

## **Sanford D. Akselrad to Receive Doctor of Divinity at HUC-JIR Graduation Ceremony in Los Angeles**

**Rabbi Sanford D. Akselrad**, rabbi at Congregation Ner Tamid, Las Vegas, Nevada, will receive a Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, from the **Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR)**. The degree will be granted at HUC-JIR's Los Angeles Graduation ceremony on Monday, May 18, 2009. HUC-JIR is the nation's oldest institution of higher Jewish education and the academic, spiritual, and professional leadership development center of Reform Judaism.

Communal leaders, relatives, and friends will gather at the Los Angeles Campus, 3077 University Avenue, for the HUC-JIR Graduation Ceremonies of the 134th academic year.

**Rabbi David Ellenson, Ph.D.**, announced HUC-JIR alumni recipients who will be 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 Akselrad has served as the spiritual leader of Congregation Ner Tamid since 1988. During this time the Synagogue has grown from 60 to over 600 families, becoming the largest Reform Synagogue in the State of Nevada. Rabbi Akselrad has served on a wide variety of community boards including the Humana Hospital Pastoral Advisory Board, the Jewish Federation of Las Vegas, and the National Conference of Community and Justice. He is currently the President of the Clark County Board of Rabbis and he is a founding member. He is a past chair of the National Conference of Community and Justice's Inter-faith Council and past chair of the Federation's Community Relations Council (CRC). Rabbi Akselrad is currently a board member of the Anti-defamation League in Las Vegas and a member of the board of the Governor's Council on Holocaust Education. Recently, Rabbi Akselrad was appointed to serve on a National Commission on Jewish Living, Worship and Music for the Union of Reform Judaism (URJ). He has also served on the Outreach Committee (to inter-faith families) of the URJ and is currently a member of the URJ's Worship Commission.

Rabbi Akselrad was ordained from HUC-JIR in 1984. His rabbinic thesis dealt with the moral implications of the Holocaust and how the Holocaust is taught in public and private schools. Upon ordination, Rabbi Akselrad served as the associate Rabbi of one of the largest Reform Congregations in the midwest, Temple Israel of Columbus, Ohio.

Rabbi Ellenson said, "As founding chair of his community's Yom Hashoah observance, Rabbi Akselrad keeps the memory of the Shoah alive. He has attained leadership positions in the many civic and Jewish organizations he serves with distinction."

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](http://www.huc.edu).*

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