Part 5, Conclusion: Looking back at gains, losses

By AARON HOWARD | JHV

Editors note: In metropolitan Houston, where 1.4 million people are foreign born, one untold immigrant story is that of South African Jews. The core of the community, estimated at 600 families, has lived here four decades. Nearly all brought with them the highest levels of formal education, English proficiency, and skill sets. They have become U.S. citizens and have significantly contributed to the local Jewish and greater Houston communities. This is their unique story.

Houston has been successful at attracting highly skilled Jewish South African immigrants. One reason is Houston offers multiple employment and social opportunities for talented foreign-born. Another reason: The climate, which is warm, sunny, weather, like back home.

Most South Africans integrated well and have made numerous contributions to the local community. The South African Jews interviewed in this series have been immigrants for more than 30 years. They’ve worked hard to succeed. They’ve contributed in large ways to Houston.

They look back, many also felt the loss of the things they’ve had to give up. Most important: the network of family and friends they had to leave behind.

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