

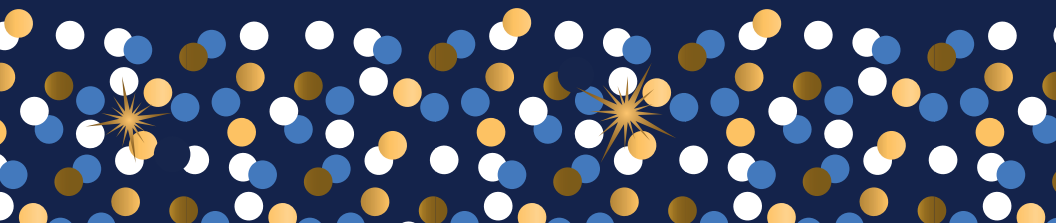


WRJ WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT
AWARDS

Program Guide



FRIDAY | MAY
13 | 2022





Welcome to Women of Reform Judaism's 2022 Women's Empowerment Awards Event!

For more than a century, WRJ's mission is to bring women together for sisterhood, spirituality, and social justice, particularly around issues concerning women. WRJ is proud to recognize and celebrate strong women: women who demand to be heard, advocate for change, and help others find their voices. We are dedicated to advancing women's leadership and recognizing the extraordinary role models who live their Jewish values, promote *tikkun olam* (healing the world), and create community, connection, and safe spaces for us all. This year, we are honored to present the Women's Empowerment Award to 12 women who have dedicated their lives to activism by raising awareness and speaking out about women's issues in the Reform Jewish Movement and beyond. These women make a difference and help change lives every day through their strength, dedication, compassion, and hard work.

Congratulations to our 2022 Women's Empowerment Award honorees! Please take a few minutes to read their stories in this program. We hope this event will inspire you to engage with us as we mobilize our network of Jewish women for collective action, education, programming, and philanthropy.

Thank you for attending this incredible event. Your support allows WRJ to continue to empower women and communities and to reach more women seeking sisterhood, spirituality, and social social justice. We are honored to have had the opportunity to lead this event and are so grateful to our staff, Board, and members for making it possible.

We hope you enjoy the captivating learning sessions and celebrations that have been planned and become inspired by the empowered women we are honoring today.

Sara B. Charney
WRJ President

Lynn Magid Lazar and Betsey Hurwitz Schwab
WRJ Women's Empowerment Awards Event Co-Chairs

Lillian Silver
WRJ Vice President of Philanthropy

Thank you to our WRJ Staff!

Natalie Boles, Philanthropy Associate

Amanda Feldman, Manager of Events & Leadership

Rabbi Marla J. Feldman, Executive Director

Kate Franklin, Communications and Programs Associate

Joshua Freedman, Administrative Assistant

Elisa Heisman, Manager of Marketing & Communications

Lillie Heyman, WRJ/RAC Legislative Assistant

Heather Lorgeree, Manager of Engagement

Liz Rosenblum, Manager of Operations

Shari Schulner, Manager of Philanthropy

Bayley Swain, Administrative Assistant

Kol HaKavod to this incredible team.

**Learn more about Women of Reform Judaism
on our website at www.wrj.org**

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EVENT SCHEDULE

WORKSHOP BLOCK ONE: 2:00-3:00PM ET

Choose one:

Lay Leaders Making an Impact and Inspiring Others to Join in the Work

A panel discussion with:

- Becky Markowitz, member of Shir Ami, Newtown, PA
- Julia Weinstein, member of Wilshire Boulevard Temple, Los Angeles, CA
- Ronnie Cook Zuhlke, member of Temple Sinai, Pittsburgh, PA

Moderator: Shoshana Dweck, WRJ VP of Advocacy, and member of Temple Shaaray Tefila, Bedford Corners, NY

Leading from the Pulpit or the Podium: Using Your Position to Inspire and Create Social Change

A panel discussion with:

- Ellen Cohen, member of Congregation Beth Israel, Houston, TX
- Rabbi Susan Shankman, Washington Hebrew Congregation, Washington, D.C.

Moderator: Susan C. Bass, Immediate Past President of WRJ, and member of Congregation Beth Israel, Houston, TX

WORKSHOP BLOCK TWO: 3:30-4:15PM ET

Choose one:

Educating & Championing Inclusivity in our Reform Communities

A conversation with:

- Marra B. Gad, author/speaker
- Liz Dunst, social justice champion, and member of Temple Sinai, Washington, D.C.

Moderator: Blair C. Marks, Past President of WRJ, and member of Temple Kol Emeth, Marietta, GA



Empowered Millennials: Defining Our Future

A panel discussion with:

- Eliana Rubin, HUC student and trans-advocate and ally from Los Angeles, CA
- Rachel Schulties, COO of Marketsmith, Inc. and member of Barnert Temple in Franklin Lakes, NJ
- Tani Prell, 18 Doors Chicago Director, and member of Congregation Etz Chaim in Chicago, IL

Moderator: Barbara Weinstein, Associate Director of The Religious Action Center and Director of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism

VIP EXPERIENCE: 4:30-5:00PM ET

Private fireside chat with Dana Bash, CNN Chief Political Correspondent, and member of Temple Micah, Washington, D.C.

Moderated by Lynn Magid Lazar and Betsey Hurwitz-Schwab, Women's Empowerment Awards Co-Chairs

This program is for those who purchased VIP passes and sponsorships.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS, AWARDS, AND CONCERT: 5:15-7:00PM ET

- Welcome
- Dana Bash, CNN Chief Political Correspondent & Honoree
- Rabbi Marla J. Feldman, Executive Director of WRJ and Honoree
- Honoree Celebration Videos
- Concert with Fourtelling



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Thank you to all of the event attendees for your support!

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Dana Bash

Dana Bash is CNN's Chief Political Correspondent and co-anchor of State of the Union with Jake Tapper and Dana Bash, the network's Sunday morning newsmaker show. Bash is based in Washington, D.C., where she covers both campaigns and Congress and regularly serves as a moderator for CNN's political town hall specials.

Dana is a member of Temple Micah, a Reform synagogue, and her son attends one of URJ's many summer camps. Dana was born and raised as part of the Reform Jewish community and her Jewish roots run deep. Her mother is an educator and author on Jewish issues and received her master's degree at Hebrew Union College. Her grandparents escaped Nazi-occupied Europe and made their way to America in 1941, two months before Pearl Harbor.

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Ellen Cohen

A 50+ year breast cancer survivor, Ellen founded a self-help post-mastectomy group – Reach to Recovery of Canada – the first of its kind in the country. When she moved to Texas, she worked as the executive director of the American Jewish Committee where she fostered understanding and tolerance across diverse religious and business communities. She also served as President and CEO of the Houston Area's Women's Center for 18 years. As a State Representative in the Texas State House, Ellen passed major legislation for cancer research and to support adult and child survivors of sexual assault. Most recently, she completed eight years on the Houston Texas City Council – the last year as Mayor Pro Tem. Her leadership roles have included serving on various non-profit boards in Houston and being appointed by President Bill Clinton to the National Violence Against Women Advisory Council. Throughout her career, Ellen's work has been driven by her Jewish values around human dignity and *tikkun olam*.

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Isabel "Liz" Dunst

Liz Dunst is a member of Temple Sinai Women of Reform Judaism in Washington, D.C. She is an honored recipient of their Women of the Year award. Liz is a champion of social justice, encouraging action through her sisterhood and her work on URJ's North American Board, the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, and more. She uplifts the efforts of others and inspires the next generation to step up with her while actively supporting the initiatives that mean the most to her, particularly through her work with the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.

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Rabbi Marla J. Feldman

Rabbi Marla J. Feldman is marking 10 years as the Executive Director of WRJ and 20 years as a leader in the Reform Movement. She has been with WRJ since 2012, having previously served as the Director of Development for the URJ and Director of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism. Feldman is a Reform rabbi (HUC-JIR, New York) and lawyer (JD, Univ. of Fla). Previously, Rabbi Feldman worked in the Jewish community relations field in Detroit and Delaware and served Reform congregations in Sarasota and Orlando, Florida. Rabbi Feldman has authored Reform Movement action manuals and published modern midrash, and her articles have appeared in numerous publications and newspapers.

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Marra B. Gad

Marra B. Gad is an award-winning author, speaker, and independent writer/producer. As president of Egad! Productions, she oversees the development and production of scripted television series and films. A grateful child of adoption, Marra speaks internationally about her own transracial adoption in 1970 and her experiences being Black/White biracial and Jewish through the lens of her debut memoir, *THE COLOR OF LOVE: A Story of a Mixed-Race Jewish Girl*, winner of the 2020 Midwest Book Award for Autobiography/Memoir.

Marra holds a BA from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and an MA in Jewish History from Baltimore Hebrew Institute at Towson University. She is a member of Soho House's inaugural Inclusivity Board and a 2021 nominee for the University of Illinois Alumni Association Award for Diversity and Inclusion.

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Becky Markowitz

Becky Markowitz has a great deal of energy and passion for her professional and volunteer work. She served on the WR Executive Committee and Board and is a past president and long-time board member of WRJ's Atlantic District and past president of Shir Ami Congregation. Becky currently co-chairs WRJ's Chai Society, and she is a member of Ner Tamid, WRJ's legacy society. She was the chair of WRJ's 2020 Holiday Auction and several major fundraiser celebrations at Shir Ami. Becky brings extensive experience in sales, public speaking, management, and marketing to her volunteer roles. She is a top-producing realtor and trainer for Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Fox & Roach. She is the co-chair in her office for Fox & Roach/Trident charities. Giving back and believing that by working together we can make change and leave the world a better place is at the core of everything she does. Leading by example is her trademark.

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Tani Prell

Tani Prell is a member of Congregation Etz Chaim in Chicago, IL. Currently, she is the Chicago Director at 18 Doors, an organization that empowers people in interfaith relationships to engage in Jewish life. Tani has been a long-time leader in the Reform Movement: 2018 JewV'Nation fellow in the JOC Cohort; North American Board of the Union of Reform Judaism member; member of the Task Force on Governance and The DEILS Implementation Workgroup, to name a few. Additionally, she sat on the associate board of Urban Gateways, which helps provide arts education resources and programming to schools in need, an issue on which she is passionate.

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Eliana Rubin

Eliana Rubin has been involved in the Reform Movement since 2018 as a Theatre Arts Mentor at URJ's 6 Points Creative Arts Academy (returning in Summer 2022 as the Artistic Director) and a member of the JewV'Nation LGBTQ+ Fellowship Cohort. They participated in the Klal Yisrael Fellowship, worked with Moving Traditions, and is now obtaining their master's degree in educational leadership at HUC. Eliana is an openly trans-advocate and ally in a variety of Jewish and LGBTQ+ spaces, and their presence both affirms other trans individuals and helps Reform communities be places of belonging for Jews from a wide range of marginalized and often underrepresented backgrounds.

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Rachel Schulties

Rachel Schulties is a member of Barnert Temple in Franklin Lakes, NJ. As the Chief Operating Officer at Marketsmith Inc., a woman-owned and led marketing agency, she has been committed to lifting the next generation of talent and ensuring that all voices are heard and have an equal opportunity for advancement. Rachel has tapped into her professional skills to educate within her local community and support the Reform Movement globally. In addition to her commitment to Judaism, she is particularly passionate about advocating for racial justice and has taken the opportunity to speak locally about her family's challenges as both an interfaith and mixed-race household.

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Rabbi Susan Shankman

Rabbi Susan Shankman has been a rabbi and community leader at Washington Hebrew Congregation for over 20 years. Rabbi Shankman has positively affected the Reform Movement from serving as a leader in her congregation and spearheading support groups to uplifting the wider community, working with CCAR, JWI, HUC-JIR, URJ-Harlam, and more. Beyond that, Rabbi Shankman has advocated for civil rights, starting a SEA Change coalition (Study, Engage, Act), worked with the RAC's Every Voice, Every Vote initiative to get out the vote, and co-hosts "Sister Act Podcast," a weekly interfaith conversation between a Jewish, Muslim, and Christian woman.

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Julia Weinstein

Julia Weinstein is a member of Wilshire Boulevard Temple Sisterhood in Los Angeles, CA. With over 20 years of leadership experience in her sisterhood and over a decade of service to WRJ on the Pacific District and national levels, Julia continuously jumps at the chance to help others and brings out the leadership qualities in everyone around her. Julia acts as a mentor to those new to WRJ to make sure everyone feels like WRJ is their home. As an attorney and member of the bar in the states of New York and California, Julia serves WRJ as its Amicus Brief representative in cases filed in courts throughout the United States including the US Supreme Court. Julia's focus on advocacy and education demonstrates her dedication to social justice and to WRJ.

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Ronnie Cook Zuhlke

Ronnie Cook Zuhlke is a member of Women of Temple Sinai in Pittsburgh, PA. After a career of working in the mine and steel industry, Ronnie has been dedicated to pursuing her social justice interests. Beyond regularly attending her sisterhood's Tikkun Olam Center, she has been involved with PIIN (Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network) for more than ten years and has been a local leader in J Street, an organization advocating for a peaceful two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Additionally, Ronnie is involved in get-out-the-vote efforts, promoting racial equality, and standing against gun violence.

