

We asked the Class of 1989 to reflect upon their experiences at the College-Institute, advise current students, and update us on their lives over the past 10 years. Where are our alumni? What paths have they chosen? What were the highlights of their years at HUC-JIR? What have been their most significant accomplishments? How have they made a difference in their communities?

We received responses from our rabbinical, cantorial, education, communal service, and graduate studies alumni in California, Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Their lives encompass a wide range of professional venues, from congregations, Jewish organizations, foundations, hospitals, and churches, to universities/colleges (including HUC-JIR), Hillels, and libraries.

Our alumni felt prepared by their experiences as students at HUC-JIR. Interaction with the faculty – academically and personally – was especially highly regarded by alumni. They praised their internships and student pulpits, as well as peer interaction and the HUC-JIR community. They valued HUC-JIR's leadership and organizational development training, course work, and preparation for synagogue life. Their travel experiences, the choirs, and the library were also noted as highlights of their years at HUC-JIR.

Frances Silverstein Fischer (MAJCS) praised the School of Jewish Communal Service as “one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. I cannot imagine how different my life would be without the friends, career opportunities, learning, and humor I gained...”

Andrea Zoll-Stein (MAJCS/MSW) remarked, “The value HUC-JIR places on its students and graduates is unlike anything I’ve ever encountered.”



The Cincinnati Rabbinical Class of 1989

Although many graduates knew exactly what they wanted to do upon completion of their studies, others weren't sure which path to choose. Either way, their goals have developed and changed over the past 10 years. Respondents agreed that they find their current positions to be both personally and professionally rewarding. Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch responded, “The well-being and perpetuation of

the Jewish people is what motivated me to enter the rabbinate. In this aspect I feel I am playing a role.” Professor Paul Y. Tashiro remarked, “I am doing exactly what God called me to do.”

A vast majority of alumni, many of whom are interested in mentoring current students, offered advice. They emphasized that HUC-JIR students should make the most of their time at the College-Institute – taking advantage of resources, enrolling in classes that interest them, building close relationships with faculty, staff, and other students, and realizing the importance of character and nurturing spirituality. They encouraged students to study and absorb as much as possible, pursue career guidance early, be open to changing career goals, and to try something “off the beaten track.” They urged that students get a sense of what a work week in a desired position is really like and learn about the management/organization of places where they intern, define their goals, publish their theses, and find a good mentor upon graduation. Alumni also commented that the equality and partnership of rabbis and cantors should be reinforced at HUC-JIR so that it will continue to be nurtured in the field.

As part of their ongoing relationship with the College-Institute, many of the respondents expressed an interest in continuing education programs. They would like to see text study and courses in time management, organizational devel-

TEN YEARS LATER: THE HUC-JIR CLASS OF 1989

AMUSING OBSERVATIONS ABOUT LIFE AT AND AFTER HUC-JIR

The qualifiers are always interesting. In a small city, I was introduced as the “the Jewish rabbi,” in larger ones as “the Reform rabbi,” to someone with a small child from a different city whose rabbi is female as “a male rabbi.”
(Rabbi Michael L. Feshbach, Temple Beth Am)

I was heartbroken to learn of the loss of Jack Dauber. One of my favorite memories was teaching him how to hula hoop at the annual retreat. He promised me an “A” if I could teach him. Too bad it was pass/fail... (Frances Silverstein Fischer, MAJCS)

opment, leadership development/staff management, professional development, music history, Jewish history, Talmud, education, and philosophy. They suggested that Internet guided study courses be offered.

Since alumni praised the inclusive community during their years at the College-Institute, it follows that they would like to see that perpetuated after they leave. Roslyn Roucher (MAJE) suggested text classes/*kallot*, where all alumni would study together, in addition to the campus days which are held each year; she also proposed a national retreat. Cantor Lisa Lipco Levine emphasized the importance of all alumni associations for all graduates of HUC-JIR programs. She recommended that the College-Institute invite all alumni back to visit every year. Cantor Betsy S. Peters-Epstein suggested that alumni visit a campus to discuss their careers with students.

Another suggestion, which came from Rabbi Jonathan E. Kraus, encouraged more interaction between faculty and lay people – “the more faculty and lay people can interact, the more we develop a shared vision for the College-Institute and our congregations. It’s a relationship that’s beneficial in both directions. Faculty keep in touch with the Jewish world that their students are encountering and lay people come to understand the value of HUC-JIR.” Rabbi Peter B. Schaktman remarked, “I’m grateful that so many of my teachers remain in the community, and hope that I can continue to find ways to partake of their wisdom.”

Technological and other



Rabbi Edwin Goldberg officiating at a wedding at Temple Judea in Coral Gables, Florida

advances at HUC-JIR are fulfilling some of the alumni suggestions and enabling the College-Institute to be more helpful to alumni and their constituencies. The on-line cataloguing of HUC-JIR’s libraries, now in process, and the plans for distance education using

the Internet will make it easier to participate in the academic life of the College-Institute. It will also facilitate continued contact with the faculty, in addition to the biennials and CCAR conferences, and it will offer more short-term courses announced well in advance for continuing education. The electronic publications on HUC-JIR’s website at www.huc.edu/faculty/pubs.html and *Kesher* newsletter already provide important sermons and guest lectures.

Our alumni expressed the ongoing struggle to achieve a balance between work and personal life. But in summing up their lives 10 years later, most echoed the sentiments of Rabbi Jonathan Kraus: “The frustration and disappointments can be enormous, but so can the rewards. The rabbinate still feels like the right work for me to be devoting my life to and a great privilege.”



Cantor Lisa Lipco Levine (l) in her Jewish folk duo, “Lisa and Lynn”

We are grateful to the members of the Class of 1989 who participated in this survey. We would like to encourage the strengthening and continuity of alumni ties with HUC-JIR. Please be involved with our community; recruit potential students; mentor current students; continue your studies in an HUC-JIR program; and keep us updated on your lives and activities.

AMONG THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE CLASS OF 1989:

- **Rabbi Rachel Cowan:** Working with Nancy Flam to start the Jewish Healing Center and working with Larry Hoffman to start Synagogue 2000
- **Rabbi Michael L. Feshbach:** Providing high quality adult education programs; increasing the level of congregant participation and involvement; publishing articles and writings
- **Frances Silverstein Fischer, MAJCS:** Making connections with Jewish students through my Hillel work and helping them enter and participate in the Jewish community...
- **Rabbi Edwin Goldberg:** Building a better community
- **Rabbi Jonathan Kraus:** Leading my current congregation to a time of strength and renewed confidence
- **Cantor Lisa Lipco Levine:** Composing original pieces, such as “MiSheberach,” which have become popular in congregations around the country
- **Cantor Betsy S. Peters-Epstein:** Raising the level of Jewish musical literacy through my presentations, and training my congregations to participate in the musical aspects of religious services
- **Rabbi Richard Rheins:** Writing six CCAR responsa and contributing to dozens of others
- **Rabbi Peter B. Schaktman:** Having an ongoing, meaningful, and satisfying role in the lives of the congregants with whom I have worked
- **Rabbi Sharon L. Sobel:** Having my students choose to become Jewish professionals themselves – either rabbis, educators, or cantors
- **Pastor Bernard Taylor:** Having my dissertation published in 2 volumes by Harvard University
- **Andrea Zoll-Stein, MAJCS/MSW:** Sitting on a number of hospital committees to facilitate institutional change during a time of hospital restructuring...