

Supporting Professional Leaders for the Community

The community relies on exceptional professional leaders to head the institutions, agencies, and organizations of Jewish life – from the local Federations and their networks of social service agencies supporting the needs of Jews of all generations and economic strata to the communal, cultural, and educational centers enriching and sustaining Jewish identity. These leaders – schooled in social work, synagogue management, public and arts administration, gerontology, communications management and business administration – are the products of HUC-JIR's School of Jewish Communal Service (SJCS).

“Ruth Ziegler is a visionary philanthropist who understands and appreciates the critical role that Jewish professional leaders play in advancing the agenda of the American Jewish community,” says Richard A. Siegel, Interim Director of the SJCS. “The complexity of Jewish organizational management requires professional leaders with increasing levels of business skills and sophisticated understanding of Judaism and the Jewish community. Ruth Ziegler’s generous contribution to the School of Jewish Communal Service provides critical support and encouragement for the next generation’s Jewish professional leaders.”

Mrs. Ziegler, along with the Ziegler Family Trust, has committed to a gift of \$1 million to provide full tuition scholarships for up to four students, to be known as Ziegler Scholars. This follows a gift of \$500,000, which endowed the SJCS’s Scholar-in-Residence program in memory of her beloved father and esteemed HUC-JIR alumnus Rabbi Louis Bernstein, ז”ל, who was ordained in Cincinnati in 1906. Mrs. Ziegler’s newest gift establishes a “virtual endowment,” which commits 6% or \$60,000 annually from a \$1 million fund that she set aside for the benefit of HUC-JIR. The full \$1 million will come to HUC-JIR as a bequest to permanently endow these scholarships. The College-Institute is deeply grateful to Mrs. Ziegler, not only for her generosity, but also for introducing a new model of giving.

Mrs. Ziegler is helping to offset the high cost of tuition for future communal service professionals. Most students at the SJCS enroll in dual degree programs with the University of Southern California, in a unique academic partnership with HUC-JIR’s Los Angeles campus – a partnership that makes the SJCS program highly desirable in the field of professional training. These students make the commitment to register in both schools and enroll in expanded coursework, and pay tuition and fees to both institutions. SJCS students emerge from their studies with an average debt of \$50,000. For those Ziegler Scholars, this scholarship support allows them to begin their careers more focused on their work than their debt.

“I am deeply committed to the School of Jewish Communal Service and to the leadership of Rabbi David Ellenson. I am pleased to enable future generations of communal service professionals to pursue their transformational work,” said Mrs. Ziegler.

The SJCS, founded in 1968 by Professor Gerald Bubis, is the oldest and most diverse professional school of its kind. The School’s emphasis on providing students with insights into management and business skills as well as organizational theory and practice has placed this program in a leadership role. Its outstanding reputation is based on an interdisciplinary approach that combines study of Jewish tradition and text with pragmatic, effective tools from the fields of the social sciences and business.

Mrs. Ziegler and her inspirational gift ensure that the Jewish community will continue to thrive with the leadership of communal professionals deeply steeped in Jewish knowledge and values and proficient in best practices.



(From left) Ruth Ziegler, Anna Schwarz, MAJCS/MPA '09; and Richard A. Siegel, Interim Director, School of Jewish Communal Service, HUC-JIR/Los Angeles