Cincinnati Campus Celebrates 135th Anniversary and Receives New $500,000 Grant for Rabbinical Student Scholarships

Karen Hoguet and Jim Miller honored for distinguished community service

CINCINNATI, OH: With 550 guests gathered in the ballroom of the Hyatt Hotel in downtown Cincinnati on Sunday evening, October 24, the Cincinnati Associates of Hebrew Union College hosted its 27th Annual Tribute Dinner honoring Karen Hoguet, Chief Financial Officer and executive vice president of Macy’s Inc., and James A. Miller, Chairman of Bartlett & Company—a Cincinnati-based investment advisory firm. The event marked the formal celebration of the 135th anniversary of the founding of the College in Cincinnati.

The evening began with a celebratory program, “Planting for Our Future” which featured a video recalling pivotal moments in the campus’ 135 year history; the campus’ expanding role within the entire College-Institute; as well as plans for enhancing community-wide access to the vast academic and cultural assets of the campus. (The video can be viewed at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rAH4M1Nm_Y4). The film was followed by moving testimonials from several audience members who shared their thoughts about the enduring impact of the Cincinnati campus on various facets of community, business, cultural and Jewish life—regionally, nationally, and internationally.

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HUC-JIR President David Ellenson announced that the Cincinnati campus was the recipient of a new $500,000 grant from the Society for Classical Reform Judaism (SCRJ), with the support of the Edward and Wilhelmina Ackerman Foundation. The grant will support rabbinical students on the Cincinnati campus with scholarships, Prize Essay Awards, a Student Travel Fund, and an annual SCRJ Institute. Tribute Dinner Chair Dick Weiland said that the total funds raised by the event exceeded $900,000. Proceeds will support rabbinic and graduate student scholarships for the Cincinnati campus.

Following a video highlighting the distinguished records of community service of both of the evening’s honorees, Karen Hoguet and Jim Miller, Rabbi Ellenson presented each with a framed print of a letter—written in 1871 by Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise to the President and Board of Trustees of K.K. Bene Yeshurun in Cincinnati—asking the Temple to lead the way in forming a union of congregations that would support the establishment of a “seminary to educate ministers”. Wise went on to say that, “…the seminary is established and will remain in Cincinnati, an honor and glory to all of us”.

The evening concluded with the performance of a new song derived from the Talmudic passage, “Ki Heichei Dishtalu Li” (As my ancestors planted for me, so do I plant for the future); composed in tribute to the honorees and to the 135th anniversary of the College by Cantor Yvon Shore, Director of Liturgical Arts for the Cincinnati campus. Shore conducted a choir comprised of rabbinical and graduate students on the Cincinnati campus.

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“This celebration was most inspiring and uplifting for all who were in attendance on that extraordinary night,” said Rabbi Ken Ehrlich, Dean of the Cincinnati campus. “There was a sense of deep pride that could be felt throughout the ballroom as the Cincinnati campus of Hebrew Union College—the oldest institution of Jewish higher education in the western hemisphere and the academic center of Reform Judaism—looked towards the future. On its milestone anniversary—following a period of challenge and uncertainty—the event was an opportunity to achieve a new level of community-wide awareness of the Cincinnati campus’ peerless academic and cultural assets and how they can be utilized for the benefit of all.”

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Founded in 1875, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion is the nation’s oldest institution of higher Jewish education and the academic, spiritual, and professional leadership development center of Reform Judaism. HUC-JIR educates men and women for service to American and world Jewry as rabbis, cantors, educators, and communal service professionals, and offers graduate and post-graduate programs to scholars of all faiths. With centers of learning in Cincinnati, Jerusalem, Los Angeles, and New York, HUC-JIR’s scholarly resources comprise renowned library and museum collections, the American Jewish Archives, biblical archaeology excavations, research institutes and centers, and academic publications. HUC-JIR invites the community to an array of cultural and educational programs which illuminate Jewish history, identity, and contemporary creativity and which foster interfaith and multiethnic understanding.

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Rabbi Sally Priesand, who, in 1972 became the first woman in the world to be ordained rabbi, told the gathering that she owes her entire career to the Cincinnati campus of Hebrew Union College; and to the courage of then-President Nelson Glueck and his successor, Rabbi Alfred Gottschalk.

(L-R) Rabbi Richard Sarason, Faculty Chair; Jason Levine, President of the Rabbinical Student Association; Jill Gutmann, President of the Graduate Student Association, and Rabbi Kenneth Ehrlich, Dean of the Cincinnati Campus, hosted the live portion of the program.

Eva Mwanika, a graduate student from Kenya, told the gathering that the Cincinnati campus was the only place in the world where she could find the cultural immersion she was seeking in her studies of modern period political theology narratives.