

# RABBINICAL ALUMNI IN THE ACADEMY-Part II

HUC-JIR continues to recognize the scholarship and achievement of rabbinical alumni teaching in colleges and universities.

**Herbert Bronstein, C '57**, teaches Comparative Religion in the Religion Department of Lake Forest College, has lectured and taught History and Philosophy of Religion at the University of Rochester, Northwestern University, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and HUC-JIR, and has been a Visiting Scholar at the Post Graduate Centre for Jewish Studies at Oxford University.

**Steven Leonard Jacobs, C '74**, is the Aaron Aronov Endowed Chair of Judaic Studies and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at The University of Alabama and has taught at Spring Hill College, Birmingham-Southern College, Samford University, and Calhoun Community College.

**Leon A. Jick, C '54**, is Professor Emeritus at Brandeis University, where he has served as the Helen and Irving Schneider Professor of American Jewish Studies, Director of the Lown Graduate Center for Contemporary Jewish Studies (where he inaugurated the Hornstein Program for Jewish Community Service), Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and Associate Dean of Faculty, and has been a visiting professor at Hebrew University in Jerusalem and at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Wisconsin.

**Lance J. Sussman, C '80** is Professor of American Jewish History at Gratz College, and the Community Coordinator for the University of Pennsylvania Lectures in Judaic Studies at the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, and has served as Associate Professor of American Jewish History and Chair of the Judaic Studies Department at Binghamton University.

## A Vital Partnership: HUC-JIR Alumni Leading the UNION FOR REFORM JUDAISM

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tion between the North American Reform Movement and the growing Progressive Movement in Israel and elsewhere around the globe – a connection that would demonstrate unequivocally that we are truly 'joined at the hip' and that we can and must draw strength from each other."

These distinguished alumni point to Rabbi Ellenson's leadership as a key invigorating element. "David Ellenson is an outstanding scholar, devoted Jew, champion of Jewish peoplehood who has provided a model of inspired leadership, *mentschlichkeit*, serious study, and deep Jewish commitment that is being felt in every corner of our Movement," describes **Eric Yoffie**. "The URJ takes strength from his energy and Jewish devotion. His presence as partner and friend strengthens the

sense of collectivity and mutual respect that are at the heart of Reform community-building."

"The Jewish community is 'voting with its feet' – flocking to the Reform Movement as the expression of Jewish faith and values that most closely reflects their own," notes **Marla Feldman**. "I hope our Movement and our commitment to social justice will continue to inspire and resonate for the modern Jew. The rabbis who are trained at HUC-JIR bring alive this vibrant, dynamic Jewish choice for millions of our members. Our congregations could not thrive without well-trained, multi-talented clergy leading them, nor could our clergy succeed without the solid foundation of healthy congregations to support them." This symbiotic relationship is reflected in the URJ/HUC-JIR partnership, which benefits the Movement as a whole. "We hope to share with HUC-JIR the trends that are emerging within our congregations and help identify the professional skills that are needed today and that may not have been required a generation ago," adds **Sue Ann Wasserman**.

As a former member of the HUC-JIR Admissions Committee

in New York, **Deborah Hirsch** acknowledges that "the composition of the current student body appears to include not only men and women entering the rabbinate as a second career, but also individuals whose Jewish foundation is not rooted in the Reform Movement – a phenomenon that is also seen in our congregations and the National Jewish Population Survey demographics. As 21st century Reform Judaism evolves it is imperative that congregational lay and professional leadership partner with one another and with the support mechanism of the Union for Reform Judaism and its affiliate organizations. Our mission is to engage Reform congregations, synagogue members, and those religious seekers to Judaism in a vibrant, enriching and transforming Jewish experience – a Reform Judaism rooted in the ethics, core values, and social consciousness that have defined and redefined our Movement since its creation."

**Daniel Frelander** stresses, "There is a real challenge to maintain the integrity of the Movement, which must be sustained by students trained in the authenticity and ethos of Reform when they become the

leaders of communities." **Ammiel Hirsch** adds, "The synagogue is the preeminent institution in Jewish life that can provide the kind of intellectual stimulation and lifelong emotional attachment that can create and sustain Jews and perpetuate Judaism. HUC-JIR trains the spiritual leaders of the Reform synagogue. In a real sense, the future vitality of American Jewry rests on the shoulders of Reform rabbis."

Looking to the future, **Aron Hirt-Manheimer** expresses the urgency of the cause. "We Reform Jews and the Jewish people are in the business of survival, survival not just to survive, but survival because we have a moral message that must be articulated in every generation, in word and deed, and because we have a special destiny as Jews." **Elliott Kleinman** sums it up in saying, "The strengthening of congregations with gifted professionals, with a learned laity, with programs and services that invigorate Reform Judaism, all of this happens when HUC-JIR, the URJ, and all the arms of the Movement are working together – that's when we are at our best."