

Rabbi Joe Rooks Rapport Received Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, at HUC-JIR Graduation Ceremony in Cincinnati



Rabbi Joe Rooks Rapport, Co-Senior Rabbi at **The Temple – Congregation Adath Israel Brith Sholom** in Louisville, Kentucky, received a Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, from the **Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR)**. The degree was granted at HUC-JIR’s Cincinnati Graduation ceremony on Sunday, June 7, 2009 at Isaac M. Wise Temple.

Rabbi David Ellenson, Ph.D., announced HUC-JIR alumni recipients who were awarded honorary Doctorates of Divinity, Music, Jewish Religious Education, and Jewish Communal Service, as well as the Founders' Medallion, in recognition of their 25 years of distinguished professional service.

Rabbi Ellenson said, “Rabbi Rapport has contributed to social action based on religious practice. His commitment to Jewish continuity is evident as he guides his congregants through religious school to B’nai Mitzvot to adulthood.”

Rabbi Rapport has served The Temple – Congregation Adath Israel Brith Sholom since 1988. He received his Ph.D. in American Jewish History in 1988 and a Master of Arts in History in 1986 from Washington University in St. Louis. Rabbi Rapport was ordained at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati in 1984.

At the HUC-JIR, he began his study of the American Jewish experience with his Rabbinic Thesis, a computerized collective biography entitled: “*Notable American*

Jewish Women.” In addition, he has completed theses and major works on: American Involvement in the Holocaust, The Early Settlement of the Jews in Georgia, Fannie Hurst, Leni Riefenstahl, Local and Regional campaign Media, as well as various technical works in the field of computers and education.

At The Temple, Rabbi Rapport oversees many programs. He teaches in a variety of adult education classes, as well as teaching children in the The Temple’s Religious School, at the High School of Jewish Studies, guiding The Temple Confirmation Class, and working closely with Bar and Bat Mitzvah students. Each summer, he works with Jewish children during a two-week session at Goldman Union Camp Institute in Zionsville, Indiana.

In the community at large, Rabbi Rapport offers a course in Jewish philosophy at Bellarmine University and is often called upon to speak throughout the city. He was on the original planning committee for the new Rauch Planetarium in the Gheen’s Science Center. He is a member of the University of Louisville Board of Overseers, and is involved in various interfaith and social action activities. He is past chair of the Louisville Coalition for the Homeless, and MPOC, a diversity project of the NCCJ.

Within the Jewish community, he has served as a member of the Executive Committee of the Jewish Community Federation, and as president of the Kentucky Board of Rabbis and Cantors, and is a past chair of the Community Relations Council. Nationally, he is a contributor to Reform Voices of Torah, the URJ’s Torah Study and he was the chair of the Computers and Technology Committee of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

Rabbi Rapport is married to Rabbi Gaylia R. Rooks, who is also a Senior Rabbi at The Temple, where she has served since 1988. They are parents of Yael and Lev Rooks-Rapport.

For more information on the HUC-JIR Graduation, Investiture, and Ordination ceremonies in New York, Los Angeles, and Cincinnati, please visit <http://www.huc.edu/newspubs/pressroom/article.php?pressroomid=271>.

*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. Visit us at www.huc.edu.*