7,000 iconic educational adventures offered annually in 50 states and 150 countries around the world.

Road Scholar educational adventures are created by Elderhostel, Inc., the not-for-profit world leader in lifelong learning since 1975. To learn more, please visit our website at [www.road scholar.org/press](http://www.road scholar.org/press)

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