

Rabbi Gregory S. Marx Received Doctor of Divinity at HUC-JIR Graduation Ceremony in New York



Rabbi Gregory S. Marx, rabbi at **Congregation Beth Or**, Maple Glen, Pennsylvania, 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 New York Graduation ceremony on Thursday, April 30, 2009 at Congregation Emanu-El of the City of New York.

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 Marx has given effective leadership to Congregation Beth Or for almost two decades. He has strengthened his community with innovative adult education programs and has been recognized by his community for kindling the spirit of interfaith relations."

Rabbi Marx has been as committed to the causes of community education and social action as he is to being a congregational spiritual leader. He was the first to have his congregation Adopt Inner-City Youth for College Mentorship. He has introduced youth and adult interfaith symposia to gain greater understanding of our neighbors. As the former President of the Wissahickon Faith Community Association, he worked in the forefront of local interfaith activities, bridging the gap between races and religions.

Rabbi Marx has been instrumental in working with interfaith fellowship groups and symposiums involving not only clergy but also laypersons from all religious groups.

In his role as congregational spiritual leader, Rabbi Marx brought into existence several innovative programs with far-reaching results. He instituted adult and youth pilgrimages to Israel. He has strengthened the community with innovative adult education classes, including a 19-year Torah Study class along with learning classes in Center City and Maple Glen on Torah and tradition. Congregants were able to learn more of the traditions and history of Passover through his creative Passover University. Rabbi Marx recently instituted Synaplex, a creative alternative to Shabbat worship. In an attempt to make Judaism more personal, Rabbi Marx introduced the "Torah To Go" which features a clergy member bringing a Beth Or Torah and Ark to a family's homes for informal Torah study and community building. In the hopes of creating a "mikdash me'at" a "sanctuary in the home," the family keeps the Torah in their home for a week and returns it just before Shabbat Services begin. Lastly Rabbi Marx conceived of and instituted Caring Congregants, a committed group that aids and assists members of Beth Or in crisis; Empty Nesters, a discussion group for senior members of the congregation, which meets monthly to confront current issues; the Outreach Committee, which seeks to bring the intermarried into the fold of Judaism.

Rabbi Marx has held numerous leadership roles in civic and Jewish communal organizations. Recently, he was elected to the Board of Trustees of Abington Hospital. Rabbi Marx is on the Board of the Anti-Defamation League of Philadelphia and also the Leonard and Madlyn Abramson Center for Jewish Life. He is currently serving as the co-chair of the Board of Trustees of State of Israel Bonds National Rabbinic Cabinet and the General Board of Directors of Philadelphia State of Israel Bonds. He is on the Executive Board of the Greater Philadelphia Board of Rabbis and is a member of the New York Board of Rabbis as well as the National Board of the American Reform Zionists Association, ARZA. He serves as Treasurer for the South Eastern Pennsylvania Interfaith Alliance. Rabbi Marx served as a co-chair of Yahad, leading the Bux-Mont Collaborative of area synagogues from 2005 to 2007.

Prior to becoming the Rabbi of Congregation Beth Or in Maple Glen, PA, Rabbi Marx was Associate Rabbi of Temple Beth El in Boca Raton, Florida from 1984-1989. While studying for ordination at the Hebrew Union College, he served as Rabbinic Intern at the University of Cincinnati Hillel and as Chaplain at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. For two years he was the Rabbi at Oheb Shalom in Sandusky, Ohio.

In 1993, he received a citation from the House of Representatives on behalf of his distinguished service for "Understanding Through Education" Program through the Jewish Chautauqua Society.

Rabbi Marx and his wife, Laurie Singer-Marx are proud parents of three children: Daniel, age 18, Joseph, age 15, and Rebecca (Ricca), age 12.

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.*

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