

THE Chronicle

FALL 2016



BREAKING NEW GROUND

The Taube Family Campus
in Jerusalem

CHARTING A NEW PATH

Students and Newest
Alumni Share
Their Journeys



**HEBREW
UNION
COLLEGE
JEWISH
INSTITUTE
OF RELIGION**



**HEBREW
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COLLEGE
JEWISH
INSTITUTE
OF RELIGION**

Leadership Programs for College Students:

The Tapestry of Jewish Culture
November 11-13, 2016 in Cincinnati

New York Area Reform College
Student Shabbaton
February 24-25, 2017 in New York

L'Chaim: Absolute Judaism
March 3-5, 2017 in Cincinnati

Founders' Fellowship
New York Kickoff - March 30 - April 2, 2017
Los Angeles Kickoff - April 6-9, 2017

Admissions Webinar:

Sunday, November 6, 2016
at 2:00 PM EST

Register Now:
huc.edu/explore

Academic Program Study Retreats:

Doctor of Ministry Open House
March 13, 2017 in New York

DeLeT Open House
February 2, 2017 in Los Angeles

Campus Open Houses:

CINCINNATI

Multiple study and leadership
retreats - details below!

JERUSALEM

November 10, 2016
March 16, 2017

LOS ANGELES

November 14, 2016
March 6, 2017
July 18, 2017

NEW YORK

November 10, 2016
March 30, 2017

**Generous
Scholarships
Available**

**DO
WHAT
YOU
LOVE
WHAT
YOU
DO**

Leadership Programs for High School Students:

EIE Fall Semester Leadership Retreat
December 9-10, 2016 in Jerusalem

NFTY Ohio Valley Winter Kallah
(NFTY-OV Members)
January 20-22, 2017
in Cincinnati

North American High School
Spirituality Retreat
April 21-23, 2017
in Cincinnati

Joint HUC-JIR and URJ Youth Professional Seminar:

March 24-26, 2017
in Cincinnati

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for HUC-JIR?**

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President's Message

Dear Friends,

Each morning, Jews worldwide recite the following beautiful words of thanksgiving:

אשרינו, מה טוב חלקנו, ומה נאים גורלנו, ומה יפה ירשתנו.

"Ashreinu, mah tov helkeinu, u'mah naim goraleinu, u'mah yafah yerushateinu."

"How happy we are, how good our portion, how pleasant our fate, and how beautiful our inheritance."

These words ring in my ears as I reflect on the energy, creativity, and intellectual curiosity that abounds on our campuses in our 142nd academic year, which you will see reflected in the pages of this issue of *The Chronicle*. Our HUC-JIR faculty, students, alumni, staff, and lay leaders all share a passionate dedication to invigorating Jewish life and learning. I feel blessed, each and every day, that my portion is to be among these inspired leaders, and to help them grow better in all that they do.

HUC-JIR is breaking new ground, literally and figuratively. On June 29th, we celebrated a groundbreaking and naming ceremony for our Taube Family Campus in Jerusalem, honoring Tad Taube, founder and chairman of Taube Philanthropies. Our new logo and visual identity system will move us forward in the world of digital branding and communications. New initiatives in creating college leaders for the Reform Movement, in advancing publishing at HUC Press, enhancing scholarship, deepening community service, expanding vital interfaith work, and providing thought leadership are all efforts that will continue to break ground and build a better educated, more engaged community.

In this issue, more than anything else, you will see the impact of our students. As visionary leaders, inspired teachers, passionate advocates, thoughtful pastors, and courageous souls who improve the world, they take the beauty of our inherited tradition and apply it to Jewish lives with vision and devotion. Many paths have led them to HUC-JIR; it is here that they are preparing themselves to change the world, each in their own unique way. I am proud to share just a few of their journeys with you in this issue, knowing that there are so many more stories we could tell. I hope that you will be inspired by their experiences – and I invite you to share their stories with young people you may know who have the heart, imagination, and vision to lead with integrity. HUC-JIR just might be their path to a meaningful and fulfilling life.

We are all a part of this extraordinary inheritance – both of the Jewish tradition and of HUC-JIR – and to this we say *Ashreinu*, how happy we are! Thank you for all you do to help ensure its bright future.

May 5777 be a year blessed with health, peace, and joy for you and your loved ones.

In friendship,



RABBI AARON PANKEN, PH.D.

President

November 2016/Cheshvan 5777



RABBI AARON PANKEN, PH.D.
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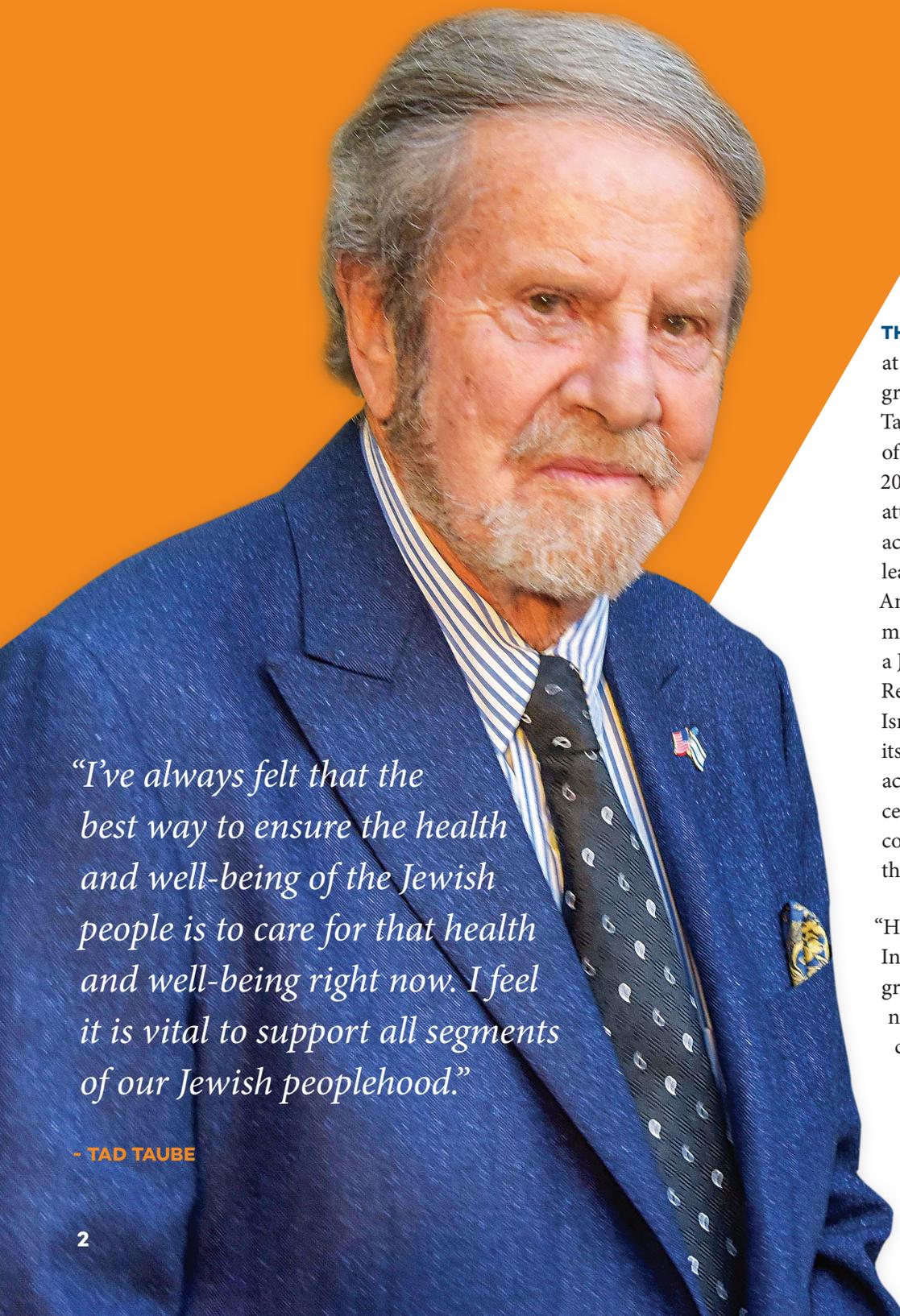
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The Taube Family Campus Named at Groundbreaking of Jerusalem Campus



“I’ve always felt that the best way to ensure the health and well-being of the Jewish people is to care for that health and well-being right now. I feel it is vital to support all segments of our Jewish peoplehood.”

- TAD TAUBE

THE TAUBE FAMILY CAMPUS

at HUC-JIR was named during a groundbreaking ceremony honoring Tad Taube, founder and chairman of Taube Philanthropies, on June 29, 2016. This milestone occasion was attended by governmental, diplomatic, academic, spiritual, and cultural leaders of Israel, Poland, and North America. Taube Philanthropies’ \$15 million grant, its largest grant ever to a Jewish organization, will enable the Reform Movement’s headquarters in Israel to update, enhance, and beautify its Jerusalem campus as a vibrant academic, cultural, and spiritual center welcoming the larger Israeli community and visitors from around the world.

“Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion is doing groundbreaking work in training the next generation of Reform rabbis, cantors, educators, and nonprofit leaders for Israel and the Jewish people as a whole,” said Tad Taube. “Its Jerusalem campus, Jewish professional leadership development, brilliant faculty,

“This campus and its activities have made an extraordinary contribution to the cultural life of Jerusalem. The opening of its front door on King David Street will amplify its presence and give the campus a strong identity and accessibility.”

- MOSHE SAFDIE, ARCHITECT

and ambitious students deserve a beautiful, modern campus that matches the institution’s lofty goals. We are honored to be a part of this community as it achieves new heights in Jewish and rabbinical education.”

Rabbi Aaron Panken, Ph.D., HUC-JIR President, added, “We are enormously grateful to Tad Taube for his vision and support as we enhance, modernize, and complete our Jerusalem campus. Here, in the heart of the modern State of Israel, is where the vital links of mutual partnership and responsibility between Israel and the global Jewish people – *arevut* – are forged among the next generations of Jewish leaders. Our students and alumni are teaching,

leading, and building these vital links, more crucial today than ever before, among the two million Reform Jews worldwide and within thousands of congregations, organizations, and institutions throughout Israel and the Diaspora. Taube Philanthropies’ generous gift will secure our Jerusalem campus as an enduring testament to the vibrant ties uniting Israel, North American Jewry, and the global Jewish people.”

Capital improvements will include a prominent new entrance to the campus, which will be designed by

internationally renowned architect Moshe Safdie, who designed the campus expansion three decades ago. The new entrance gate and piazza will be located along King David Street, the city’s most significant thoroughfare, bridging the ancient and modern sections of Jerusalem. The new spaces designed by Safdie and the renovation of the very first campus building, designed by International Style architect Heinrich Heinz Rau in 1963, will create compelling public spaces for worship services, educational programs, and cultural events.

“You [HUC-JIR] are a beacon of tolerance, pluralism, and the pursuit of Tikkun Olam – and you are a leading agent in promoting personal ties with Israel.”

**- AMBASSADOR DANIEL B. SHAPIRO,
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO ISRAEL**



Rendering: Moshe Safdie



“HUC-JIR contributes to the city of Jerusalem by representing an array of tribes of the Jewish people, in Israel, and the world.”

- MAYOR NIR BARKAT, THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

HUC-JIR's Jerusalem campus is the headquarters for the Reform Movement in Israel, including the World Union for Progressive Judaism, Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism, Union for Reform Judaism, and Israel Religious Action Center. HUC-JIR prepares Israeli rabbis, educators, and pastoral counselors who are pioneering religious pluralism in the Jewish State and serving the global Jewish people. All North American rabbinical, cantorial, and education students are required to spend their first year of study at the

campus, where they establish lifelong ties to Israel that they later transmit as leaders of congregations, organizations, and communities worldwide.

HUC-JIR will also collaborate with Taube Philanthropies' senior staff to foster a strong connection with the Jewish community in Poland, Jewish history, and Jewish peoplehood among HUC-JIR faculty, students, and lay leaders. Taube Philanthropies has a long history supporting the revitalization of Jewish life and culture in Poland.

Watch the groundbreaking video at:
huc.edu/taube-groundbreaking

“It is so important for the Jewish people, for Israel, and for the Israel government, even if they don't know it, that HUC-JIR is here in the heart of Jerusalem.”

- NATAN SHARANSKY, CHAIRMAN, JEWISH AGENCY FOR ISRAEL



“The Governors of HUC-JIR share a proud commitment to the State of Israel and to preparing Jewish leaders who will inspire the next generations of engaged Jews around the world.”

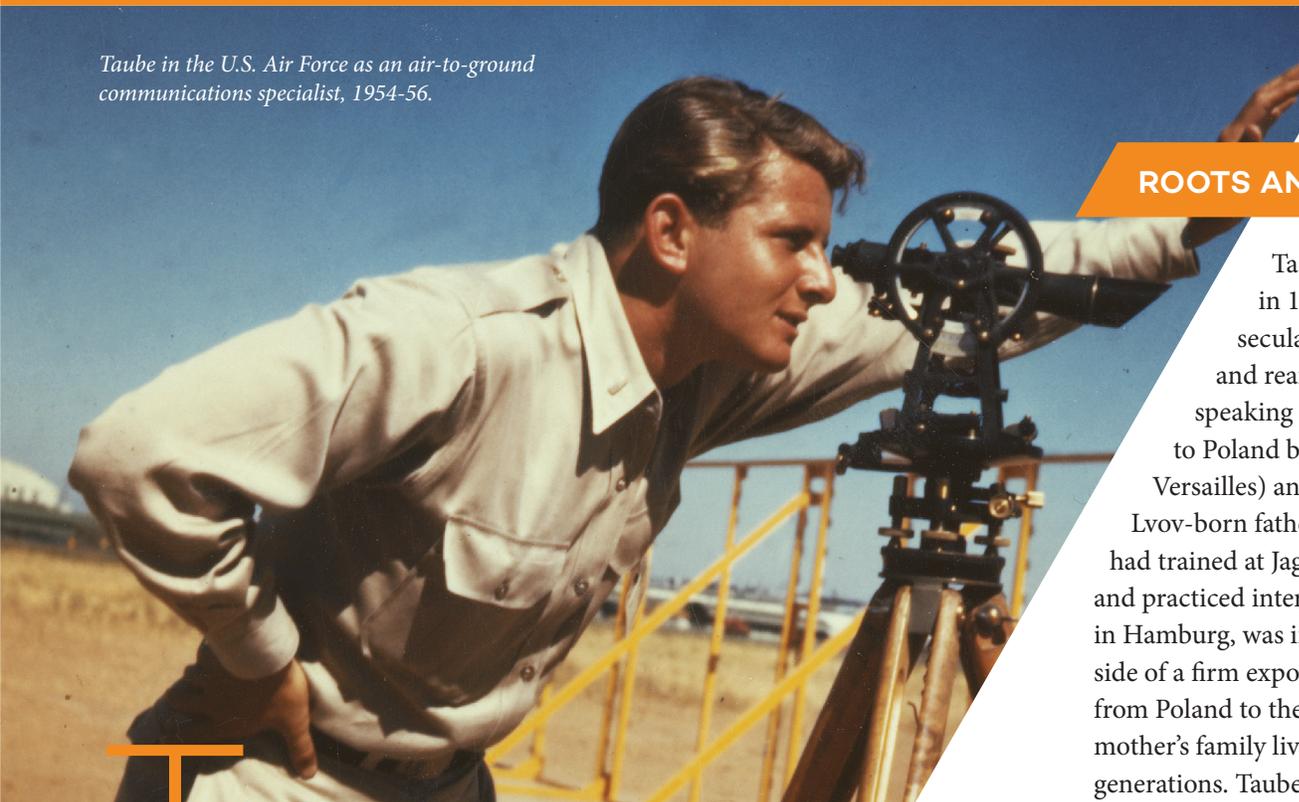
- BONNIE TISCH, HUC-JIR GOVERNOR

Front row from right: Mayor Nir Barkat, Natan Sharansky, Tad Taube, Rabbi Aaron Panken, Shana Penn, Sean Taube, U.S Ambassador Daniel B. Shapiro, and Julie Fisher celebrate the naming of the Taube Family Campus at HUC-JIR.

TAD TAUBE

Ensuring the Jewish Future

Taube in the U.S. Air Force as an air-to-ground communications specialist, 1954-56.



ROOTS AND REFUGE

Tad Taube was born in 1931 in Krakow to secular Jewish parents and reared in German-speaking Toruń (ceded to Poland by the Treaty of Versailles) and later Warsaw. His Lvov-born father, a lawyer who had trained at Jagiellonian University and practiced international trade law in Hamburg, was in the marketing side of a firm exporting canned hams from Poland to the United States. His mother's family lived in Krakow for generations. Taube's early education in Toruń was in German, and later in Polish at a Catholic School in Warsaw, where during formal religion classes he was sent to a private classroom to study with a rabbi. He remains fluent in Polish to this day.

Tad Taube's extraordinary life encompasses the full trajectory of the Jewish historical experience of the past eight decades. It spans his early childhood years in pre-war Poland, his perilous escape from Nazi Europe and immigration to the United States in 1939, and his embrace of the freedom and opportunities in America that have shaped a life distinguished by professional success and philanthropic impact.



Taube as a child in Poland in 1936 at about age five.

His parents traveled to the United States for business in the spring of 1939. There they made the conscious decision not to return to Poland – leaving Taube in Warsaw in the care of his grandmother. “My dad’s close friend from school, whom I considered an uncle, was the one who brought me safely to the United States,” he recalls. “I vividly remember the train ride from Warsaw to Paris, passing through hostile territory. The Gestapo entered our compartment repeatedly to check our papers – Polish documents, which had my religion plainly marked. I knew what that meant to the Germans, and I was frightened.”

Taube and his uncle lived in Biarritz, France for six weeks until they acquired documents, which were probably forged, to enter the U.S. Fortunately, they were allowed to board the Queen Mary in Cherbourg, travelling in claustrophobic quarters.



Taube at age eight, in New York City, shortly after his escape from Poland in the spring of 1939.

He recalls his fearful arrival as an eight-year-old refugee landing in New York harbor in the summer of 1939, just months before the outbreak of the Second World War. “Those of us who did not have proper papers were shipped by ferry boat to Ellis Island, where we stayed overnight. We finally got temporary visitors’ visas that allowed us to exit and join my parents.”

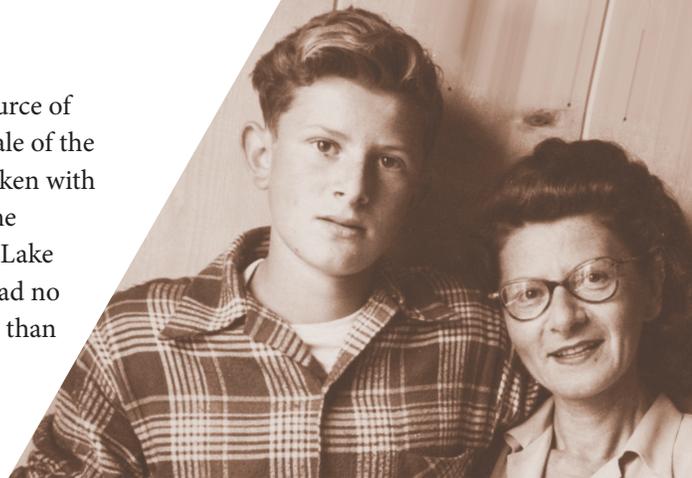
It was virtually impossible for his parents to find work that year in New

York City. The family’s sole source of income was provided by the sale of the jewelry that his mother had taken with her from Poland. “They had the foresight to send me to Crane Lake Camp that summer, where I had no alternative to learning English than through total immersion, and was able to enroll at P.S. 9 on the West Side that fall.” By the time he reached third grade, his parents ran out of money, and drove the family across the country to Los Angeles to seek employment from Polish acquaintances.

GOING WEST

Living in a tiny Los Angeles apartment, Taube was the first one in the family to get a job – as a child star in three war-time films – thanks to an expatriate Polish casting director. “In ‘The Greenie,’ I starred as a little refugee kid who arrives on the Lower East Side of New York with my grandpa because my mom has been killed by an air raid in Warsaw. Speaking no English, I watch a sandlot baseball game through the window. I join the kids, but they beat me up. When one of the kids speaks broken Polish and informs the other kids about my life, they let me play and I hit a home run!”

An only child at the time, Taube quickly acculturated. “I became an all-American kid. I didn’t want to be thought of as a refugee. I didn’t like it when my friends heard my parents speaking foreign languages. I completely adopted my American heritage, so much so that I was selling war stamps and, wearing my yellow junior air warden helmet, on the lookout for Japanese planes.”



Taube as a teenager in Brentwood, CA, with his mother, Lola, about two years before he headed off to become a Stanford Freshman.

But the impact of the Holocaust was ever present. “I had constant reminders of what was going on. I watched my mother cry every day. Her father was killed while trying to escape from Auschwitz and her grandmother was shot in the street. My mother’s adopted sister and her husband were both murdered at Auschwitz, and their daughter was hidden by nuns during the war. Miraculously, we were able to find her when the war ended and in 1946 brought her to the U.S., where my parents adopted her. My father’s mother, sister, and her daughter were able to escape to Brazil with false papers.”

STANFORD STUDIES

With improved finances, Taube’s family moved to West Los Angeles, where his parents built a home. “My dad’s word was law. When it came to applying to college, he said, ‘You’re going to go to Stanford.’ That was it! After denial for regular admission, I was admitted into the provisional program for the summer quarter and, with a passing grade point average, I was admitted as a full-time student in the winter quarter.”

(Continued on page 30)

CHARTING A NEW PATH

Our Students and Newest Alumni
Share Their Journeys



*Rabbinical Students
in the Year-In-Israel
Program (from left):
Esther Jilovsky '21
Emily Aronson '21
Sam Klein '21*

THE YEAR-IN-ISRAEL

Our students discover Judaism’s ancient roots, develop close ties with the land and people of Israel, and deepen their identities during this unique first year of study and exploration. Three students share their unforgettable experiences during this transformative year.



Danielle Rodnizki leading services on the beach.

DANIELLE RODNIZKI '20

Cantorial Student

Although I had previously been to Israel on short, meaningful trips with March of the Living and Birthright, I was excited to spend the year studying in Jerusalem, knowing that it would be a deeper, bigger, more intense experience. This program gave all the first-year students the opportunity to live there and be Reform Jews in Israel, not always the easiest thing. The growing Progressive Movement in Israel triggers conflict in Israeli society as it pushes back on that binary division between the *dati* (literally “religious,” usually referring to Orthodox Jews) and the secular.

It was wonderful to interact with Israeli Rabbinical Program students, Israeli clergy, and activists to hear more about what Reform means to them. Especially meaningful was my yearlong *T’rumah* (volunteer) project at Kibbutz Gezer with Rabbi Miri Gold ‘98, one of the rabbis who fought in the Israel Supreme Court for Reform rabbis’ salaries to be paid by the Israeli government. When I led Shabbat services with Israeli rabbinical student Leora Ezrachi Vered for Project Keshet – a group of Russian women who were recent immigrants to Israel – the only way we could communicate was through prayer and music. It is a big deal for women to pray together publicly and communally in Israel, and as I sensed their gratitude for this opportunity, I felt even more deeply the importance of the work of the Progressive Movement and HUC-JIR in Israel.

The Year-In-Israel program provided amazing opportunities to meet people from all sectors of Israeli society, listen to them and learn from them, and engage in difficult and important conversations about Israel as both a Jewish and democratic state. Our professors and clergy challenged us to consider how we engage with Israel as we continue our studies and begin working in our student pulpits stateside.

My blog, danielledwellsonisrael.wordpress.com, covers some of the impactful moments from this year and reminds me of what I can do to connect with Israel, even when I am not physically there. Each learning opportunity has deepened who I am as a future Jewish leader, and I look forward to drawing on my Year-In-Israel experiences for many years to come.

Danielle Rodnizki is the recipient of the Cantor Israel Goldstein Endowed Scholarship.



Thalia Halpert Rodis with Women of the Wall.

THALIA HALPERT RODIS '21

Rabbinical and Education Student

I loved the Year-In-Israel. The program was packed with so much to learn and do. I got to know and grow from my classmates and teachers – people who have a similar passion for Jewish identity, learning, and community building. It was thrilling to learn with them and be challenged by them.

I loved our Scheuer Israel Seminar days when we got out of the classroom, experienced different parts of the country, and deepened our understanding of Israel from antiquity through the present day. It was wonderful learning about Israel through the lens of nuance, honesty, and complexity. These experiences strengthened my connection to Israel and my commitment to advance religious pluralism and Jewish-Arab relations.

My *T'rumah* site was at Hillel, an organization that supports individuals, usually between 18-40 years of age, who have chosen to leave the *Haredi* world. Often, those who leave the *Haredi* world lose their families, the comforting structures of observance, and their friends. Hillel offers them emergency housing, food, clothing, and tutoring in subjects like math, technology, writing, Hebrew, and English (since their schooling is primarily restricted to Jewish texts). My role, along with three other HUC-JIR students, was to run the English club. I learned about the *haredi* world, and they learned from a Reform Jewish woman who wants to be a rabbi.

Thalia Halpert Rodis is the recipient of the HUC-JIR Grant-in-Aid Scholarship, provided by generous donors.

MEIR BARGERON '20

Rabbinical Student

No one can fully describe the Year-In-Israel for you – you have to experience it for yourself. It is a wonderful, intense experience of learning about text, Hebrew, Israel as a society, and a lot about yourself. It was an amazing and overwhelming year and I did things I never imagined I would do: lead services, travel all over Israel, and engage in difficult conversations with Israelis about life there.

During our weekly Scheuer Israel Seminar, a woman heading an NGO helping young women from the economically disadvantaged periphery of Israeli society gave us a close inside look into her work. Her example of living Jewish values translated into transforming these young women's lives and professional opportunities after the army. She showed us how it was possible to create something that will make Israel stronger.

Every Tuesday, our North American group would pray with the Israeli Rabbinical Program students. We also engaged in learning trips together. A good number of these students are second career, and it was fantastic to find much in common with them. They are visionaries pioneering religious pluralism in Israel.

The Year-In-Israel is essential for our success as future leaders. An appreciation for Israel and Judaism through hands-on experiences gave us a deep understanding of Jewish history, the reciprocal links between the U.S. and Israel, and how the Reform Movement is an incredible lab of innovation. You can't understand Israel unless you live there for a period of time. Israel is a huge part of being a rabbi and representing Jewish life.

Meir Bargeron is the recipient of the Eleanor Shone Seigman Endowed Rabbinic Scholarship.



Meir Bargeron in Havilio Square in Jerusalem.



From Heavy Metal to Holy Meaning

RABBI MICHAEL SHEFRIN '16

Assistant Rabbi, Temple Emanu-El, Sarasota, FL

One of 13 grandchildren living within a mile of his Orthodox *bubbe* in Los Angeles, Michael Shefrin grew up pulled between two poles: his dad's work for "American Bandstand" and his mom's second-career as a Conservative rabbi. He was deeply engaged through Hebrew high school, and then he wasn't. Shefrin discovered the music community in high school and found a home in aggressive, extreme music and identity. "Concert venues became my temple."

For fifteen years, he worked in the music industry, performing in heavy metal bands, recording albums, and working for the management company, "The Firm." He managed day-to-day operations for Linkin Park, among other artists. One of his proudest moments was helping to produce a collaborative album featuring Linkin Park and rapper Jay Z, which they performed at The Roxy Theatre on Sunset Boulevard, which Shefrin later managed.

But by his early 30s, Shefrin was burned out. During a short stint

working for entertainment lawyer Shep Rosenman, co-founder of Limmud LA, his boss asked him, "When are you going to rabbinical school?" He volunteered at the Limmud conference and reconnected with Judaism at Beit T'Shuvah, where he found an inspiring community "that was progressive and mine, not my family's."

"My friends started calling me 'rabbi,' but I was the last one to look up. It took me four years until I found myself choosing a life that I never expected to choose."

His rabbinical school search drew him to HUC-JIR. "The social action, inclusivity, being part of a community, grappling with tradition and modernity – I identified with that process and found myself at home. Despite not being part of the Reform Movement pipeline and being second career, I felt welcomed."

He was attracted to HUC-JIR's "big vision of partnership with the Central Conference of American Rabbis and Union for Reform Judaism, which would seal my career opportunities," as well as his access to the nonprofit

management and Jewish education programs fostering relationships with classmates across career paths. He also became more politically engaged through Just Congregations work in California, studying issues such as climate change, sentencing reform, and community organizing.

A year of study on the wearing of the *tallit* was the focus of his capstone project. He looked at the Reform Movement's evolving principles relating to ritual garb, midrashic understandings, Talmud, halakhah, and scientific discoveries relating to the blue thread, culminating in making his own *tallit* "large enough to wrap several people."

Shefrin says that the choices he made five years ago were even more right than expected. "I want to help others take a step forward in their journey."

*His boss asked him,
"When are you going to
rabbinical school?"*

Waging Peace as a Rabbi

DAHLIA SHAHAM '20

Israeli Rabbinical Student



EDUCATION:

Law and Spanish/Latin American Studies, Hebrew University; M.A. in International Political Economy, The Fletcher School, Tufts University

LEGACY:

Both grandparents were born in Ottoman Palestine; grandfather was a founder of the Israel Defense Forces.

ARABIC SPECIALIST:

Arabic translator in Israel Defense Forces and in news media.

ACTIVIST:

Policy research and advocacy with Israeli NGOs to promote beneficial policies between Jews and Arabs, Israel and its neighbors, and the well-being of the region through the perspective of legal and human rights:

- Diversity training for police officers;
- Green energy solutions for Palestinians in occupied territories;
- Trust-building between Israelis and Palestinians;
- Economic and legal research at Peres Center for Peace; and
- Translation of Hannah Senesh's poem "Eli Eli (My God, My God)" into Arabic while Tel Aviv and Gaza were being bombed, thinking of mothers standing at the shores of the same sea, praying for the same thing

TURNING POINT:

"Music was always a part of my life, but only during the Gaza War of 2014 did I realize that I could foster peace through songs of prayer and reflection. With this in mind I joined

Rabbi Tamar Kolberg at the Ra'anana Reform Synagogue for the Tisha B'Av service. After a few more times of playing and singing with her, it hit me: I can be a rabbi too. I don't have to choose between women's rights or waging peace, or bringing voices together, or studying and teaching – all of my passions can fit together in one place. That brought me to HUC-JIR."

PIONEER:

Exploring how her rabbinical school discoveries and experimentation with spirituality can advance the discourse within peace NGOs, many of which are secular and anti-religious.

VISION:

"We have a role as the Reform Movement to be a catalyst and build bridges between ourselves and others. The forces of destruction, fear, and hatred are working their way through our region and are felt in our society. I aspire to expand the expression of peace in Israel between Jewish factions as well. Our central value of pluralism is something that connects us to others. Our challenge is to learn about each other and respect each other, to break through the walls, and reach out to each other."

"I don't have to choose between women's rights, or waging peace, or teaching—all of my passions fit together at HUC-JIR."

Folk Rocker

SHANNA ZELL '17

wrote her first songs on the piano at six, on the guitar at sixteen, and went on to perform with her folk rock band “Shanna and the Zellots” at the Knitting Factory and other venues.

Shanna Zell is the recipient of the HUC-JIR Grant-in-Aid Scholarship, provided by generous donors.

WHAT DO THESE THREE MUSICIANS HAVE IN COMMON?

The Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music at HUC-JIR.

“This is a really cool place to be because it is a seminary of sacred studies; a professional school teaching chaplaincy, real life skills, and systems thinking; a conservatory; and a composer workshop,” says Lutz.

A CALL?

Niemi and Lutz both felt a “call” during their high school years and began their journeys to cantorial school during college. Lutz majored in Religious Studies at UC-Davis, and made music at Hillel for four years, “doing music *lishmah*, for its own sake.”

Niemi began by majoring in choral music education at Florida State in a new program for aspiring church musicians. “They didn’t know what to do with me! But I learned so much about what goes into the coordination of sacred music, liturgy, and worship in a religious community and acquired a good vocabulary for doing interfaith work in the future.”

As for Zell, it took her well into her late 20s to realize that becoming a cantor was her destiny. After Brandeis, she was an arts administrator at the Makor/Steinhardt Center in New York “for unaffiliated Jews in their 20s and 30s who want to be around film, art, and music with a Jewish soul.” She recorded albums of her music, was a product specialist at Discmakers, and ran their Oasis office in New York. She was 28 and feeling unfulfilled when her friends took her to a Brooklyn Jews event in Prospect Park. At one point, her best friend asked her, “Why aren’t *you* leading us in the music?” “I looked around at the young, hip people davening, and I thought: if this is what Judaism looks like, I want to get involved.”

Choir Boy

JACOB NIEMI '18

joined his synagogue’s youth choir at nine as a way of taking ownership of his love of music and interest in Jewish life, and later became his dad’s post-conversion bar mitzvah coach.

Jacob Niemi is the recipient of the Forchheimer Family Endowed Scholarship.

“Kosher Ham”

CANTOR EMMA GOLDIN LUTZ '16

did ballet at three, musicals at four, every kind of dance and theater, including Shakespeare and improv, and has been called a “kosher ham” all her life.

Cantor Emma Goldin Lutz was the recipient of the Morris Kramer Scholarship.

Shanna Zell at Congregation Beth Elohim in Brooklyn.



GETTING STARTED

All three spent their first year of study in the Year-In-Israel Program. “It was wonderful accessing the culture and living through the Jewish calendar year, to be in a place where Jews from all over the world express their Judaism in so many ways, with such a range of musical traditions,” says Niemi. “Hebrew immersion was a crucial access point for my study of Tanakh, liturgy, Israeli poetry, or the latest news.”

“Every cab driver helped my Hebrew, and I lived the daily stories that are being told in Israel, beyond the drama of the news,” recalls Lutz, who also found her *bashert* in classmate Rabbi Adam Lutz ‘16, an aerospace engineer before coming to HUC-JIR.

Zell remembers believing in the power of prayer while leading *Shacharit* during her class *tiyul* to the Aravah desert. “As we shouted blessings and petitions toward the overcast sky, the sun burst forth.”

LEARNING TO LEAD

Zell is now into her fourth year as the student cantor at Congregation Beth Elohim, the synagogue where she first discovered her path, and serves as the cantor for Brooklyn Jews’ monthly prayer experiences in offbeat venues, including visual *tefillah* at Berg’n in Crown Heights (a beer hall with food kiosks). “We want to meet young people where they are.”

Niemi loves teaching music to K-2 kids in the religious school at Congregation B’nai Jeshurun in Short Hills, NJ. He is leading High Holy Day services at Kenyon College in Ohio, where “many students from diverse backgrounds are exploring what Judaism means to them.”

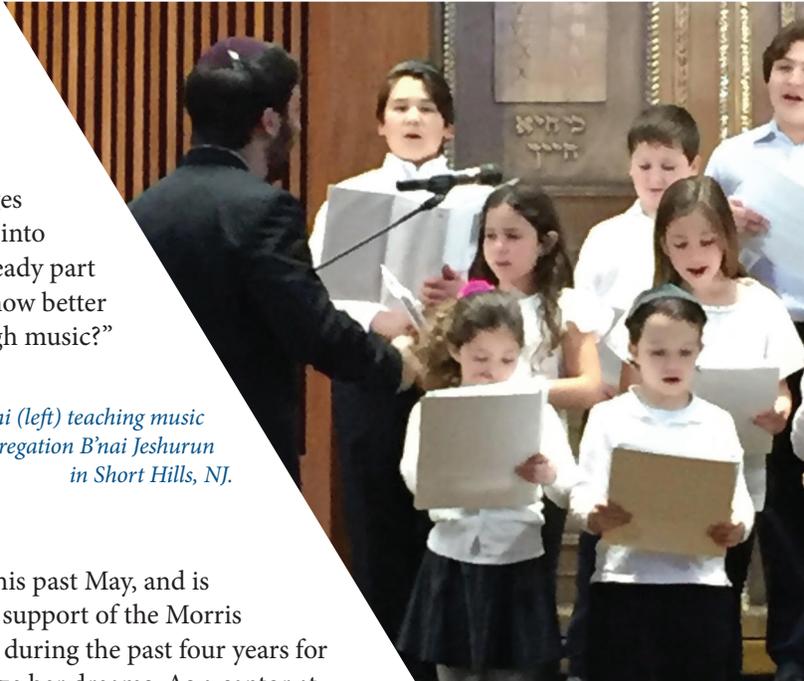
Lutz points to the richness of the cantorate. “Cantors are cultural curators of Judaism. When I am on the *bema*, there is communication, not performance.”

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

“My cantorate will be about teaching access to liturgy to enhance the worship experience, pastoral work, and a fair amount of composing,” notes Niemi. “Music, as an integral part of Jewish culture, is a gateway for people to come back to Jewish expression and community.”

Zell agrees, saying, “My goal is to show today’s Jews of all ages how Judaism can fit into their lives and is already part of their lives – and how better to do so than through music?”

Jacob Niemi (left) teaching music at Congregation B’nai Jeshurun in Short Hills, NJ.



Lutz was ordained this past May, and is grateful for the vital support of the Morris Kramer Scholarship during the past four years for enabling her to realize her dreams. As a cantor at Stephen Wise Temple in Los Angeles, working with Cantor Nathan Lam, she aspires to use her voice as “a call for inclusivity, a guide for those who are struggling with God and identity. I want to make meaning with people – even those who have closed their hearts. What would happen if we got them in the door?”

Cantor Emma Goldin Lutz leading services at HUC-JIR /New York.



Soup Kitchen Chef, Prison Educator, Scholar

HILLY HABER '19

Rabbinical Student



EDUCATION:

B.A. in German and Religion, Mount Holyoke; Humboldt University, Berlin; Master of Theological Studies, Harvard Divinity School

PRISON EDUCATOR:

- Partnered with students and clergy of other faiths from the Harvard community for two years through the Boston University “College Behind Bars” B.A. degree program for the incarcerated
- Organized Harvard Hillel and Episcopal Chaplaincy’s Harvard Interfaith Prison Education Program
- Will be teaching at Rikers Island, New York City’s main jail complex, this year

“While working in a church basement shelter during grad school, I met residents who gave me insight into the cycle of poverty, addiction, and incarceration. I saw how a faith-based institution could help break this cycle through offering space, support, and unconditional love. This experience greatly influenced my vision for Jewish institutions in North America.”

TORAH AS MAGIC REALISM:

“Literature, specifically fiction, has the power to reveal truths about society that can’t be expressed in everyday life, truths that boil underneath the surface of our daily existence. The events and characters that seem the most magical or unbelievable in text often express or tap into these truths. I see Torah as the most powerful example of literature in its ability to express human experiences of suffering, anguish, and joy, with God as the ultimate expression of human longing.”

LGBT IN ISRAEL:

“The Hebrew language is gendered, and forced me to grapple with my own identity and gender expression.”

CHIEF CHEF:

“It is so powerful for teen volunteers to see how the HUC-JIR student-run Soup Kitchen welcomes our guests and

fulfills the Jewish obligation to help those in need. We live the value of hospitality here. Our Soup Kitchen is a great example of how you can frame social justice in *mitzvot*, and translate *mitzvot* tangibly into something teens and kids can see and do.”

“It is so powerful for teen volunteers to see how the HUC-JIR Soup Kitchen welcomes our guests and fulfills the Jewish obligation to help those in need.”

HOW DID YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN JEWISH EDUCATION?

I majored in Education Studies and Sociology at Brandeis, worked in a pre-school on campus for four years, and did student teaching in a 4th-grade classroom. During college, I was a counselor and art specialist at URJ Camp Kalsman in Seattle, and worked with special needs kids at URJ Kutz Camp. Leslie Litman became my mentor and nominated me to be a NATE (National Association of Temple Educators, now ARJE, Association of Reform Jewish Educators) intern at their conference. That was when I realized for the first time that I could become a full-time Jewish educator.

WHAT PROPELLED YOU TO GET YOUR M.A. IN JEWISH EDUCATION AT HUC-JIR?

After college, I went to work at Temple Beth Shalom in Needham, MA, in the pre-school, religious school, and art and wilderness programs for teens. I loved teaching kids who were so happy being Jewish. The school was doing everything right as they transitioned to an experiential model, and I wanted those tools. I came to HUC-JIR because it teaches pedagogy, supervision, curriculum writing, and leadership skills – it's a leadership development program.

Artist and Mensch-Maker

SASHA KOPP '17

Jewish Education and Jewish Nonprofit Management Student



WHY ARE YOU ALSO GETTING THE M.A. IN JEWISH NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT AT HUC-JIR?

Every educational leader is running a nonprofit institution and needs skills in marketing, fundraising, organizational management, and systems to make everything work smoothly and joyously.

HOW DOES YOUR PASSION FOR MAKING GLASS ART COMPLEMENT YOUR GOALS AS AN EDUCATOR?

I've been a stained and fused glass artist since I was 10. My grandmother told me to make her a *mezuzah* before I knew what it was, and I haven't stopped making *mezuzot* since! I lead *mezuzah* workshops in four Los Angeles synagogues, including a weekly class at Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills, where I engage students in a text study of *ve'ahavta* (the biblical text scribed on the parchment placed inside *mezuzot*) and its values for our doorposts and inside our spaces.

WHY DO YOU LOVE BEING A JEWISH EDUCATOR?

I love it because the Jewish community has an opportunity to teach children today how to be a *mensch* (a person of integrity and honor). We have a great problem to solve: how do we use our ancient tradition to influence our 21st-century lives? I want to help people of all ages find their own answers.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST DECIDE TO BECOME A RABBI?

I've been talking about becoming a rabbi since I was six years old. I remember being in *shul* and looking at the rabbis and thinking that this is what I would do one day. People always ask me, did I have one great rabbi role model who pulled me in? The answer is no. I was called to serve my community, to serve God. Throughout my life, my family has been as supportive as possible in providing me with whatever Jewish opportunities I wanted – summer camp, Jewish books, or studying with the rabbi.

DID THE FACT THAT THERE WERE NO JEWS OF COLOR AS ROLE MODELS EVER MAKE YOU THINK TWICE ABOUT BECOMING A RABBI?

As I began middle school, I became increasingly aware of the place of Jews of Color in synagogue. I was particularly aware of the reception that greeted my mother. It really made me skeptical about how effective I could be in the role of rabbi. But truthfully, this was the path I was on and nothing could really dissuade me. The more I was invested in Judaism, the more my mother got invested in Judaism and was an engaged Jewish role model.

HOW IS YOUR RABBINICAL TRAINING PREPARING YOU TO BE A LEADER?

One of the things I like about entering the rabbinate is that there is no one model of a rabbi. There is a real breadth to the rabbinical school education, and I engage with a wide variety of material that

Advocate for Diversity

ISAAMA STOLL '19

Rabbinical Student

Interviewed by

*Rabbi Ruth Abusch-Magder '06, Ph.D.,
Rabbi-in-Residence, Be'chol Lashon*



Rabbinical student Isaama Stoll (left) went to Camp Be'chol Lashon this summer to teach, pray, and hang out with other Jews of Color.

will help me with whatever form my rabbinate takes. But the shape of my rabbinate is tempered by the question of what does it mean to be a black Jew. One of the most challenging things about being thrown into communities that are not as diverse as the communities in which I grew up is that often I'm the only Jew of Color in a given space. I am often the token and I have to articulate my identity. There is a lot of pressure to talk to larger issues that are burning in our time, and that can be a heavy burden. I cannot speak for all Jews of Color. But as I navigate these spaces, the experiences are teaching me and shaping me into the rabbi I need to be, so I can wear my identity with pride.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO BE A STUDENT RABBI AT CAMP BE'CHOL LASHON THIS SUMMER AND A ROLE MODEL FOR OTHER JEWS OF COLOR?

I'm more concerned with being an advocate for the message that diversity in the Jewish community exists than in being a role model. When I am at Camp Be'chol Lashon, I feel very empowered as a Jew of Color. The moments when I can shed light on the intersection of Jewishness and blackness, when I can have these conversations with young people, are really powerful.

“There is no one model of a rabbi.”

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR JEWISH IDENTITY?

I went to a modern Orthodox day school, learned in an Orthodox yeshiva in Jerusalem after high school, and studied at Yeshiva University (YU) for my undergraduate psychology degree and M.A in Jewish Education. I also enrolled in, but did not complete, YU's rabbinical program. I have been teaching middle and upper school Judaic Studies for the past seven years at the Beren Academy in Houston.

AS A MODERN ORTHODOX JEW, HOW DID YOU FIND YOURSELF AT HUC-JIR?

When I ran the Academy's summer camp for three years, it made me feel that there were a lot of ways that I could contribute to Jewish education on an administrative level, but to do that there was also a lot for me to learn. I consulted a close family friend, Lee Wunsch '76, President and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston, who recommended that I go to his alma mater, HUC-JIR. Doing this program is the best way for me to gain the skills and confidence I need to shift into an administrative role in my school.

WHAT IS IT LIKE FOR YOU TO STUDY IN A REFORM CONTEXT?

I did not have any previous experience with the Reform community. In order to really grasp what is happening in the Jewish world, this was a very important piece that I was lacking. The culture at the Zelikow School of Jewish Nonprofit Management is one of collaboration and friendship. It is beautiful to absorb the diversity, both religiously and professionally, of the student community, while I contribute to it as an Orthodox Jew.



Houston Calling

ARI KELLERMAN '17

*Jewish Nonprofit
Management Student*

WHAT ARE YOU LEARNING?

My classes include nonprofit marketing and branding; creating experiential education programs; a survey of American Jewish history through the nonprofit world – what problems spawned and were solved by organizations; advanced planning; fundraising; and more. We visit nonprofits and speak to leaders throughout Los Angeles about their challenges. It is amazing to see how a much larger Jewish community like Los Angeles tackles its issues. Each day I came home from HUC-JIR feeling wiser than when I started, thinking “What if I brought these ideas back to Houston?”

HOW WILL YOU INTEGRATE YOUR LEARNING INTO YOUR WORK BACK IN HOUSTON?

I now have the credentials to do half-time administration and half-time teaching at my day school. I am creating a new high school class in which we can learn about Jewish organizations and what they do to help the Jewish community function. I will bring in speakers from the Houston area to demonstrate to the students the importance of their being part of the larger community and identifying problems and solutions. I hope this class will be an incubator of future Jewish professionals and lay leaders for the Houston community.

“If you are looking to have a successful career in the Jewish nonprofit world, the Zelikow School is for you.”

From Shakespeare to Maimonides

JESSE PAIKIN '18

Rabbinical Student



HOW DID YOU FIRST FIND OUT THAT YOU COULD BECOME A RABBI?

I grew up in Toronto with a strong sense of Jewish identity, mentored by Rabbi Nancy Wechsler '90 at Kol Ami Temple. It was only when I was at a bar mitzvah at another shul and saw a man walk up to the *bema*, whom my mother identified as the rabbi, that I first realized: men can be rabbis, too.

BUT YOU CHOSE THEATRE INSTEAD?

Becoming a rabbi was everyone's idea for me, but I pushed back. I majored in philosophy, theatre, and religious studies at York University and then began a theatre conservatory program at the National Theatre School of Canada in Montreal. But a particularly pointed moment on this journey was when a professor criticized my missing classes during the High Holy Days and told me I would have to choose between Judaism and a career in the theatre. I realized that as much as I loved the arts and theatre, there was something else pulling at me.

DOES THEATRE PLAY INTO YOUR RABBINICAL VISION?

I spent a long time studying text – Shakespeare, context, history, intentions, choices made by actors translating text onto the stage. I apply it to Judaism. We understand you can read Shakespeare, but you have to go to the theatre and see it with a great director and cast who bring its meaning to you. You can start learning it at ten, then go to the abridged version, and finally get to the full Macbeth. But you would never be satisfied with pediatric Shakespeare, the same version for adults as for kids. We can't be satisfied with Jewish life at that

level. My background in theatre has enhanced my belief in the importance of fidelity to a textual tradition, the seriousness of deep learning, and the ability to creatively interpret tradition to bring meaning to contemporary Jewish life.

WHAT EXCITES YOU ABOUT YOUR STUDIES?

There is a depth of respect for Torah, Talmud, and philosophy, but also a dissatisfaction with the status quo on the part of our professors. They challenge us and encourage us to question the “why” in a profound way. We learn that content does not exist in silos, that learning in one class impacts on learning in another. We learn the content and also how to bring it to others. When we relate our studies to the larger issues of Jewish life and learning today, there is a respect for divergent opinions.

“Our professors challenge and encourage us to question the ‘why’ in a profound way.”



Defender of the Faith

RABBI NICOLE ARMENTA AUERBACH '16

Rabbi of Small Groups, Central Synagogue, New York City

EDUCATION:

B.A. in Women's Studies, Harvard College;
J.D., Harvard Law School

FIRST CAREER:

"For ten years, I worked as a federal public defender, then as a litigator in First Amendment Law. I had gone to law school because I was passionate about using constitutional law as a tool to uphold individual rights and advance social change."

GAME CHANGER:

"I prepared for my conversion with the clergy at Congregation Rodeph Sholom in New York City, where I was introduced to a vibrant spiritual and intellectual tradition that enriched and enhanced my understanding of how I wanted to live and work in the world. Becoming a rabbi would allow me to bring my heart and soul to engaging with people, and working with them to create a vision of a more just world."

CLINICAL PASTORAL EDUCATION:

"I spent two summers as a chaplain intern, first at a nursing home and then at a hospice, which changed how I understand my theology and calling. These experiences helped me reflect on how I experienced God on a personal level, and how I understand my role as a rabbi in manifesting God's love and compassion in the world."

ENTREPRENEUR:

"I participated in the 'Be Wise Entrepreneurial Grants Program' with an original project, 'Two Minutes of Torah,' to create and disseminate brief, engaging, and accessible messages that might lend themselves to broad distribution through social media and advance the voice of liberal Judaism in the public sphere."

SMALL GROUPS ENGAGEMENT:

"I interned at the URJ to create and moderate a 'community of practice' of five large congregations interested in adapting the 'small groups' model of congregant engagement that is prevalent in Protestant mega-churches. I then served as a rabbinical intern at Central Synagogue in New York City for two years, working with small group leaders to build a greater sense of community and connection within this large congregation. After my ordination this past May, I became their Rabbi of Small Groups as we expand this initiative."

NEVER TOO LATE:

"If you are wondering if it is really possible to do this as a second-career student, as a parent, as someone who came to Judaism in later life, I'm here to tell you that you can."

*"There is no better place than
HUC-JIR to learn who you are and
what you want to do in the world."*

A portrait of Max Jared Einsohn, a man with dark curly hair and a beard, wearing a dark blue shirt, smiling slightly against a teal background.

MAX JARED EINSOHN '16

*M.A. in Religious Education;
Director of Education
and Engagement,
Temple Beth Israel,
Melbourne, Australia*

Teaching from the Heart

WHAT WERE YOU DOING BEFORE YOU CAME TO HUC-JIR?

Growing up in Dallas, TX, where I went to a Christian private school, I was very involved in the Temple Emanu-El and URJ Greene Family Camp communities. I studied psychology and music at Indiana University, studied abroad in Argentina and Australia, and after graduation I spent almost two years traveling throughout the U.S. and Israel as a professional musician and informal Jewish educator.

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC DO YOU COMPOSE AND PERFORM?

My songs engage listeners with a unique experience of musical fusion, blending folk, pop, hip hop, and rock vibes, funky acoustic guitar, and dynamic voicings.

HOW DO YOU DEFINE BEING AN INFORMAL JEWISH EDUCATOR?

I design programming spanning Torah study, biblical storytelling in song, prayer and holiday celebrations through art-music fusion, and community building experiences. I engage the entire spectrum of learners in Jewish text through accessible prayer experiences, workshops, and concerts celebrating Jewish history, ritual, and values in song.

WHY DID YOU ENROLL IN THE M.A. IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM?

Working in both large and small Jewish congregations, I found myself asking my mentors questions about developing age-appropriate material and programming. My mentors said that if I wanted to be exponentially more impactful, I should go to HUC-JIR to get the skills, knowledge, and experience necessary to be an expert educator.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH AS A LEADER IN JEWISH EDUCATION?

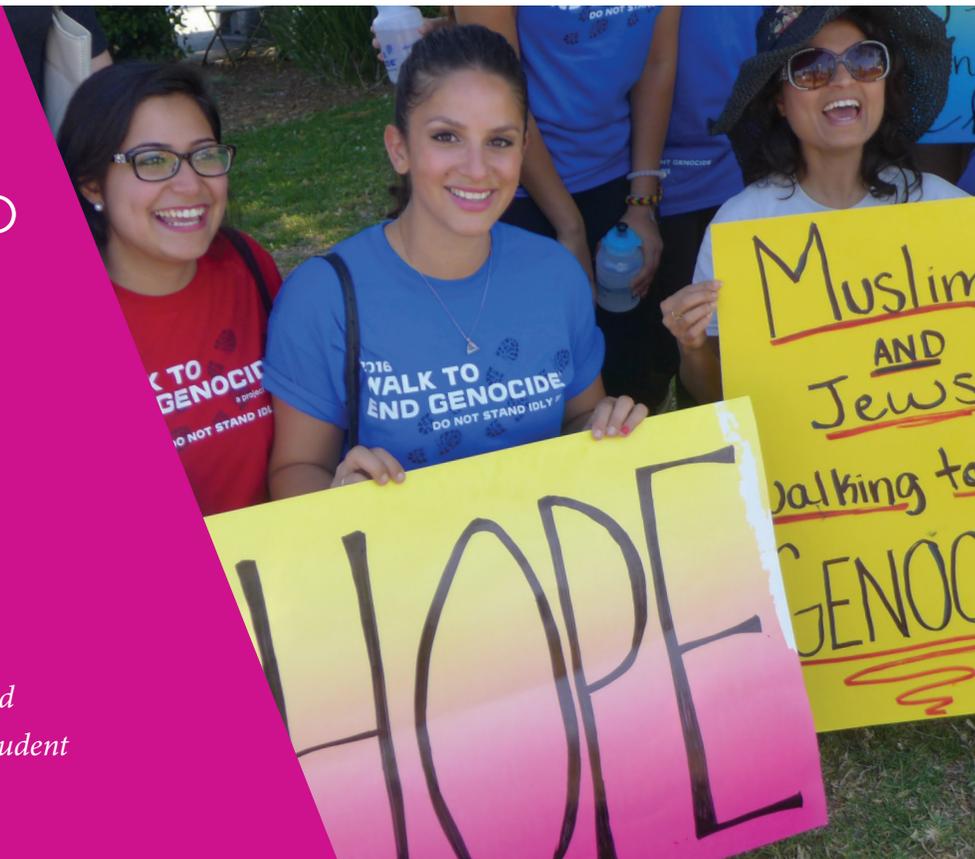
I hope to connect Jews to our tradition, to Israel, and to other Diaspora Jews around the globe so that they may feel uplifted by a tradition that is so rich and vast. I would like to inspire them to express their Judaism in their own unique ways, adding to the colorful tapestry we continue to weave as Jews making and remaking our tradition, culture, and presence in the world.

“My mentors said that if I wanted to be exponentially more impactful, I should go to HUC-JIR.”

Harmony and Kinship

JULIA HUBNER '17

Jewish Nonprofit Management and Communications Management Student



Julia Hubner (center) at a human rights rally in Los Angeles.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THE ZELIKOW SCHOOL OF JEWISH NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT?

The dual M.A. degree program at HUC-JIR and the University of Southern California (USC) is so unique and special, it nailed it for me. It brought HUC-JIR so far ahead of any challenger.

WHAT SURPRISED YOU ABOUT THE PROGRAM?

HUC-JIR balances the understanding of working in the nonprofit world with courses in Jewish history, culture, and thought. I didn't expect the Jewish content and at first I questioned, why are they teaching Talmud to a Jewish nonprofit professional? But now I feel that this will be very helpful for my work in a Jewish setting so that I am able to introduce Jewish values into the nonprofit world.

WHAT IS THE STUDENT COMMUNITY LIKE?

The students in my cohort are so different and open to those differences: people very connected to Reform Judaism, those who are not movement oriented, Orthodox students, people interested in global Jewish nonprofit work, others like me who are looking toward Los Angeles communal work, students who observe Shabbat, and those who don't. Some are doing dual degrees at USC in social work and public policy, others are doing joint degrees with HUC-JIR's rabbinical

and education programs. There is a real sense of harmony and kinship. At USC, 50% of the students are international. It's really interesting to get perspectives from different world views.

DO YOUR TWO PROGRAMS OVERLAP?

I can translate both programs to each other. I can take the HUC-JIR fundraising class and connect it to what I am learning in communications at USC. The reading in one class connects to another. My thesis and research questions will transcend both.

WHERE IS YOUR INTERNSHIP?

We fulfill 450 hours in our internship during the academic year. I was matched with NewGround: A Muslim-Jewish Partnership for Change. So far, I have written two grants raising \$70,000 for programs and I am learning how a small organization runs.

"It is great to see my classwork have a real, immediate impact on a nonprofit organization."

Julia Hubner is the recipient of the Corwin Fuller Scholarship, Mount Sinai Memorial Parks and Mortuary Scholarship, and the Marcia Burnam Endowed Scholarship for the Zelikow School of Jewish Nonprofit Management.

A Radical Redirection and Natural Conclusion

CHELSEA SIMON '22

Ph.D. Student in Greco-Roman Studies



HAILS FROM:

Kansas and North Carolina

UNDERGRAD MAJORS:

Finance and Banking, Appalachian State University

GRAD DEGREE:

M.Div. in Religious Education, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

FIRST CAREER:

Wachovia Securities

IDENTITY:

“I am a hybrid of Jewish and Christian cultures and religions. My dad’s genealogical research of his Jewish family played into my sense of Jewish cultural ties and gave me my interest in religion.”

CAREER SHIFT:

“While working in finance, the 2008 market crash discouraged me from climbing the corporate ladder. At the same time, I knew that from childhood I had wanted to be the first person in my family to earn the Ph.D. degree.”

WHY HUC-JIR:

“I am interested in the Second Temple period, an important time for both Jews and Christians, and HUC-JIR’s Greco-Roman program at the Pines School of Graduate Studies in Cincinnati is renowned for its excellence. I like the idea that this is a Jewish academic institution with a rabbinical program, where I can also pursue my interest in liturgy.”

“I am part of a community of graduate students and rabbinical students that fosters a collaborative spirit.”

DIGGING ANTIQUITY:

“I helped with an upcoming Cincinnati Art Museum exhibition about Nelson Glueck, archaeologist and HUC-JIR President, and his collection of artifacts relating to the Nabataean Temple at Khirbet et-Tannur. This summer I participated in the HUC-JIR Israel Seminar and its archaeological dig. If you are studying ancient culture, there are so many layers built into the same site. I find it very interesting on a historical and artistic level.”

INTERFAITH AGENT:

“In today’s polarized world, there is the danger that Jews and Christians don’t understand each other, despite our many connections throughout history. My mission is to create a conversation that will build greater understanding across faiths.”



An Israeli in Cincinnati

**RABBI OFER SABATH
BEIT-HALACHMI '05, '20**

*Ph.D. Student in Liturgy
and History*

HAILS FROM:

Secular, socialist farming village in Emek Hefer near Netanya, Israel

UNDERGRAD DEGREES:

Photography at Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design; Talmud and Judaism at University of Haifa

FIRST CAREERS:

Kibbutz worker, then taught Talmud at University of Haifa

GAME CHANGER:

“While participating in a delegation of Israeli educators to New York, I met HUC-JIR ordained rabbis who showed me that there was a spiritual way to practice Judaism without compromising one’s theology and academic approach. I was ordained at HUC-JIR in Jerusalem in 2005 and served as the rabbi of Tzur Hadassah for eight years.”

PRAYING WITH ART:

“I led a transformation of our synagogue with changing contemporary art exhibitions to experiment with the connection between art and prayer. In a prayer setting that was otherwise filled with accustomed faces and familiar liturgy, art revitalized the worship experience.”

DIGGING DEEPER:

“The Pines School of Graduate Studies in Cincinnati combines the highest level of academic research, progressive spiritual life on campus, the incredible research resources of the Klau Library and American Jewish Archives, and students representing diverse religions and parts of the world. The low student to faculty ratio offers wonderful mentorship. The faculty wants me to both succeed and be fulfilled as I create my own research area combining liturgy and history.”

RITUAL AS MIRROR:

“Rituals mirror Jewish identity. Early American Reform Jews and Zionists faced the same vision and challenge: creating a new way of Jewish living. In comparing American Reform rituals with Zionist rituals created in the kibbutzim, I am exploring how and why rituals develop to understand the process of innovation and the development of Jewish identity.”

AN AMBASSADOR:

“I love studying in such a vibrant surrounding with people who are not like me. I am a source of information that comes from a real Israeli, not just newspaper headlines and politicians.”

“I am an ambassador of the Reform Movement in Israel to the Jewish community here.”

“What we share are some of the deep questions about what it means to be a human being, to live in relationships with others.”

- RABBI JOEL LEVENSON



A Rabbi and a Pastor Walk into a Classroom...

When Seventh-day Adventist Pastor Ferron F. Francis and Conservative Rabbi Joel Levenson were ordained in 2001, little did they know that one day they would be classmates at the Reform Movement’s seminary. Rabbi Levenson and Pastor Francis are pursuing the Doctor of Ministry in the Interfaith Clinical Education for Pastoral Ministry Program (D. Min.) at HUC-JIR in New York, where faith leaders learn how to better understand and respond to the variety of clinical problems encountered in ministry in congregational, chaplaincy, counseling, or community settings.

“I do more counseling than preaching,” explains Pastor Francis, spiritual leader of Lebanon Seventh-day Adventist Church and CEO of its Early Childhood Center in Laurelton, Queens. His church has a large young adult population, with approximately 65% of his congregants in their 20s to 40s. A number of these young people are confronting issues relating to marriage, fertility and childbearing, parental conflicts,

and sexual orientation. “Thanks to HUC-JIR, I am learning the skill and art of listening. Rather than being prescriptive – telling people what the Bible says and what I think – now I can help people explore the obstacles before them and empower them to discover their own solutions.”

Rabbi Levenson describes the confidence he has gained in bridging the worlds of psychology and religion, which he applies as a “first responder” in his individual counseling sessions with congregants confronting such issues as life-threatening illness, adolescent struggles, or substance abuse. “When anyone experiences a trial in their personal life and has a valued relationship with a member of the clergy, it is natural to turn to that clergyperson for support. Thanks to the D. Min. Program, I have a better understanding of the psychological dynamics, can diagnose the issue, can provide short term counseling, and, as needed, match that person or family to a licensed professional who can be most effective.”

Both spiritual leaders praise the program for the diversity of the student population and the personal attention from the interfaith faculty. “There is a wealth of learning through interacting with other denominational and faith traditions. We are encouraged to look at what we believe, not just what the tradition teaches us. I have learned so much about my personal theology and myself,” says Pastor Francis.

Clergy burnout is also addressed. “The work we do is holy and deeply meaningful but also deeply draining,” notes Rabbi Levenson. “This program is a ‘sabbatical on a Monday’ when we pause our usual work routine, enjoy the gift of time to reflect on our own theology with classmates of different faiths, and discover ways in which we can support each other. We need to take care of ourselves so that we can take care of our communities. The D. Min. Program helps me become a better rabbi for my congregants.”

Advancing Tolerance in Jerusalem: **THE TEACHERS' ROOM**



“Teachers in Jerusalem are on the front lines,” explains Dr. Michal Muszkat-Barkan, Director of HUC-JIR’s Department of Education and Professional Development at the Taube Family Campus in Jerusalem. “Every day in their classrooms, these educators who are Jews and Arabs, Christians and



Muslims, religious and secular, have to face the fear of the ‘other,’ the stereotypes, and sometimes the hatred. In ‘The Teachers’ Room,’ we create opportunities for teachers to discuss their own fears and aspirations and to create shared pedagogies for tolerance and pluralism.”



Israeli Muslim, Christian, and Jewish educators participating in ‘The Teachers’ Room’ at HUC-JIR.

This new summer training program is supported by the American Center, a project of the U.S. Embassy in Israel, and the family of 16-year-old Shira Banki, who was tragically murdered at the Jerusalem Pride Parade in 2015.

“I want to salute HUC-JIR for this partnership,” states U.S. Ambassador Daniel B. Shapiro. “We are working together to promote co-existence and a shared society and are proud to be working

with this institution, and with the Banki family, to further Shira’s legacy in impactful and meaningful ways.”

During the eight-session program, sixteen teachers got to know one another, gained an understanding of each other’s communities and neighborhoods, and developed the pedagogic tools to bring their encounters into their classrooms. As they drew a map of “their” Jerusalem, shared narratives, and studied key texts together, they enriched each other’s perspectives. Some of these teachers will go on to become facilitators to more groups of teachers to ensure a growing number of educators and schools that will change the conversation about Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem Municipality Department of Education, Israel’s largest educational department, supports this program, offering teacher enrichment credits that benefit the teachers and serve as a powerful incentive to join the program. In addition, the program receives support from the Jerusalem Foundation and the New Israel Foundation.

‘The Teachers’ Room’ is part of the city-wide ‘This Is Jerusalem’ initiative, now in its second year, which is organized by a variety of cultural, educational, and social action organizations that share responsibility for shaping the multi-faceted, pluralistic, and tolerant character of Jerusalem.

NEW INITIATIVES



Spokesperson's Department / Office of the President

Israel President Reuven Rivlin welcomed a delegation of 15 young Reform clergy alumni, ordained within the past two years, as guests of the first **Ministry of Foreign Affairs–HUC–JIR Rabbinical/Cantorial Mission to Israel** on February 28–March 6, 2016. “We had access to some of the most influential thinkers and leaders in Israeli government and society, and they saw us as leaders as well,” says Cantor Sara Hass ‘15 of Temple Israel of Long Beach, CA. Rabbi Ethan Prosnit ‘14 of Temple Emanu-El, Westfield, NJ, adds, “This was an opportunity to dive deeper into the successes and challenges that face Israeli society today and bring back what we learned to our congregations. I returned to my community with a greater hope that there is a strong future for Reform Judaism in Israel.”



The Zelikow School of Jewish Nonprofit Management’s inaugural Geller-Gallagher Leadership Institute (GGLI) on August 8, 2016 provided an important forum on key issues confronting Jewish nonprofits today, namely executive leadership succession and attracting and retaining talented professionals. “Leading Change in the Jewish Nonprofit Ecosystem,” an evening of interactive conversation with hands-on learning, featured Allan Finkelstein, President Emeritus, JCCA; Gali Cooks, Executive Director, Leading Edge (pictured by podium); David Cygielman, Founder and CEO, Moishe House; and Jordan Fruchtmann, CPO, Moishe House.

Jay Geller, a member of the HUC–JIR Board of Governors, established the GGLI with his husband **Lowell Gallagher** with a \$1 million gift to HUC–JIR. He states, “Our goal in creating this Institute is to give the Zelikow School and the community at large the ability to cross-pollinate ideas and experiences in order to inspire leadership at every level.”

ON VIEW AT HUC-JIR'S MUSEUMS

SKIRBALL MUSEUM, CINCINNATI



Eighteen Tiny Treasures of the B'nai B'rith Klutznick Collection

Antique and contemporary Judaica and fine art treasures

Through December 18, 2016

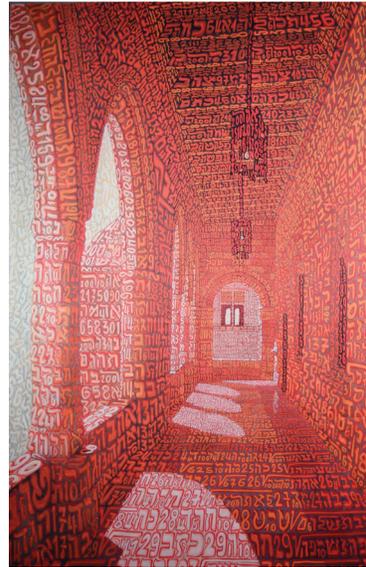
12 Nazi Concentration Camps: Photographs by James Friedman

Unsettling images reflect how the Holocaust is remembered today

Through January 29, 2017



HUC-JIR MUSEUM, NEW YORK



Paint by Numbers

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By appointment only.
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SKIRBALL CAMPUS, LOS ANGELES

re-Crafting Tradition

Contemporary art revisions Jewish ritual and tradition

Through February 2017



COMING TO A VENUE NEAR YOU: HUC-JIR MUSEUM'S TRAVELING EXHIBITIONS

Great Neck, NY	Birobidzhan: Russian Jewish Autonomous State	Rudin Gallery, Temple Beth El	Through December 2016
New York, NY	Isaac Bashevis Singer & His Artists	UJA-Federation of New York	Through December 2016
Dallas, TX	Rebirth After the Holocaust: The Bergen-Belsen Displaced Persons Camp, 1945-1950	Dallas Holocaust Museum	Through January 2017
Amherst, MA	Sigmund Balka - The Eye of the Collector: The Lower East Side	Yiddish Book Center	Through March 2017
St. Paul, MN	Cinema Judaica: The Epic Cycle	The JCC of St. Paul	December 2016 - March 2017
Houston, TX	The Sexuality Spectrum	Margolis Art Gallery, Congregation Beth Israel	January - February 2017
Tallahassee, FL	Cinema Judaica: The War Years	Florida State University Museum	January - March 2017
Beachwood, OH	Peter Leventhal's Lamed Vav: Thirty-Six	The Temple Museum of Jewish Art, Religion, and Culture	February - May 2017
Houston, TX	Cinema Judaica: The War Years and The Epic Cycle	Margolis Art Gallery, Congregation Beth Israel	April - June 2017
Miami Beach, FL	Evil: A Matter of Intent	Jewish Museum of Florida	April - September 2017

For descriptions of the HUC-JIR Museum's 24 traveling exhibitions, visit: huc.edu/museums/traveling-exhibitions
To arrange for an exhibition to come to your community, contact: **212-824-2218** or museumnyc@huc.edu

NEW SENIOR ADMINISTR



RABBI DAVID ADELSON '99, D.MIN. '16

Dean of the New York Campus

“The best part of joining the team at the New York campus has been hearing from our faculty and administrators how much they care about our students and want to help them succeed,” states Rabbi David Adelson, D.Min. “I am honored to work with this team to strengthen a community where students feel supported to take risks and grow. I am grateful to my predecessor, Dean Shirley Idelson, whose hard work gives us this opportunity for growth today.”

Rabbi Adelson has devoted his career to empowering others in their search for meaning in their lives through Jewish community. He comes to HUC-JIR after serving as the spiritual leader of East End Temple since 2000. He is a leader of the Reform Movement’s Just Congregations community organizing work and of Manhattan Together, a faith-based community organizing network.

Rabbi Adelson has been deeply involved with the HUC-JIR Spirituality Initiative since its inception in 2011, and serves as a Spiritual Director guiding rabbinical and cantorial students. He is one of the three primary faculty members of Bekhol Levavkha, the program training Spiritual Directors, and is responsible for planning and leading retreats as well as mentoring participants.

“Rabbi Adelson has shown tremendous leadership, innovation, and creativity in congregational life,” notes Rabbi Panken. “His warmth, collaborative spirit, and empowering outreach to others make him a wonderful model for students and a superb leader for our growing New York campus in the years ahead.”

Rabbi Adelson received the M.A. in Hebrew Literature (1998) and ordination (1999) at HUC-JIR, and trained and served as a hospital chaplain at New York Presbyterian Hospital for one year after his ordination. He completed a two-year rabbinic cohort of the Institute for Jewish Spirituality and received the Doctor of Ministry degree in pastoral counseling at HUC-JIR (2016). He studied at Hebrew University and Brooklyn College, and received his B.A. from Oberlin College (1992).



LISSIE DIRINGER

Vice President for Institutional Advancement

“I am excited to work with colleagues across cultures, languages, and time zones in support of HUC-JIR’s crucial role in ensuring the future of a vibrant and diverse Reform Movement, which in turn will ensure the strength of the broader Jewish community in the U.S. and abroad,” says Lissie Diring.

A veteran development professional with expertise in strategic and campaign planning,

major gifts fundraising, development team creation and management, and volunteer training, Diring has had a lifelong professional, intellectual, and personal engagement with the American Jewish community.

Andrew R. Berger, Chair of the Board of Governors, says, “We are extremely fortunate to have Lissie Diring and her extensive experience in institutional advancement leading our development efforts, which are so vital to supporting the sacred mission of HUC-JIR: producing the next generation of leaders for the Reform Movement and the Jewish People.”

ATION APPOINTMENTS



DR. MIRIAM HELLER STERN

National Director of the HUC-JIR School of Education

“I am deeply committed to elevating the quality of Jewish education for all and fortifying the pipeline of educational leadership,” says Dr. Miriam Heller Stern. “For Jewish education to be robust, compelling, and effective, we must recruit and nourish a talented cadre of leaders and teachers to shepherd the enterprise at all levels. We must also enlist lay leaders, rabbis, and funders as partners to elevate the status of the profession. The opportunity to bring my passion, skills, and experience to the helm of this critical cause is a privilege.”

Dr. Stern joins HUC-JIR after six years as the Dean of the Graduate Center for Jewish Education at the American Jewish University, where she launched new programs and established deep and significant relationships among her colleagues worldwide. She has published widely in the field of Jewish education and is recognized as a thought leader in both the practice and theory of education.

She received her Ph.D. at Stanford University in 2007, focusing her dissertation on the history of American Jewish education. Her scholarly articles have re-evaluated historical assumptions, and her popular publications, such as “The Creativity Imperative,” have posed the key educational challenges of the future. Most notably, Dr. Stern launched “Dream Lab,” an unprecedented collaboration between artists and educators, to position both as change-makers in the field of Jewish education.

“We greet Dr. Stern’s appointment with every hope and expectation that she will take our storied institution to new heights, building on the achievements of her predecessors, Dr. William Cutter, Sara Lee, and Dr. Michael Zeldin; and collaborating with our faculty, administration, and alumni in the service of our students and the advancement of our mission,” states Dr. Joshua Holo, Dean, Skirball Campus, HUC-JIR/Los Angeles.

During her 20-year career in development, Diringher has fostered the growth of a broad range of mission-driven nonprofit institutions. As the principal of Lissie Diringher Development Consulting, most recently she has worked with clients such as the American Academy in Rome, International Center of Photography, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Breakthrough New York, National Academy Foundation, and Global Kids, among others.

Previously, Diringher served as Director of Development for the New York University Child Study Center, where she led a \$140 million capital campaign and grew the annual fund to \$9 million. She created the first major gifts program at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where she rose to Deputy Chief Development Officer for Major Gifts, managing the \$650 million capital campaign. Prior to the Metropolitan Museum, she was Vice

President and Account Supervisor at LCF&L Advertising, where her clients included Bristol-Myers Squibb, Clairol, General Mills, and Ross Laboratories.

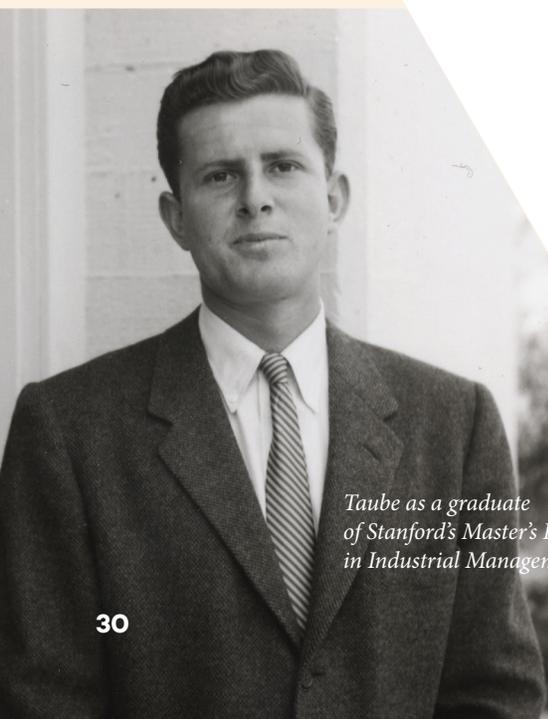
Diringher received an A.B. in American Civilization, with a focus on 20th-century gender, ethnicity, and religion, from Brown University, and was a visiting student at The Jewish Theological Seminary. She is a Vice President and Development Committee Chair at Temple Shaaray Tefila of New York City and also serves as a member of the Dalton Council, supporting the Dalton School’s Board of Trustees. She is a Women’s Launch Pad Mentor on the Brown University Women’s Leadership Council and taught graduate courses in the Master of Science in Fundraising Management Program at the School of Continuing Education at Columbia University.

(continued from page 6)

At Stanford, there were no Jewish fraternities. Taube was rushed and admitted into Sigma Nu, notwithstanding this fraternity's Southern states-based charter that restricted membership to white Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Taube joined the ROTC on campus during the Korean War and, upon graduation, became a lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force. Prevented from flying due to his eyesight, he went to communications school, where he became proficient in radio transmitting and ground-to-air navigation systems. "I learned a lot and grew up during those years in the Air Force, where I served side by side with people older than me, traveled around the country installing communications systems, and took on base commanders when we didn't get cooperation."

NINE CAREERS

Returning to Stanford after Air Force duty, Taube was selected for the Honors Cooperative program, which helped finance graduate education by partnering with high tech firms in the Bay Area. "I worked part time at Ampex Corporation, a pioneer in the video recording business, and went to school part-time. That's how I financed my graduate industrial management



Taube as a graduate of Stanford's Master's Program in Industrial Management.

degrees, adding business school to my undergraduate industrial engineering degree. Subsequent to my enrollment in graduate studies, I got married."

Responsible for packaging the video recorders, whose motor drives would fail if they were out of alignment, he came up with the idea of using popcorn from local movie theater suppliers as packaging. "One day I was paged to go to the pre-shipment warehouse. When I arrived, I was horrified to see thousands of worms crawling over the motor boxes. I had overlooked a minor detail – insecticide on the popcorn!"

Fired by Ampex on the day his son was born, "I found myself looking through the hospital nursery window to view him, but with no job, no prospects."

Taube describes his professional life as a sequence of nine careers, and advises young people to be open to unexpected opportunities, as he has been. "By a stroke of luck, my fraternity brother was the chief engineer at a San Francisco company manufacturing electric heating equipment and controls, and I went to work with him. It had a great influence on my career, because I observed how, during the late 1950s, utility companies were giving large incentives to residential developers who were building all electric or all gas homes. The building trades prospered with 90% loans for construction and 10% subsidies from utility companies. That environment induced me to enter residential development as a side venture, building apartments with minimal capital, which I raised by partnering with friends."

Next, Taube became a co-founder of E-H Research Laboratories, which produced very sophisticated instrumentation that was pivotal in the development of the transistor and provided testing equipment for Texas Instruments,

IBM, and Motorola. A public offering of E-H stock provided the stake that allowed him to go into real estate full-time as a broker and syndicator of apartment properties.

THE KORET YEARS

It was at this time that Taube reestablished contact with Stephanie and Joseph Koret, friends of his parents, whom he had met as a teenager. Their company, Koret of California, manufactured ready-to-wear women's clothing and developed the world's first permanent press process. When the previously privately held company sold stock in the public market, "Stephanie and Joe wanted to diversify their wealth and employed me to put their money into real estate. They soon were making more money in real estate than from their apparel/textile company."

In 1970, Taube was asked by the Korets to join the board of Koracorp Industries (successor to Koret of California), which was created as a holding company to accommodate the acquisition program embarked upon with the profits from the permanent process patents. Childless, the Korets embraced Taube as their surrogate son in every facet of their lives, including the celebration of all the Jewish holidays.

"But in 1973, Koret of California got a serious case of indigestion from its acquisition binge, and a major fraud in one of their divisions. Joe said, 'You have to come into the company and save it.'" Taube became President, then Chairman and CEO of the Koracorp Industries holding company, responsible for 15,000 employees worldwide.

"These were the six hardest years of my life. While still running my real estate business at the same time, I was able to effect a healthy company that I sold to Levi Strauss in 1979. I did not 'go with

the wallpaper,' so I was back running my real estate company after the Levi sale."

About the same time as the Levi sale, Stephanie Koret died after a long illness. "I made what may have been the most important decision of my career – I decided to convince Joe to waive his interest in Stephanie's community property and allow her property to flow into and endow the Koret Foundation, which until then had no assets to speak of. Enter Koret Foundation, which was to influence the rest of my life and the lives of those touched by the Foundation."

USFL FOOTBALL

By 1982, his best friend, Jim Joseph, was exploring the idea of forming a new football league, the USFL. Taube became a minority partner with Jim Joseph, but when he got to New York for the formal announcement of the new league by ABC-TV with Howard Cosell, the new league-to-be was confronted with the loss of one of its organizers. The remaining owners asked Taube to stand in for San Francisco temporarily until they could find a substitute owner for the purpose of the national TV broadcast. Upon returning to San Francisco, Taube found himself a celebrity. "In short, the die was cast for Taube's Oakland Invaders!"

VISIONARY PHILANTHROPIST

Taube's ninth career was to succeed Joseph Koret as the President of the Koret Foundation, a position he held until last year and which gave him a world of experience in and about philanthropy. "Having accumulated substantial wealth, I also began my own personal philanthropy. Later, my own resources served to create Taube Philanthropies, which gave me a charitable vehicle by which I could express

my Jewishness and my commitment to building on our Jewish peoplehood."

"My philanthropy reflects the experiences of my life as an immigrant and beneficiary of American democracy. As a businessman, I saw philanthropy's capacity to be a magnet for drawing people together. Collaborative philanthropy is very much the cornerstone of our philanthropic endeavors."

Today, Taube continues his work as Chairman and Founder of Woodmont Companies, a diversified real estate investment organization.

POLAND, ISRAEL, AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

A special focus of Taube's philanthropy is the Jewish renaissance in his birthplace of Poland, for which he was honored by being named the Republic of Poland's Honorary Consul for the San Francisco Bay Area in 2007. He was awarded Poland's highest official state distinction for a foreign civilian – the Commander's Cross of the Star of the Order of Merit in 2015, which adds to the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit he received in 2004.

He feels strongly that "the story of the Jewish people is not one of death; it is one of life. When we set out to develop the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw, we wanted to tell the story of 1,000 years of Jewish life in Poland and how the Jewish people gave the world what we now regard as Judeo-Christian western culture. The Polish people have adopted this museum as theirs because, as then President of Poland Bronislaw Komorowski stated at the Museum grand opening, "There is no Poland without Jews and there are no Jews without Poland."

Through his major gift to HUC-JIR, Taube hopes to foster a closer connection between HUC-JIR and



Taube was asked to sign the official documents establishing the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews at its groundbreaking in Warsaw in 2007.

his extensive network of programs and staff throughout Poland, so that students preparing to become rabbis, educators, cantors, and nonprofit leaders can explore Polish Jewish history and participate in the renewal of Jewish life and culture in Poland, North America, Israel, and worldwide.

Taube's transformative naming gift for the Taube Family Campus at HUC-JIR in Jerusalem is his largest gift to a Jewish institution to date and expresses his hopes for the Jewish future. "We need a strong Israel, a united Israel that has spiritual commitments and supports all segments of Jewish peoplehood. My hope for the Jewish people everywhere is that they understand their history and religion and practice their commitment to God."

"My philanthropy reflects the experiences of my life as an immigrant and beneficiary of American democracy."

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HUC-JIR PRESIDENT

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