

RABBI SALLY J. PRIESAND

Rabbi Sally J. Priesand, America's first female rabbi, was ordained in June, 1972, by Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, Ohio. In addition to the Bachelor of Hebrew Letters and the Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters, she holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the University of Cincinnati. In 1973, she was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from Florida International University, and in 1997, an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from HUC-JIR.

Upon ordination, Rabbi Priesand accepted a position at Stephen Wise Free Synagogue in New York City where she served for seven years, first as Assistant Rabbi and then as Associate Rabbi. From 1979-1981, she was Rabbi of Temple Beth El in Elizabeth, New Jersey and also served as Chaplain at Manhattan's Lenox Hill Hospital. From 1981-2006, she served as Rabbi of Monmouth Reform Temple in Tinton Falls, New Jersey. In 2006, she retired, becoming Rabbi Emerita.

Rabbi Priesand's commitment to all things Jewish, to the cause of justice and peace, to equal opportunity for women, to the needs of the hungry and the homeless, and to the survival of Israel is reflected in her many organizational affiliations. She is a member of the Women of Reform Judaism, Jewish Women International, Hadassah, the National Council of Jewish Women, the National Organization for Women and the National Breast Cancer Coalition. She was a Founding Member of ARZA (Association of Reform Zionists of America) and has served on the Executive Board of both the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Union for Reform Judaism. She also served as a member of the Board of Governors of HUC-JIR, as President of the Rabbinic Alumni Association, and for three years as editor of the CCAR Newsletter.

In her local community, she is an Honorary Vice President of the Jewish Federation of Greater Monmouth County and President of Interfaith Neighbors, an organization whose primary purpose is to provide rental assistance and support services for the working poor. She is a former chair of the membership committee of the Center for Holocaust, Human Rights and Genocide Education (CHHANGE) at Brookdale Community College, is an active supporter of the Jewish Heritage Museum of Monmouth County and works closely with Planned Parenthood on both the local and national level.

Rabbi Priesand is the author of JUDAISM AND THE NEW WOMAN and a contributor to WOMEN RABBIS: EXPLORATION AND CELEBRATION as well as A TREASURY OF FAVORITE SERMONS BY LEADING AMERICAN RABBIS. She is featured in numerous books including RABBIS: THE MANY

FACES OF JUDAISM and FIFTY JEWISH WOMEN WHO CHANGED THE WORLD.

She is the recipient of many awards and honors. These include being given, in 1991, the Woman of Leadership Award by the Monmouth Council of Girl Scouts. In 1993, she received the Woman Who Dares Award from the National Council of Jewish Women in celebration of its centennial. In 1997, her colleagues bestowed upon her Honorary Membership in the Central Conference of American Rabbis. That same year, the Women's Rabbinic Network initiated a fundraising campaign for the establishment of the Rabbi Sally J. Priesand Visiting Professorship of Jewish Women's Studies at HUC-JIR. She also received a Distinguished Alumnae Award from the Alumni Association of the University of Cincinnati and its Friends of Women's Studies, and in 2002, she was inducted into the Hall of Fame of her high school in Fairview Park, Ohio.

More recently, she was one of twenty women honored by the Jewish Women's Archive and the UJC National Women's Philanthropy in conjunction with the exhibit FROM HAVEN TO HOME at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. In 2009, she received the Elizabeth Blackwell Award from Hobart and William Smith Colleges, the Distinguished Alumni Award from the McMicken College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Cincinnati and the Myrtle Wreath Award from the Southern New Jersey Region of Hadassah. In 2010, in honor of its 125th anniversary, GOOD HOUSEKEEPING MAGAZINE named her one of 125 women who changed our lives and our world. In 2013, she was honored by the Center for Holocaust, Human Rights and Genocide Education (CHHANGE) at Brookdale Community College at its annual awards dinner.

Rabbi Priesand, a native of Cleveland, Ohio, lives in Ocean Township, New Jersey, together with her Boston Terrier, Shadow. Her hobbies include photography and abstract watercolor. She often exhibits in the Monmouth Festival of the Arts and in the spring of 2002, in honor of the thirtieth anniversary of her ordination, she had her first solo exhibition in the Backman Gallery at HUC-JIR in New York. In 2007, she invited her female rabbinic colleagues of all denominations to join her in donating their professional and personal papers to the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, Ohio, in order to document the history of women in the rabbinate. The first ever exhibit of the historical memorabilia of her career was displayed at the Jewish Heritage Museum of Monmouth County in the winter of 2010.