The focus will be on retired rabbis and on rabbis of the future at an event Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Midwest Region is hosting in Evanston on Thursday, April 3.

It will honor 14 retired Reform rabbis from synagogues in the Chicago area as well as raising money for future rabbinical students from the area at HUC-JIR, the Reform movement's first seminary, located in Cincinnati.

The honor roll consists of Rabbis Howard Berman from Chicago Sinai Congregation; Herbert Bronstein, North Shore Congregation Israel; Hillel Gamoran, Beth Tikvah Congregation; Donald Gluckman, Temple Anshe Sholom Beth Torah; Harold Kudan, An Shalom; Robert Marx, Congregation Hakafa; Herman Schaalman, Emanuel Congregation; Robert Schreibman, Temple Jeremiah; Frederick Schwartz, Temple Sholom; Mark Shapiro, Congregation B'nai Jehoshua Beth Elchim; Joseph Strauss, Temple Menorah; Victor Weissberg, Temple Beth El; Arnold Jacob Wolf, K.A.M. Isaiah Israel Congregation; and Leo Wolowitz, B'yal

Yehuda Beth Shalom.

None of the 14 will be present, event co-chair Larry Sherman said. The rest live out of town or are away for the winter.

Rabbi David Ellenson, HUC-JIR president, will present the rabbis with a certificate thanking them for their many years of service, and will speak briefly. Rabbi Peter Knobel, spiritual leader of Beth Emet The Free Synagogue, where the event takes place, and president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, will also give a short presentation.

The event has a two-fold purpose, co-chair Joan Pines said. "Chicago has always had outstanding Reform rabbis, and most if not all of them went through HUC at a time when scholarships were very important to them in being able to get their education, and that's the case," she said. Considering that a majority of students at the college are on some type of scholarship, "we thought we could combine an effort not only to honor these rabbis but also to make it a means of helping students from the Chicago area," she said.

The fund-raiser will need $250,000 for the planned endowed scholarship, Pines said, and "we are well on our way. The people we have contacted have responded splendidly."

Sherman said he hopes the evening will also raise HUC-JIR's profile in the Chicago area. "Even though it was the first seminary of the Reform movement, a lot of Reform Jews don't know about the college, what it is, where it is," he said.

The 14 rabbis being recognized richly deserve the honor, he added. "They take an active role, even in retirement."

Pines said that even though the rabbis are retired, they are not forgotten. "They all have followings in their congregations," she said, and the event "should be a very festive and upbeat evening."

It takes place at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 3 at Beth Emet, 1224 Dempster St., Evanston. To make a reservation, contact Phyllis Volan at (513) 487-3032 or e-mail pvolan@huc.edu.