

How do you become a national professional leader of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), the synagogue arm of the North American Reform Movement? For many the gateway has been the College-Institute. Distinguished alumni of HUC-JIR's rabbinical, cantorial, education, and Jewish communal service programs lead the organization that is shaping the future of the largest growing denomination of Jews in America

THE PATH TO HUC-JIR

For many URJ leaders, the journey to HUC-JIR began in the Reform Movement's congregations, religious schools, camps, youth movement programs, and emphasis on social justice. Indeed, some first emerged as leaders within that context. **Rabbi Eric Yoffie**, N '74, **URJ President**, describes how he grew up in "a tightly knit Jewish community of 10,000 in Worcester,

of Torah." Transferring from a Jewishly-barren Stanford to Brandeis, where he was student body president, majored in politics, and intended to go to law school, he recalls how "my courses in Bible, modern Jewish thought, and the excitement of learning the Hebrew language changed my life. I began to look on Torah study as an inspiration, a source of joy. I felt connected with the sacred for the first time, and

"Stephen S. Wise, the paragon of 20th century Jewish social justice and Zionism; my great-uncle, a graduate of one of the earliest classes; my father, Rabbi Harold Saperstein, and my uncle, Rabbi Sanford Saperstein, graduates in the 1930s and 1940s, respectively; and my brother, Marc, who, other than my parents and the role model of Al Vorspan, UAHC Vice President Emeritus, has had the greatest influence on my life."

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

By Jean Bloch Rosensaft



*Rabbi Eric Yoffie, N '74
President*



*Rabbi Lennard Thal, N '73
Senior Vice President*



*Rabbi Daniel Freeland, N '79
Vice President*



*Rabbi David Saperstein, N '73
Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism; Co-Director, Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism*

– the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-2001 estimates that 39% of the Jewish adults affiliated with a synagogue belong to one of the URJ's 920 congregations. The URJ's leaders spoke to *The Chronicle* about their enduring relationship with HUC-JIR, where their studies prepared them for careers that are influencing the destiny of the Reform Movement and the Jewish people.

Massachusetts, the sort that does not exist anymore, attended religious school at Temple Emanuel three times a week, was in a confirmation class of 142 teenagers, and spent my high school years devoted to NFTY." He credits his experiences as a regional president and national vice-president of NFTY as "where I developed my skills as a speaker and organizer and became intellectually engaged with discussion

began to struggle with serious theological questions. I traveled to Israel in the summer of my junior year. By my senior year I knew I wanted to be a rabbi."

Rabbi David Sapertsein, N '73, **Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism** and **Co-Director of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism**, points to the inspiration of those who came before:

Having grown up observing his father, the rabbi of a single congregation which grew from 40 families to nearly 1,000 in his 50 years of leadership, Saperstein "landed in college wrestling between being an English professor, or a rabbi and attorney. Why the rabbi-attorney combination? Because in my mind, religion and law were the two great institutions capable of helping individuals and transforming society."

Rabbi Sue Ann Wasserman, N '87, **Director of Worship, Music, and Religious Living**, who recalls her parents' role in founding the Pound Ridge Jewish Community and as members of the Eisner Camp Commission, was active in the NFTY youth movement and a camper at Camps Eisner and Kutz, attended the EIE program for high school students in Israel, and worked at Camps Jacobs, Coleman, and Harlam. "From the time I was 16, I was focused toward going to HUC-JIR," she explains.

Rabbi Daniel Frelander, N '79, **URJ Vice President**, remembers his regular participation in services and the synagogue choir of Temple Emanuel in Worcester, Massachusetts, where he became proficient in worship leadership,

the rabbinate. Although she faced some hurdles, her persistence and determination prevailed and she became the 49th woman ordained at HUC-JIR.

In some cases, graduate studies redirected interests toward Jewish professional careers. At Stanford Law School, **Rabbi Lennard Thal**, N '73, **URJ Senior Vice President**, was consumed with matters of social justice and did not find very much responsiveness on the part of faculty members, recalling his civil procedure professor's response to a student's question about justice, 'Justice, what are you talking about? This is a law school.' Instead of a summer law firm internship, he worked at Camp Saratoga, now Camp Swig, where he "discovered that there were rabbis sitting under the redwood trees

Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch, N '89, **Director of ARZA/WUPJ North America**, was a young lawyer who had spent his high school years in Israel and served in the Israeli army, while growing up in the orbit of a distinguished father, Rabbi Richard Hirsch, Executive Director Emeritus of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. But it was only when Dr. Paul M. Steinberg, then Dean of HUC-JIR/New York, complimented him on his wedding speech, saying "you should think about becoming a rabbi" that he decided to become one.

"I had a master's degree in public administration, some technical skills, and lots of passions, but I didn't know what Jewish leaders need to know," confesses **Rabbi Andrew Davids**, N/J '99, **Co-Director, Youth Division**.

a pioneering initiative. "I knew that my major at the University of Pennsylvania would be Jewish studies and that I was destined for a professional role within the Jewish community. Without having had any exposure to women rabbis, however, it never occurred to me to consider the rabbinate," recalls **Rabbi Marla Feldman**, N '85, **Director of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism**. It was her classmates' consideration of the rabbinate that finally clicked with her. "Once I realized that this was an option for me as well, it became clear that this was what I had been working toward most of my life."

Aron Hirt-Manheimer, MAJE '76, **Editor, Reform Judaism Magazine**, found his way to HUC-JIR through his passion



*Rabbi Deborah Hirsch, C '82, D. Min., '97
Director of Regions*



*Rabbi Elliott Kleinman, C '92
Director of Program*



*Rabbi Sue Ann Wasserman, N '87
Director of Worship, Music, and
Religious Living*



*Dale Glasser, MAJCS '85
Director of Synagogue Management*

NEFTY, and the NFTY Torah Corps at the UAHC Kutz Camp as the "activities and Reform rabbi role models, all HUC-JIR graduates, that guided me."

An upbringing rooted in a love for Judaism, a commitment to Jewish values and learning, a desire to teach, and a passion for justice directed **Rabbi Deborah A. Hirsch**, C '82, D. Min., '97, **URJ Director of Regions**, to

who validated the very questions that my law professors seemed to disdain or treat with benign neglect at best. I saw Judaism come alive and saw the impact it could have on young people." Back at law school, Thal remembers going to the pay phone after a class in creditors' rights, "and calling Rabbi William Cutter at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles and asking him what would be involved in entering rabbinical school."

"I found that HUC-JIR would provide me with a great opportunity to deepen my understanding of Judaism through text study from a liberal and critical perspective and would give me entrée to a national Jewish professional position where I could help shape the agenda for the future of the American Jewish community."

For women a generation ago, the path to HUC-JIR required

for Jewish journalism, born out of his identity as a son of Holocaust survivors and the impact of the Six Day War. As a student at UCLA he founded the cutting-edge West Coast quarterly magazine, *Davka*, in 1969 – an expression of the Jewish radical community's countercultural protest against the Jewish establishment.

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*Rabbi Richard Address, C' 72
Director of Jewish Family Concerns*



*Rabbi Marla Feldman, N '85
Director of the Commission on Social
Action of Reform Judaism*



*Aron Hirt-Manheimer, MAJE '76
Editor, Reform Judaism Magazine*

Despite studies at Tel Aviv University, Hirt-Manheimer felt he lacked for a strong background in formal Jewish studies and was looking to “infuse more depth and knowledge into the work I was doing, not just passion and energy.” Dr. William Cutter, who had written for *Davka*, encouraged him to enter the Rhea Hirsch School of Education, recognizing that Hirt-Manheimer would not become a conventional educator but someone who would teach through mass communication.

STUDENT YEARS AT HUC-JIR

Alumni look back upon their studies with some of the intellectual giants of higher Jewish learning at HUC-JIR. **Lennard Thal** reminisces about “the opportunity to study with Dr. Eugene Borowitz, who was unparalleled as a pedagogue and teacher,” and his thesis research on the legal terminology and context of the Book of Job, under the supervision of Dr. Harry Orlinsky, “who insisted on engaging with me in his study, in his apartment, in the hallways, and sharpened my ability to grapple with both the text itself and the conceptual challenges the Book of Job presents.”

“Professor Abraham Aharoni was the head of the Hebrew language program, a wonderful mentor who advised me on my thesis on the Zionist writings of Moshe Lieb Lilienblum,” recalls **Eric Yoffie**. “Then, as now, struggling with the religious significance of Israel and Zionism were the central concerns of my intellectual life.”

Elliott Kleinman, C' 92, Director of Program, came to HUC-JIR with a master's degree in public administration after several years as a political consultant who worked with campaigns, including speech writing and media management. He remembers the gift of time, in the classroom and at their homes, spent with Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus, founder of the American Jewish Archives, Dr. Jacob Petuchowski, then Bronstein Professor of Judaean-Christian Studies, and Dr. Ben-Zion Wacholder, Professor Emeritus of Talmud and Rabbis. “It was fantastic to be in the presence of that kind of intellect.” He also was the student manager of the College Bookstore, where he could indulge his love of books.

The Vietnam years provided a challenging context for some of these alumni's studies at HUC-

JIR. “My years at HUC-JIR were tumultuous,” **Eric Yoffie** recalls. “The war was raging, students were more outspoken, and the faculty was attempting to adapt to a more assertive student culture.”

“The Havurah Movement was changing the way we thought about the structures of Jewish life, making it more relevant and Jewishly richer than we had experienced in most of our congregations growing up.” adds **David Saperstein**. “The success of the counterculture values in the Jewish community together with the successful protests at the Council of Jewish Federations General Assembly in Boston in 1968, the Six Day War, and the beginning of the mobilization of the Soviet Jewry Movement – all these led us to feel that we could fix the world.”

Richard Address, C' 72, Director of Jewish Family Concerns, describes his student pulpit in Dothan, Alabama, at the height of the civil rights era. As a Northeastern Jewish activist, he experienced “the precarious position of the Southern Jewish community” as it negotiated its place in the racial struggle between blacks and whites and was told, “You can't impose what you can do in

Philadelphia in Alabama.” He later “took a 600 family congregation outside London,” when a number of rabbinical students took a year off after their third year to extend their deferments and avoid the draft. He has vivid memories of Ordination in 1972 when Sally Priesand was ordained by President Gottschalk and his entire class stood in support. “All of us there on that *Shabbat* morning were aware that the world had now changed.”

Deborah Hirsch points to the important lessons learned at HUC-JIR. In addition to deepening her Jewish knowledge and commitment, HUC-JIR provided the backdrop for Rabbi Hirsch to “trust her own abilities, confront surmountable challenges, and tap into her own internal resources and spiritual understanding in an effort to serve and strengthen the Jewish community.” Reflecting on the early years of women in the rabbinic program, she believes that women clergy have had a profound impact on modern Reform Judaism. Women have not only served as spiritual leaders, counselors, and teachers, but also have been role models to generations of Jews. Hirsch



Rabbi Andrew Davids, J '99
Co-Director, Youth Division



Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch, N '89
Executive Director, ARZA/World Union for Progressive Judaism North America



Rabbi Jan Katzew, C '83
Director of Lifelong Jewish Learning



Cantor Alane Katzew, SSM '81
Director of Music Programming in the Department of Worship, Music, and Religious Living

herself served as assistant rabbi at Temple Beth-El in Great Neck, New York, and was among the first women to have a full-time pulpit in a major city – fifteen fulfilling years as Rabbi of East End Temple in New York City. In addition, she served as chair of the CCAR's Finance Committee and the first woman CCAR officer. In 2000, she joined the URJ as Regional Director of the Greater New York Council of Reform Synagogues and, last year, was named Director of Regions.

"I was in one of the huge rabbinical classes of the mid-1970s," says **Daniel Frelander**, who began working for the Union immediately upon returning to HUC-JIR/New York after the Year-In-Israel Program. "I loved being at HUC-JIR/New York on the Upper West Side, because the UAHC (now URJ) was right across Central Park. So I could finish my classes by 2 o'clock and take the cross-town bus and work at the Union for four or five hours. I did that for all four years at HUC-JIR. The most important thing I learned at HUC-JIR was the real relationship between the study of Judaism and the practice of Judaism. Whatever I learned in school, I was always trying to

translate into my youth work and my camp curriculum. I realized, in retrospect, that I studied in order to teach."

Sue Ann Wasserman describes the "very intense five years" of her rabbinical program, juggling her academic coursework with internships and jobs – working in the library during her first year in Jerusalem, teaching religious school at her childhood congregation of Beth Elohim in Brooklyn several days a week for four years, a weekly pulpit at The Jewish Home and Hospital for the Aged during her third year, and her fourth- and fifth-year student pulpit at Temple Beth Am in Monessen, Pennsylvania. "More than anything else," she says, "my years at HUC-JIR were really about growing as a Jew and taking on the role of a pulpit rabbi, which allowed me to be a counselor, a teacher, an officiant, and a mentor."

Marla Feldman and her classmates petitioned for, and then took, a course on Social Action taught by Al Vorspan. She interned as the Critical Issues Liaison for the Women of Reform Judaism (then NFTS), and summered as Legislative Assistant at the Religious Action Center (RAC) of Reform Judaism in

Washington, D.C., which "ignited my passion for social activism, political engagement, and community organizing. As a result I became the first HUC-JIR student liaison to the Commission on Social Action," the department which she now directs after some years in congregational pulpits, law school, and community relations positions in Delaware and Detroit. She praises the "symbiotic relationship so crucial to successful rabbinical training, with HUC-JIR providing the academic foundation for my rabbinate, and the practical application of that learning coming from my student opportunities with URJ departments and congregations."

"I think it was enormously beneficial to have had the opportunity to study with rabbinical and education students, especially from the vantage point of working in synagogue management, because it provided me with insights and with a network," says **Dale Glasser**, MAJCS '85, **Director of Synagogue Management**. He entered the double masters program in Jewish Communal Service and Social Work at HUC-JIR and the University of Southern California after getting a master's degree in counseling and starting

the first Jewish community center day camp in Orange County.

Grateful for HUC-JIR's scholarships and financial aid, which made his graduate study possible and launched his career, **Aron Hirt-Manheimer** adds, "one of the best experiences was to be in classes with cantorial, education, rabbinical, and communal service students, with very different career goals, in the midst of a pioneering institution marked by creativity and flexibility, and not hindered by inherited patterns or formulas of how things should be done." Research interviews for his master's thesis, which analyzed the UAHC's published materials and educational publications, elicited encouragement from their editors and Al Vorspan, who had oversight of UAHC publications, and led to an invitation in 1976 from Rabbi Alexander Schindler, then UAHC President, to edit *Reform Judaism, Keeping Posted*, and the UAHC's books. Hirt-Manheimer has spent the past 28 years growing *Reform Judaism* magazine to its current circulation of 310,000, with over an 80% readership and seven out of ten copies passed on to another household.

"I did four of my six years of study at HUC-JIR/Jerusalem,"

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states **Andrew Davids**, who studied with Israeli rabbinical students who are now leading the Progressive Movement in Israel and abroad. “At times I felt like one of the *Nehutai*, the 4th century rabbis who traveled between Babylonia and Palestine, trying to build relationships and share each other’s thinking and teachings.” His thesis explored these relations as reflected in the two Talmuds at a time when there were two centers of Jewish life – “one living according to the Jewish calendar as the majority in the Jewish land and speaking the Jewish language, and the other focusing less on land and language and more on Torah, spirituality, interaction with a larger host majority culture, and trying to define its new Jewish understandings of existence in that setting. Seeing these two communities spar in the Talmuds for control and definition of where the center is speaks very much, in my mind, to the present day situation where centers of Jewish life in North America and Israel each contribute different elements to the strengthening of the Jewish people.”

Jan Katzew, C ’83, **Director of Lifelong Jewish Learning**, published a chapter from his senior thesis on Judah Halevi and Moses Ibn Ezra in the *HUC Annual* a year after his ordination. He drew upon his rabbinical studies

with Dr. Barry Kogan, Efroymsen Professor of Jewish Religious Thought, Dr. Ben-Zion Wacholder, Professor Emeritus of Talmud and Rabbinics, and Dr. Ezra Spicehandler, Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of Hebrew Literature, when he became a Jerusalem Fellow and pursued his doctorate in moral philosophy at Hebrew University, studies that grounded his expertise in educational philosophy, educational psychology, and Jewish philosophy and inform his work as senior educator at the URJ.

WORKING FOR THE URJ

The pulpit experience, whether as a student intern or a newly ordained rabbi, has been central to many of these URJ leaders’ development as heads of the Reform synagogue movement.

“I loved the congregational rabbinite,” recalls **David Saperstein**. “My father taught me that there is no job quite like it, anywhere. No job that allows one person to interact so fully, from birth to death, during good times and bad, in shaping the lives of others.” He served during rabbinical school as youth director and then assistant to Rabbi Gunter Hirschberg at Congregation Rodeph Sholom in New York City, and jumped at Hirschberg’s offer to stay after ordination. “A year later, Al Vorspan called and asked: ‘Would you like to be the Director of the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism in Washington, D.C.?’ Someone was actually offering to pay me to do what I would rather do than anything in my life.”

“My first pulpit after ordination was The Temple in Atlanta, Georgia, a community of 1400 families,” says **Sue Ann Wasserman**, “where I saw how meaningful the classical Reform

traditions were for the congregants and I appreciated the great beauty and majesty in worship. Rabbi Alvin Sugarman, together with The Temple’s program director, administrator, and educators, all mentored me in what it meant to be a professional in synagogue life and to live in the South.” She has vivid memories of her student cantor interns during the six years she served as the solo rabbi for the Brooklyn Heights Synagogue, a congregation of 250 families in urban New York City. “They taught me a lot about synagogue and worship music, and were so eager to experiment and try new things with the congregation. I don’t think that I could fulfill my current portfolio of worship, ritual, and Jewish living without my experiences working with them – it was invaluable to me.”

Jan Katzew’s initial six years as Rabbi Educator at the Community Synagogue in Port Washington, New York, were followed by six years in Chicago with the Board of Jewish Education and the Solomon Schechter Middle School in Northbrook, Illinois, when he was tapped by Eric Yoffie to head the URJ’s Department of Education, which then focused primarily on day schools and congregational schools. Now renamed the Department of Lifelong Jewish Learning, his department has expanded to encompass an early childhood specialist, adult Jewish growth and Jewish education, and fourteen educators in the regions. “We have been able to engage some of the most able Jewish educators in our Movement as regional educators to serve all congregations, with a special emphasis on serving the smallest, most remote congregations that

don’t have access to the scholarship or Boards of Jewish Education readily available in major urban, federated communities.”

Cantor Alane Katzew, SSM ’81, has spent most of her professional life in congregations, with a two-year stint on the faculty of HUC-JIR/Jerusalem (where she was the first woman cantor in the State of Israel earlier in her career) until becoming **Director of Music Programming in the Department of Worship, Music, and Religious Living** in 2002. She recalls the rather unique experience of being one of the very few clergy couples of her era, “whose example encouraged others that it was possible to successfully blend family life with the demands of being a cantor and marriage to a rabbi who served a separate and distinct Jewish community.” She also recognizes her special role as a cantor on the senior administration of the URJ, where she is a resource about all things musical and an advocate for the cantors and musicians serving URJ congregations.”

The path to URJ’s senior leadership for many of these alumni included stints as regional directors of the UAHC, culminating in national positions at the URJ. After assisting Rabbi Harold Saperstein in Lynbrook, New York, and serving as the first full-time rabbi in Durham, North Carolina, **Eric Yoffie** notes, “I was much influenced by Rabbi Jerome Davidson when he was Regional Director of the Northeast Council during my NFTY years. While serving as a regional director may seem like an unusual career goal, it was something I had always thought about and, when the position of Regional Director of the Midwest Council became

HUC-JIR Alumni Leaders of URJ

YOUTH DIVISION

Rabbi Eve Rudin Weiner, N '00,
*Director of URJ Kutz Camp and
NFTY Leadership Center*

Jonathan Cohen, MAJCS '91,
*Director of the URJ Henry S.
Jacobs Camp*

Rabbi Ron Klotz, C '77, *Director
of the URJ Myron S. Goldman
Union Camp-Institute*

Rabbi Marc Israel, N '98,
*Director of KESHER-College
Education Department*

REGIONAL DIRECTORS

Rabbi Sharon L. Sobel, N '89,
*Executive Director, Canadian
Council for Reform Judaism and
ARZA Canada*

Rabbi David Wolfman, C '87,
*Regional Director for the URJ
Northeast Council*

Rabbi Don Berlin, N '77,
*Acting Regional Director for the
URJ Great Lakes Council (until
June 30, 2004)*

Rabbi Steven Mills, C '93,
*Regional Director for the URJ
Northeast Lakes Council*

Rabbi Daniel Rabishaw, C '94,
*Regional Director for the URJ Great
Lakes Council (as of July 1, 2004)*

Rabbi Michael Berk, C '80,
*Regional Director for the URJ
Pacific Central West Council*

Rabbi Scott Sperling, N '76,
*Regional Director for the URJ Mid
Atlantic Council*

Rabbi David Fine, C '89,
*Regional Director for the URJ
Pacific Northwest Council*

Rabbi Lane Steinger, C '73,
*Regional Director for the URJ
Midwest Council*

**Rabbi Alan Henkin, C '80; Ph.D
C '85,** *Regional Director for the
URJ Pacific Southwest Council*

Rabbi Randi Musnitsky, C '93,
*Regional Director for the URJ New
Jersey-West Hudson Valley Council*

Rabbi Sue Levi Elwell, C '86,
*Regional Director for the URJ
Pennsylvania Council*

Rabbi Peter Schaktman, N '89,
*Acting Regional Director for the
URJ Greater New York Council
(until June 30, 2004)*

Rabbi Jody R. Cohen, N '84,
*Regional Director for the URJ
Southeast Council*

Rabbi Eric Stark, N '99,
*Regional Director for the URJ
Greater New York Council
(as of July 1, 2004)*

**Rabbi Lawrence Jackofsky,
C '69,** *Regional Director for the
URJ Southwest Council*

available in 1980, I applied and was hired by Rabbi Alexander Schindler, a visionary and giant who was my teacher, mentor, and inspiration.”

Elliott Kleinman became the Regional Director for the Northeast Lakes Council after serving as the assistant rabbi at Temple Sholom in Chicago, under

Rabbi Frederick Schwartz's mentorship. Two years ago, he was named Director of Program and works with the URJ program departments in building sacred community in congregations, a task that involves the URJ Departments of Synagogue Management, Outreach and Synagogue Community, Jewish Family Concerns, Worship, Music

and Religious Living, and the Commission on Social Action. He is also responsible for the program at the Biennial conventions.

Richard Address joined the Union in 1978 as the Regional Director of the Pennsylvania Council, after several years of serving young congregations in California. “In the 1980s, I was asked to develop committees having to do with aspects of the family: older adults, bio-ethics, and the caring community program. By the 1990s, it had become clear to the regional directors working directly with congregations that the needs of families were shifting.” He was asked to head the newly created Department of Jewish Family Concerns in 1997.

“I've been on the Union staff continuously since 1975,” says **Daniel Frelander**, who has served as a Camp Program Director, Regional Youth Director, Assistant Director of NFTY, Director of the Commissions on Music and Religious Living, Regional Director for the New Jersey-West Hudson Valley Council, National Director of Program, and, since 2000, URJ Vice President. During the 1970s, he and Cantor Jeff Klepper wrote and performed the music that provides much of the core repertoire for religious schools, camps, and synagogues today. His other achievements include the revitalization of Transcontinental Music Publications, the last surviving publisher of Jewish choral and synagogue music, thus ensuring a creative outlet for new music to be disseminated and the programmatic transformation of the URJ Biennial conventions, which currently attract over 5,000 lay leaders and Reform Movement professionals.

Lennard Thal's career took a slightly different route. After a three-year student internship with Rabbi Charles Kroloff, he was tapped as Associate Dean of HUC-JIR/Los Angeles, a position he held from 1973 to 1982 – pivotal years in the development of HUC-JIR's rabbinical, education, and Jewish communal service programs amidst the burgeoning of West Coast Jewry. For the next 14 years, he served as Regional Director of the Pacific Southwest Council, encompassing Southern California, Southern Nevada, all of Arizona, New Mexico, and West Texas, and represented the Reform Movement to the second largest Jewish community in North America. “Serving as a regional director enabled me to relate as a rabbi in multiple ways, working closely with professional staff and lay leaders of some 70 congregations during a period of exponential growth in the number of Reform synagogues in the region.” Thal's keen interest in the growth of congregational lay leadership and board development for the URJ during those years is central to his current responsibilities: as URJ's Senior Vice President he serves as Chief Development Officer and bears primary responsibility for the functioning of the URJ's Board of Trustees.

Dale Glasser's path to directing synagogue management at the URJ grew out of the combination of both his educational and professional background and his *pro bono* practical hands-on experience. “Working professionally in the Jewish community with Jewish Big Brothers and later as Associate Executive Director of the Jewish Community Centers in Los Angeles,” he

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recalls, “was augmented by my involvement as a lay person sitting on the Los Angeles Federation Board and as President of my congregation, Kol Tikvah in Woodland Hills, California.”

CONTINUING ALUMNI EDUCATION AT HUC-JIR

Lifelong learning is intrinsic to these alumni's ongoing achievements, as alumni return to HUC-JIR for continuing education and doctoral degrees. **Daniel Frelander** points to Dr. Lawrence Hoffman, Friedman Professor of Liturgy, Worship, and Ritual, as an enduring influence on his Jewish thinking. “For 17 years, I and 20 other alumni meet three times a year for an alumni study program with Dr. Hoffman, with whom I've worked on Synagogue 2000 and the Navy Chaplain training program.”

Several alumni have returned to HUC-JIR/New York for the Doctor of Ministry in Pastoral Counseling program to gain enhanced skills for their chaplaincy work. “I was in the first year of the newly-established program, in a group of eighteen Reform rabbis and Christian clergy,” says **Deborah Hirsch**. “The counseling skills I developed were particularly helpful during my years as a regional director. In assisting a congregation in transition, it is often helpful to view it as large family

system engaged in a congregational lifecycle event.” “Entering the Doctor of Ministry program was the most important decision of my professional rabbinate,” adds **Richard Address**. “If it were up to me, after you've been out working as clergy for ten years you should go back for this additional training.”

MENTORING AND RECRUITING THE NEXT GENERATION

As visiting faculty, mentors, and fieldwork supervisors, these alumni provide significant training to current HUC-JIR students, who are placed in internships throughout the URJ during the school year and summers. There, students have hands-on responsibility in developing resource materials and programs that filter into the lives of millions of Reform Jews. “Internships at the URJ, our congregations, and our Movement's summer camps are part of the vital partnership between the URJ and HUC-JIR and reinforce the value of that partnership,” affirms **Daniel Frelander**.

During his thirty years heading the RAC, **David Saperstein** notes, “nearly 20,000 high school students have graduated our *L'Taken* seminars and our college programs, leading some towards HUC-JIR. Nearly a hundred Eisendrath legislative assistants have gone on to become Reform rabbis. That we helped produce the next generation of committed lay and professional leaders is symbolized today by the former Eisendrath LA's who serve as the current President of the CCAR, the Director of the Commission on Social Action, and the Chair of the Commission on Social Action. Some 800 Reform rabbis have gone through our rabbinical student training programs, as have numerous education and cantorial students.”

URJ leaders return to teach at HUC-JIR or to serve on the Board of Governors, Boards of Overseers, and advisory and admission committees. **Jan Katzew** has taught the introductory Jewish education course for rabbinical, cantorial, and education students, as well as classes in moral education and Jewish-Christian relations and related educational issues. **Richard Address** brings family concern initiatives back to HUC-JIR's classrooms, where he teaches courses on the changing shape of the Jewish family and finding your family through sacred text. **Dale Glasser** has served as a fieldwork instructor, supervised interns, and conducted admission interviews.

Furthermore, many of these alumni have directly influenced a large number of students to apply to HUC-JIR's programs and are gratified to welcome them as full-fledged colleagues. They recognize the need to strengthen HUC-JIR's recruitment to guarantee the next generation of leadership for Reform Jewry. In supervising the URJ's youth programs for college students, junior and high school students, and related programs, **Andrew Davids** feels that he is able to fulfill one of the primary responsibilities of Jewish leaders: to raise up disciples.

“Through these programs, Reform youth and young adults are introduced to HUC-JIR faculty and alumni, who model for them a career path that is meaningful, challenging, and rewarding, and are encouraged to bring their talents and passion to the leadership of the Movement,” he says. “We are an important link in that chain, since we know that 70-80% of HUC-JIR students are graduates of our youth and camping programs.” Serious teaching, learning, and relation-

ship building are key. “When HUC-JIR faculty teach these young people, those who are thinking about going to HUC-JIR say, ‘This is exactly what I want and I want more of it’ while those who have not thought about HUC-JIR suddenly wake up and say, ‘I didn't realize what going to HUC-JIR could be about.’” All of these initiatives are reinforced by the URJ Youth Division's robust Internet presence, where Jewish learning is placed in the medium that is most utilized by the new generation; a learning page co-sponsored by HUC-JIR goes out to 19,000 college students on a regular basis. Another incubator for future HUC-JIR students is the new Carmel 'bridge' program for 18-year-olds at the Lokey International Academy of Jewish Studies and Haifa University, beginning this fall, when 25 students from North America and Great Britain will study and work with HUC-JIR's Israeli rabbinical alumni.

Elliott Kleinman encourages prospective students to apply, but tells them “do it not just because you want to learn at HUC-JIR, but because you want to do the work when you complete your studies.” **Deborah Hirsch** urges them “to trust your ability, to acknowledge that there will be challenges and not to let them defeat you, to utilize your own understanding of Jewish values and tap into your own internal strength and spiritual understanding, so that you may move forward, bring people closer, and overcome barriers and prejudices.”

SHAPING THE FUTURE

Eric Yoffie has established the current cadre of charismatic, visionary, and creative leadership heading up the URJ's departments. Through their URJ portfolios, these alumni are implementing

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an intensification of Jewish life within Reform synagogues. “I became President of the URJ at a time when Reform Jews were ready to move in new directions,” he notes. “My task was to prod the Movement along the path it was already traveling and to strengthen the internal foundations of our Movement: channeling the religious energy of Reform Jews who want to learn and study, creating a serious Reform educational system for Jews who care about Torah study that is directed at adults no less than children, expanding our camp system and improving our congregational nursery school network, and revitalizing Jewish worship with prayer that is nurturing, satisfying, and mystical. And to do all of this without abandoning our traditional commitments to *tikkun olam* and inclusivity that welcomes the stranger, the intermarried, and those who are on the margins of our community.”

“Worship is a huge issue for the Movement,” asserts **Daniel Frelander**. “How do we help people from a variety of backgrounds to feel comfortable in Reform worship? More than half of our congregants did not grow up in Reform congregations and come with different expectations. How do we serve multiple generations with one service?” To fulfill these goals, **Sue Ann Wasserman**’s department generates resources that enable ritual

committees to learn more about liturgy, so that they can be better partners with their clergy, and to explore experimentation, change, and growth in vitalizing the worship experience. “How do you bring a congregation as a whole into a discussion about worship and what it means to the community and to the individual?” she asks. “To spark that discussion, we have produced a video so that people can see components of worship in different congregations done differently. What happens when you light the Sabbath candles in the center of the congregation and everyone joins in the singing or when you light them on the *bema* and one person says it alone?”

Shaliach Kehillah, co-sponsored by HUC-JIR/Cincinnati, offers annual retreats for laity to develop a variety of synagogue and worship leadership skills, a program which she hopes will use the resources of the other state-side campuses, so that laity can learn in the context of HUC-JIR’s Rhea Hirsch and New York Schools of Education and School of Sacred Music. The department also organizes *Chadeish T’filateinu*, a worship retreat just for rabbis and cantors, often attended by teams of clergy; participants experience a variety of worship styles and learn new worship leadership skills that they can bring back to their congregations.

Music and its intersection with worship is one specific focus of that department, which has just issued a curriculum for adults and older youths, entitled “*Divrei Shir*,” in cooperation with the American Conference of Cantors. **Alane Katzew** explains, “This survey of the origins and development of Reform synagogue music will enrich congregants’ understanding

of the role of music in a community and encourage them to develop a broader repertoire embracing the breadth and depth of Jewish music.”

“We are part of a concerted effort to raise the standard of learning in the Reform Movement,” says **Jan Katzew**, whose department’s educational initiatives target all generations of Reform Jews. “The ultimate goal is to instill in Reform Jewry common understandings, values, and a recognition of Reform’s authenticity – an authenticity that did not start in Germany in 1810 but in the book of Deuteronomy. We have to demonstrate that in the free marketplace of ideas we have compelling, cogent, beautiful, powerful, worthy, and holy ideas.” He is focusing on the youngest of Reform Jews, with Nancy Bossov, NYSOE ’92, tapped as the first full-time director of early childhood education. His department recently sponsored the fourth annual conference for 80 early childhood directors from throughout North America who are educating the 25,000 youngsters who will one day become members and leaders of the Reform Movement. The CHAI curriculum, a monumental initiative providing materials and resources for students, faculty, parents, families, education committees, and synagogue boards, relies on the education faculty of HUC-JIR as readers to ensure that the materials have integrity and utility. In addition, over 16,000 people now receive a daily email of “Ten Minutes of Torah” with a different focus for each day of the week: the weekly Torah portion, social justice, Israel, ethics, and the Jewish world.

Andrew Davids sees a growing interest on the part of young adults, whether teenagers or col-

lege students, to be more informed about Reform Judaism so that they may ground their own choices about ritual and practice in serious, liberal Jewish learning. “Our best kids are hungry for things beyond the simple Bible stories from Genesis. They’re hungry for Mishnah, Talmud, Jewish mysticism, and philosophy. Our Movement must respond in an effective way, or our most serious youngsters will look elsewhere.” He also points to the fact that these young people are interested in relationships, “where someone further along the path is willing to build an authentic, personal connection and bring to the conversation the keys to accessing texts and traditions in a thoughtful, Reform way. They are a passionate, committed generation, but we have to give them the means to anchor their energy toward building a vibrant Jewish community – Hebrew and Jewish literacy, and a commitment to Israel and ethical behavior – so that living Jewish lives is how they choose to change the world.”

“The mission of the Department of Jewish Family Concerns, the only department of its kind in any synagogue movement, is to develop, monitor, and implement programs that address what is happening right now in families within congregations,” explains **Richard Address**. HUC-JIR student interns assist in the development of programs and resources regarding bio-ethics, organ-donation, mental health awareness, special needs *bnei mitzvah*, self-destructive behaviors, eating disorders, gay and lesbian inclusion, and other issues.

A new initiative, ‘Sacred Aging,’ provides resources dealing with the revolution in longevity

impacting every Reform congregation, where 50% of the membership is 50 years of age and older. “As the boomer generation ages, there are issues of care-giving, ethical decision-making at the end of life, and the question of how best to utilize the dynamic potential of this age group within the congregation. The ultimate goal is a cultural shift to transform synagogues into a system of extended spiritual families in a caring congregation.”

Dale Glasser's department provides consultation and resources for synagogue administration and management, including publications covering everything from board and leadership training and crisis intervention to legal and financial issues. With the National Association of Temple Administrators, he has just issued a temple management manual, fully indexed, that comes with a CD-ROM with forms that can be downloaded. “Coming out of my training at HUC-JIR and the double masters program, a lot of the work I do with congregations is to understand institutions from a systems perspective,” he explains. Furthermore, “it is enormously gratifying to be a non-rabbi in the URJ leadership, a largely rabbinically-centered organization, to be, in a sense, a lay person, and to represent synagogue management from a Jewish perspective. All of our materials are grounded in text and Jewish concepts in focusing, for example, on what makes synagogue leadership different from being a leader in other non-profit organizations.”

Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch's Zionist mission is to strengthen North American Reform Jews' relationship with the state of Israel, to represent the Reform Movement in national and international Jewish and Zionist bodies, and

to advance the growth of the Reform Movement in Israel. The challenges of reaching younger Reform Jews, many born after 1967 and lacking knowledge of Israel's historical struggle for statehood, are immense. He attests to HUC-JIR's Year-In-Israel Program (see page 4) for revolutionizing the Reform Movement and for “allowing the students to become intellectually and emotionally attached to Israel with a deep knowledge of her people and society and a concern with the relationship between world Jewry and Israel” – an attachment and concern that is later transmitted to their future congregational settings. He stresses the importance of continuing these bonds, formed early in their rabbinical education, throughout their careers and through their support of ARZA as a key instrumentality of the Reform Movement's relationship with Israel. “On a broad level, we've found that the stronger your Jewish education, the stronger will be your relationship with Israel. By and large, the attachment of Reform Jews to Israel is a product of their overall sense of Jewish identity. I am proud of bringing Israel closer to the hearts and minds of Reform Jews and Reform Jews closer to Israel.”

As part of this goal, **Elliott Kleinman** points to a new initiative, growing out of the 2003 Biennial Convention, of working with HUC-JIR in Jerusalem to strengthen the Israeli rabbinical program and to develop new roles for the graduates after their ordination, “so that the liberal, pluralistic Reform Movement in Israel can foster new congregations, communities, and educational programs.”

The spirit of diversity and innovation continues to mark **Aron**

Hirt-Manheimer's editorial work for *Reform Judaism* magazine, which examines what it means to be a Reform Jew today and whose readers spend an average of 64 minutes with it – more than *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The Economist*, and *The New Yorker*. His mission is “to continually challenge myself, not to become complacent, so that each issue is full of exploration and surprise, and offering new points of view.”

David Saperstein expresses one urgent wish: “Our rabbis (and often our cantors) are the social justice professionals in most synagogues; they will need the programming and community relations skills to build strong programs. Rabbis will preach and teach throughout their careers on the great social issues of the day and they will need access to sources of primary texts, Jewish legal perspectives, and the rich lessons of the history of the Jewish people whose social welfare institutions as far back as two millenia have been one of our richest treasures. Often in smaller communities, they serve as the leading Jewish community relations professional in the community. Leaders of churches and racial and ethnic minorities will turn to them to build coalitions; elected officials and media will turn to them, as well. They need the training and skills to know how to respond effectively – and appropriately. There is more that HUC-JIR can do to provide such training – and more that the RAC and HUC-JIR can do in tandem in the form of continuing education. Together we can train the current and coming generations of our community's leaders to carry on our most precious prophetic tradition – at a time the world needs such a voice more than ever before.”

A VITAL PARTNERSHIP

The alumni leaders of the URJ agree that the future of the Reform Movement depends on the alliance of the URJ, HUC-JIR, the CCAR, and all the other professional arms and affiliates in a Movement-wide effort supporting a common cause. They look to the College-Institute as the essential partner for obvious reasons. “The study of Torah and text is the primary building block of the URJ's program and is at the heart of our aspiration to be a holy people,” says **Eric Yoffie**. “The great teachers of Torah in our Movement are to be found at HUC-JIR, which is responsible for training the rabbis, cantors, educators, and communal professionals and conveying to them the enthusiasm for sacred text, without which no educational effort can succeed. If the College-Institute succeeds, we succeed.”

Lennard Thal points to three key objectives. “The most recent National Jewish Population Survey tells us that we are the fastest growing religious stream within the Jewish community in America,” he notes. “We must ensure that our congregations and their professional leaders respond to the essential needs of those who choose to affiliate with the Reform Movement since I remain convinced that the synagogue is at the very center of Jewish life and the Jewish future.” As a Movement that is deeply committed to Jewish values and social justice, he adds, “we have an important message to convey to the larger Jewish community through the important work of the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism in Washington, D.C.” As for Israel, “I would love to see in the decade ahead a much deeper sense of connec-

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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.

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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, *menshlichkeit*, 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."