

PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

Association of Jewish Libraries — Life Membership Award, 1990*

Presented to Herbert C. Zafren,
Director of Libraries
Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion

Linda Lerman
Yale University
New Haven, CT

Herbert C. Zafren, introducing you tonight as a recipient of the Association of Jewish Libraries' Life Membership Award is a task I am delighted to perform. It is an honor to pay tribute to one's teacher and mentor. Tonight, the Association acknowledges just a few of your many achievements within the field of Judaica librarianship, and especially as a founder of AJL.

Herb, you have been responsible for reshaping the concept of Judaica librarianship, fusing modern, scientific techniques of administration and automation with the needs of traditional Judaica libraries. You have created new Judaica bibliographical publications, as editor since 1953 of *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*, and also, since 1969, as editor of the monographic series *Bibliographica Judaica*. One of the volumes in the series received the AJL Reference Book Award in 1988 (Brisman, 1987).

Together with Jacob Rader Marcus, Director of the American Jewish Archives, you created the American Jewish Periodical Center and have been its Co-Director since 1980. Under your editorship, several guides to the holdings of the Center have been published. The latest augmented edition, appearing in 1984, bears the title: *Jewish Newspapers and Periodicals on Microfilm available at the American Jewish Periodical Center* ([HUC. AJPC], 1984). Long before the profession was addressing issues of preservation, you provided a model.

*Award presented at the Banquet of the Association of Jewish Libraries' 25th annual convention, Jerusalem, July 5, 1990 (13 Tammuz 5750).

Ease of access to the entire Hebrew Union College Library collection has been facilitated by the published book catalog of the Klau Library ([HUC. Klau], 1964), Judaica records on OCLC since its inception in 1967, microform supplements of the Hebrew titles ([HUC. Klau], 1981-1985), and now Hebraica records on RLIN. The Library's generous circulation policies, including interlibrary loan, have benefited countless scholars and libraries internationally.

Herb, you have been active in numerous organizations related to Judaica bibliography or librarianship, such as the Council of Archives and Research Libraries in Jewish Studies (which you served two non-consecutive terms as President), the Judaica Conservancy Foundation (Zafren, 1989), and the Society of Jewish Bibliophiles.

In addition, you have made the time to pursue your own research interests in the history of Hebraic printing, which has resulted in articles like "Dyhernfurth and Shabtai Bass: a typographic profile" (Zafren, 1971), "Early Yiddish Typography" (Zafren, 1986), and many others.

Consistently, you have demonstrated concern for the needs of Judaica librarians, both those in research and special libraries and those in schools and synagogues. As the AJL History documents, it was through Herb Zafren's efforts (beginning in 1963) that the Jewish Library Association (of synagogue librarians) and the Jewish Librarians Association (of research libraries) merged in 1965 (Posner, 1991, p. 111-112).

Herb, you are a distinguished Past President of this Association, having held office from 1965 to 1966, and you have always been available to AJL

administrations for advice and assistance, which I hope will continue. Not once, but twice under your chairmanship, Cincinnati has hosted the Annual AJL convention.

Your philosophy of librarianship is apparent in the manner in which you managed the Klau Library staff and directed the four libraries of HUC - JIR and their impressive collections, as well as through your involvement in a wide variety of professional organizations.

It is a philosophy of mutual respect and caring for all who staff Judaica libraries. It is a philosophy that not only made this organization possible, but has remained its guiding principle.

This evening, at the Association's celebration of its twenty-fifth anniversary, coinciding with your fortieth anniversary at the Hebrew Union College Library, the Association of Jewish Libraries presents to Herbert C. Zafren its Life Membership Award.

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Linda P. Lerman, *Judaica Curator, Yale University, is President of the Association of Jewish Libraries (1990-1992), and former Judaica Librarian at the HUC-JIR Klau Library (Cincinnati, 1976-1979).*

An Open Letter to the Members of AJL

August 8, 1990

Lest the point of this letter be lost in too many words, let me record right at the start my happiness and thanks at being selected for the AJL Life Membership Award.

At the banquet in Jerusalem, when the Award was presented so beautifully and eloquently, I was literally speechless; that is, on good advice, I had not prepared a speech. I could not have known ahead of time what would be said or how the official certificate would read. Now that I do know, it is still not easy to "respond."

I knew in advance, of course, that I had been chosen for the honor; and I suspected that there was to be a tie-in with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Association of Jewish Libraries because I had been a founder and its first president. I am inordinately proud of my involvement, as a catalyst, in the merger of two earlier organizations into AJL and of my activity over the years in the profession. But it must be said that much recognition is due those who founded and led those earlier groups, the many who helped to shape AJL twenty-five years ago, and those who have, through the years, turned AJL into the significant professional vehicle that it is today.

About all I was able to blurt out at the banquet – overwhelmed as I was with emotion – was thanks and a comment that suggested that I have a kind of parental feeling towards AJL itself and towards many of the younger people with whom I have worked in AJL, in the Libraries of Hebrew Union College, and in a large variety of professional undertakings. But I have also learned much from my "children" and colleagues, past and present, just as I learned from my mentors in my earlier years.

As we celebrate AJL's twenty-five years, I am delighted that you tendered me a Life Achievement Award, as I also celebrate my fortieth anniversary at HUC and my sixty-fifth birthday. I feel very comfortable about the future of our profession, as outstanding people like Linda Lerman, incoming President of the Association, take over leadership and build new strength in Judaica librarian-

ship. It has been heartening to be recognized for my life's activities, and it is heartening to feel hopeful about the future.

Sincerely,

Herbert C. Zafren

NEWMAN

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Book Received

Constructive and Destructive Uses of Film as Propaganda: Case Studies from Jewish History, [by] Marilyn Gold Koolik, Director, Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Library, 1992. 25 p. (The Max and Irene Engel Levy Memorial Lecture, October 10, 1991.)

The author of this pamphlet is one of the contributors to the proceedings of the conference on Jewish film, which is reviewed above.