

The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives recently hosted an innovative, first-of-its-kind conference, on the preservation and conservation of synagogue history, entitled *Going Beyond Memory: A Conference on Synagogue Archiving*. More than 50 participants – most representing Union of American Hebrew Congregations throughout the country – attended this inaugural colloquium held at the Cincinnati School on August 29-30.

Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco, California; and Frances Hess of Congregation Emanu-El of the City of New York. This group began planning the event a year in advance, and most of the planners attended the colloquium as well. “All of the archival professionals at The Marcus Center have been energized by the success of this event,” Profitt noted. “And we are looking forward to hosting additional programs of this sort in the years ahead.”

“The conference was very well organized,” said Phyllis Marcus of Congregation B’nai Israel in Monroe, Louisiana. “I am taking back some very valuable information that will help me enhance our already existing archive.”

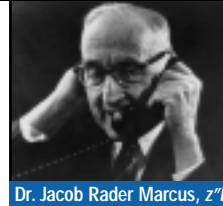
“I have been our synagogue archivist for 20 years,” noted Annette Ratkin of The Temple in Nashville, Tennessee. “This conference was done superbly to all levels of ability. Everyone received great direction and a lot of inspiration!”

by many of the participants in attending subsequent conferences on synagogue archiving at The Marcus Center, plans are already underway for the second Conference on Synagogue Archiving to be held in the Fall of 2001. Kevin Profitt’s definitive publication, *Creating A Synagogue Archive*, is available from The Marcus Center.

For more information on The Marcus Center’s programs and publications, please contact Lisa Frankel, Director of Programs at The Marcus Center (513-221-1875).

## GOING BEYOND MEMORY: A Conference on Synagogue Archiving

“This innovative conference was designed to help synagogues discover how their documents, oral histories, and



Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus, z"l.

genealogies can truly bring American Jewish history to life in their own communities,” said Dr. Gary Zola, Executive Director of The Marcus Center. “It also gave attendees an opportunity to visit The Marcus Center – one of the nation’s largest repositories of documents relating to American Jewish history – as well as the College-Institute’s historic Cincinnati School.

The conference was chaired by Kevin Profitt, Chief Archivist at the AJA, and a small steering committee comprised of Saul Briebart of Kahal Kodosh Beth Elohim in Charleston, South Carolina; Gerry Cristol, of Temple Emanu-El in Dallas, Texas; Lois England of Washington Hebrew Congregation in Washington, D.C.; Norman Grabstein of

Conference participants heard keynote addresses by Dr. Zola, Rabbi Lance J. Sussman, Ph.D., Associate Professor

of American Jewish History at Binghamton University and Rabbi at Temple Concord in Binghamton, New York, and Karen Franklin, Immediate Past President of the International Society of Jewish Genealogists. In addition to Profitt, the conference’s archival faculty included AJA archivists Kathy Spray, Dorothy Smith, Melinda McMartin, and Dr. Frederic Krome, Managing Editor of *The American Jewish Archives Journal*.

Participants enjoyed numerous workshops on “Archives 101: Starting from Scratch;” “The Lone Arranger: Providing Public Services in a Small Repository;” “Globally Wired: Archives in the Information Age;” and “Genealogists and Archivists: Working Together to Create Synagogue and Family Histories.”

Many attendees, such as Leslie Berkey of Beth Israel Temple in Hamilton, Ohio, came to the conference to find out how to start a synagogue archive from the ground up. “I think we can get our archive going now,” she said. “All of our documents are currently in boxes, but I am



eager to begin to organize them and display some of the history of our congregation which goes back a great many years.”

The Marcus Center is committed to assisting the Reform Movement’s congregations preserve their archival history. In response to the interest expressed



Conference participants learning how to preserve synagogue archives

Jane West Walsh (MAJE '85) effuses enthusiasm for Jewish learning and the field of Jewish education. As the recently appointed Educational Research Fellow at The Jacob Rader Marcus Center for the American Jewish Archives at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati, she is developing strategies and materials for teaching and learning about the American Jewish experience using archival documents. Continuing the legacy of Dr. Marcus, z"l, and working with Executive Director Dr. Gary Zola, archival staff, and educator colleagues around the world, her mission is to bring the historical riches of the American Jewish experience into the hands of Jewish educators, rabbis, and community leaders. She is an innovator – seeking new ways to engage teachers and learners in the study of Jewish tradition and culture.

It is hard to believe that West Walsh was not always so involved in Jewish communal life, Jewish learning, and the field of Jewish education. Initially pursuing a career in science communications in Denver where she lived primarily as a secular Jew, it was only during her late 20’s as an adult learner, that she started to look deeper at Jewish tradition, texts, and culture. She realized that there was “a great treasure to uncover.” Adult education classes and a wonderful experience teaching sixth grade at Temple Emanuel in Denver, under the supervision of Max Frankel, kindled a love for teaching and her desire to continue learning more about Judaism.

Whereas previously she had used her artistic and graphic talents to teach about science and ecology, she now decided to make her focus the heritage and values of Judaism. Her studies at the Rhea Hirsch School of Education (RHSOE) were “the most challenging and enriching experiences of my life to that point,” she noted. She credits the faculty, their excellent teaching, and their commitment to research and practice in the field. She also credits the Rhea Hirsch School’s core vision of creating a “collegial network of Jewish educators” for ongoing success in linking the ever expanding network of graduates. To strengthen this network, she is actively involved in the RHSOE Alumni Association, which supports ongoing professional development for alumni, and programs of the RHSOE and the College-Institute.

With West Walsh’s passionate commitment and achievements in Jewish education (she directed the religious education programs at Temple Israel in Omaha, Nebraska, and Temple Shaaray Tefila in New York City, was involved in Jewish communal education work in Baltimore and Cleveland, taught at the Cleveland College of Jewish Studies and Baltimore Hebrew University, and was a participant in the Senior Educator’s Fellowship Program at the Melton Centre for Jewish Education at Hebrew University in

Goleman’s research on emotional intelligence. A highlight of her residency was the program “A Conversation in Muslim and Jewish Education,” in which she and a Muslim educator colleague, Nadira Charaniya, facilitated an interreligious learning program. West Walsh and Charaniya based the program on a curriculum analysis they had done comparing Muslim and

INNOVATING FOR THE FUTURE: JEWISH LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

## How a science communications professional became a leading Reform Jewish educator, thanks to the Rhea Hirsch School of Education



Jane West Walsh MAJE '85

Jerusalem), it comes as no surprise that a committee of the alumni of the RHSOE honored her as the first-ever RHSOE alumnus/a-in-residence. Launched during the Fall 1998 semester, this program was sponsored by the alumni association’s Lee-Rothberg Fund, created to honor RHSOE Director Professor Sara Lee for receiving the prestigious Rothberg Prize for significant achievement in the field of Jewish Education, at Hebrew University in 1997.

As Alumna-in-residence, West Walsh taught education classes, delivered a *dvar Torah* and read Torah during student services, and prepared a *Yom Iyyun* (day of study for clinical faculty and students) based on Daniel

*The Rhea Hirsch School of Education in Los Angeles, which offers programs leading to the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Jewish Education, Master of Arts degree in Jewish Education, and Joint Masters degree in Jewish Education and Jewish Communal Service, will celebrate its 30th anniversary in the year 2000. To date, there are 208 RHSOE alumni serving the Reform Movement and world Jewry. HUC-JIR’s first honorary doctoral degrees for distinguished alumni, the Doctor of Sacred Education, are anticipated to be awarded at Graduation in the Spring of 2000.*

**Please help HUC-JIR recruit talented and motivated students for careers in Jewish Education. Please direct potential candidates to: Professor Sara Lee, Director, Rhea Hirsch School of Education, HUC-JIR, 3077 University Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90007-3796; (213) 749-3424; slee@huc.edu**

Jewish educational materials. By presenting aspects of their reflections on the uses of Hebrew and Arabic, values stories, use of historical leaders as role models, and responses to the challenges of teaching Jewish and Muslim traditions while living in a predominantly Christian and secular society, they introduced the Los Angeles School community to Ismaili Muslim education, tradition,

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