

Rabbi Judith A. Chessin to Receive Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, at HUC-JIR Graduation Ceremony in Cincinnati

Rabbi Judith A. Chessin, rabbi at **Temple Beth Or** in Dayton, Ohio, 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 Cincinnati Graduation ceremony on Sunday, June 7, 2009 at Isaac M. Wise Temple.

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 Ellenson said, "Rabbi Chessin, for the past twenty-five years, has served Temple Beth Or, Dayton, Ohio, in the highest tradition of our faith. She has dedicated her life to the teaching and transmitting of Torah to youth in her congregation, touching their souls with the beauty of our heritage."

Rabbi Chessin has been the Rabbi of Temple Beth Or since its inception in 1984.

Originally from Orlando, Florida, Rabbi Chessin received her undergraduate training at the University of South Florida, where she was the first graduate in "Judaic Studies" within the Religious Studies Department. She received ordination at HUC-JIR in 1984 and was awarded the Morris H. Youngerman Prize for Homiletics. During her tenure at HUC-JIR, she served pulpits in Owensboro, Kentucky and Brookhaven Mississippi. Chessin also directed the College-Institute's Youth and College Programming for three years.

Rabbi Chessin also studied in the graduate level psychology at the University of Cincinnati, and worked as a caseworker at both the University of Cincinnati's walk-in clinic and Jewish Family Service of Cincinnati. From 1984-5 she received pastoral counseling training and supervision at the Pastoral Counseling Center at Miami Valley Hospital.

Along with her duties at the congregation, Rabbi Chessin speaks extensively in Dayton area universities, churches, synagogues and organizations on topics of Jewish interest. She also serves as a mentor to rabbinic students at the HUC-JIR who are preparing for a career in the rabbinate. Additionally, she spends a several weeks each summer teaching Jewish youth at the Goldman Union Camp Institute in Zionsville, Indiana. She is currently the President of the Synagogue Forum of Greater Dayton and was honored in 2004 as a Woman of Influence by Dayton's Y.W.C.A.

In December, 2007 she attended Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies and was certified in "Teaching the Shoah, Antisemitism and contemporary Israel."

Rabbi Chessin is married to Professor Michael Cook, who teaches at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati. They have two teenage sons.

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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