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The America-Israel Friendship League, Kenneth Bialkin, Chairman and Dr. Charlotte Frank, Chair, AIFL Executive Committee, and Senior Vice President, McGraw-Hill, are deeply saddened by the death of former New York City Schools Chancellor Frank Macchiarola. "The Chancellor was a courageous and imaginative educator," says Kenneth Bialkin.

In 1977, as Chancellor of the New York City School System, Dr. Macchiarola was an integral part of the development of the first New York City/Israel student exchange, the foundation of the AIFL Youth Ambassador Student Exchange (YASE) program. Dr. Charlotte Frank recalls that the former Chancellor considered an exchange between American and Israeli students "an opportunity to help New York students fully understand the world and enable the Israeli students to gain a different perspective on the United States." During the planning stages, she reminded the Chancellor that New York students are a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic group," says Charlotte Frank. Somewhat to the New Yorkers' surprise, the Israeli group was also multi-ethnic and multi-racial and included Jews of European and African backgrounds, and Druze and Bedouin Israelis. "After a while you couldn't tell them apart" said Dr. Frank. As Mayor Bloomberg has said, the Chancellor 'was always ahead of his time, and he was never afraid to stand up for the ideas and people he believed in."

Says AIFL Chairman Kenneth Bialkin, "the late Chancellor's support of that initial student exchange led to the creation of the annual America Israel Friendship League YASE program, an experience that changes lives and informs perceptions. We at AIFL remain always grateful to the late Chancellor for his leadership and imagination, and his openness to then new and creative approaches to education."