



Women's Empowerment Award Honorees



Annice Benamy is a music educator, teaching vocal music to children and adolescents in a lower-income school district. She also serves as a cantor at the Reform Temple of Putnam Valley in New York. Her career is focused on urban education as she believes in lifting the voices of all people, especially girls. In addition to her professional work, she is a member of the executive committee of her local teachers' association where she has contributed both as a grant writer and as a delegate to their social justice and national conventions, focusing her attention on women's issues. Annice has also played a significant role in her local congregation, Temple Sinai of Bergen County. As Sisterhood Vice President of Ritual and Social Justice, Annice helps to shed light on women's topics such as

reproductive justice, pay equity, and violence against women. Additionally, as a member of the Women of the Wall speaker's bureau, she has spoken to sisterhoods, women's groups, and congregations in the New York, New Jersey, Connecticut Tri-State area on women's equality in Jewish spaces in Israel. Annice serves on the Board of Directors of WRJ and is currently the WRJ Atlantic District President. Annice is being recognized for her contributions to women's empowerment through her local congregation and career in urban communities and on a national level as leader in the Reform Jewish Movement.



Barbara Gibson BSN, RN, CNOR is a Clinician-Educator for Perioperative Nurses at UPMC Shadyside Hospital, in Pittsburgh, PA. Barbara is also Vice President of Advocacy for WRJ Atlantic District and is active in her local congregation and sisterhood, Temple Sinai in Pittsburgh. She has designed and implemented several learning opportunities for women both in her congregation and across WRJ's Atlantic District, including helping to demystify the operating room/surgical experience. Barbara is receiving this award because she has dedicated her professional career and her volunteer work to help lift up others. Whether she is

working at shelters and soup kitchens, sharing advocacy resources, or engaging in any number of other community causes, Barbara's colleagues share that she is the first person to step up for a project or task in her congregation, inspiring other women to do the same.





Betsey Hurwitz-Schwab is President of H&S Development LLC, where she notably managed the redevelopment of an historically significant building into a mixed-use space and anchor for the downtown area of Cumberland, MD. She was also part of the groups who began, incorporated and secured funding and staff for the Allegany County Child Abuse Task Force and the Allegany County Child Advocacy Center. In 1970, Betsey was one of the first women to enter the previously all-male Washington and Jefferson College, where she came to appreciate the camaraderie of women that enabled a sense of community. After graduating, she worked as

the first woman in an organization for at-risk boys and families and then went on to work at the clothing manufacturer, Little Me, where she established a human resources department for nearly 700 employees and elevated several women to positions of leadership within that department. Betsey continues to make a difference in her local community by supporting education, the arts, and the advancement of women and families. She serves on the boards of many social service organizations as well as local colleges and her synagogue B'er Chayim Congregation in Cumberland, MD. Betsey has thrice been named one of Maryland's Top 100 Women, enabling her to be installed in the Circle of Excellence. She was a founding member of the Women's Action Coalition and arranged for 55 women to attend the 2017 Women's March in D.C. Betsey is being honored for her dedication to lifelong learning and education, her inspirational support of women's advancement, and for empowering others by example.



Debby Shriber is the inaugural Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) Executive Director of Northeast Camps and Youth and the first woman to hold an executive director position in the URJ camping system. Debby served as the Director of URJ Crane Lake Camp for 10 years before being named as executive director. She is a dynamic, engaging, and empowering leader with a passion for exceptional results; her energy and continued success proving that gender does not dictate success in the workplace. Debby is being honored because she exemplifies the influence and impact of bringing your whole self, regardless of identity, to leadership. She has been a driving force behind the growth of

dynamic programming that focuses on respect in relationships, feminism, LGBTQIA+ acceptance, and much more. Debby has a passion for personal connection. Leading by example—without fail—she brings a robust approach to empowering women she works with to embrace their strengths, take chances, and believe in themselves.





Diane Zidman serves on the board at her temple, Makom Solel Lakeside in Highland Park, IL, and co-leads the tikkun olam committee. In 1986, she founded and served a five-year term as president of her congregation's first sisterhood. Her legacy has created 23 years of support for the local women's community and membership in WRJ. She has a certificate of training in Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and is a member of the steering committee at Jewish Coalition Against Sex Trafficking (JCAST) in Chicago. As part of this work, she is involved with Selah Freedom, a safe house located on Chicago's North Shore providing a holistic approach for women leaving sex trafficking. She raises community awareness through presentations on the topic at senior centers, schools, and other organizations. At Lakeside Congregation, she organized the "Gun Violence Shabbat Service" and at Makom Solel Lakeside, she organized a gun violence prevention legislative advocacy campaign. Diane is being recognized for her commitment to making the world a better place for women. From her work against sex trafficking, to serving as an enthusiastic force on the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC) Consultation of Conscience delegation, to forming and leading her temple's first women's group, Diane has made women's issues and needs a priority.



Jill Witkin is a Crown Attorney in the Province of Ontario's Crown Law Office-Criminal Division. She joined the Board of Directors at Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto, Canada in 2017, and has previously served as Vice President of *Kehillah Kedoshah* (Healing Community) and Vice President of Tikkun Olam and Israel. Jill has spent her 25-year career as a prosecutor specializing in child abuse, domestic abuse, and sexual assault, and has worked on the local, national and international level. Currently, Jill serves as Chair of the Sexual Violence Advisory Group of the Criminal Law Division of Ontario where she and her team have made significant improvements in how sexual assault cases are handled. Jill's other major accomplishments include publishing a best-selling book on "Prosecuting and Defending Sexual Offence Cases," traveling to Uganda to educate police, prosecutors, lawyers, and magistrates on how to effectively interview children and lead their evidence in court, and serving on the steering committee for Toronto's first Child and Youth Advocacy Centre, a partnership of agencies in law-enforcement, child protection, health and mental health services, and advocacy, who provide services to children and youth, who are victims of physical and sexual abuse. Jill is being honored for her dedication to social change and legal reform for women's rights and her leadership in changing how victims are treated in the criminal justice system.





K. Riva Levinson is the Founder, President & CEO of KRL International LLC, a boutique consulting firm based in Washington, D.C. providing comprehensive, custom-fit services to bridge the divide between Washington's decision-makers and the world's emerging markets. Her primary area of focus is Sub-Saharan Africa where she has worked and travelled for more than three decades. Her work has included supporting and advising women political leaders including the former President of Malawi, Joyce Banda, Congolese lawyer and politician, Jeanine Mabunda, the first Speaker of the House of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the former President of the Republic of Liberia, who was the first woman democratically elected to lead an African nation. In each of these cases, Riva provided advocacy and assistance, enabling them to be successful in politics and in governing. Riva details her life and

friendship with Sirleaf in her award-winning memoir "Choosing the Hero: My Improbable Journey and the Rise of Africa's First Woman President." She also writes a monthly column on African development and foreign policy for *The Hill*, one of the nation's top news platforms covering D.C. politics and policy, and speaks in the U.S. and around the world about the importance of youth empowerment and women's leadership to the consolidation of democracy. Riva is being honored for her ability to advise and empower women internationally so that they can be effective leaders.



Kathryn Fleisher is studying Politics & Philosophy and Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies at the University of Pittsburgh. She is a former Regional President of North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY) Northeast Lakes and former NFTY North American President. After the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting, she organized a Lobby Day that connected over 100 college students to their legislators. She also spearheaded the Reform Movement's gathering of 2,000 Reform Jews in Washington, D.C. leading up to the March for Our Lives. Kathryn has also worked on developing resources and mobilizing college-aged alumni of Reform programs, on-campus and across the country, to get more people registered to vote and remind them to show up to the polls. This year she founded a nonprofit, Not My Generation, and hosted a

coalition-based gun violence prevention conference for young adults with the goal of furthering an intersectional approach to crafting local gun violence prevention strategies. She is the Founder and President of a new student-run, bipartisan organization on campus, Leading Women of Tomorrow, that seeks to encourage more young women to consider careers in public service, with the aim of bridging the gender gap among public representatives. Kathryn is being recognized for her work in the Jewish community, her dedication to advocating for gun violence prevention, and for her phenomenal leadership in organizing her peers.





Leah Greenblum is the Founder and Executive Director of Midwest Access Coalition (MAC), a nonprofit that envisions a world in which all people have access to safe, free, and legal abortions wherever they live. As a practical abortion fund, MAC helps people traveling to, from, and within the Midwest access a safe, legal abortion by assisting with travel coordination and costs, lodging, food, medicine, and emotional support. Leah is being recognized for her work with MAC, and the compassionate, individualized, judgment-free care she provides her clients. Her work empowers women by giving them agency and control over their bodies and futures. Leah also models leadership, heading the 150+ volunteer strong organization where volunteers have tangible experiences that allow them to plug their passion into a project and change lives.



Lillian Burkenheim Silver works for Eco-Rapid Transit helping environmental justice communities expand their economic viability, sustainability, and equity. Prior to that, she worked for the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles, developing and implementing urban revitalization strategies for under-served neighborhoods. Lillian, a WRJ Board Member, has taken on many leadership roles in her community including being President of her sisterhood and her congregation, Temple Beth Hillel in Valley Village, CA, and serving as area director of the WRJ Pacific District. Lillian is receiving this award for lifting up the voices of women through her work on affordable housing and economic justice, including her recent role as moderator for the "Food, Housing, and Wages" workshop at WRJ's Social Justice Conference 2019. Lillian was instrumental in the planning of that conference, which provided crucial training to Jewish women activists.





Marzy T. Bauer has worked with the YWCA to raise funds from federal, state, and local governments and private foundations to provide housing for single women and victims of domestic abuse. She is active in the League of Women Voters; in the forefront of women's reproductive health, volunteering at her local clinic; a lay leader at her temple, leads Women's Torah Study, organizes and leads her temple's Women's Seder, and serves as the temple's coordinator for the Interfaith Women's Dialogue Group. Marzy established a committee within her temple for social action, called the Tzedek Seekers, which works on community social justice issues. The Tzedek Seekers successfully advised the temple board to adopt the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism's Brit Olam for Immigration Justice. She has also served on the URJ North American Board and the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism. Marzy's work in education has been recognized with two awards from the Kurt and Tessye Simon Award for Excellence in Jewish Education. Marzy is being honored for empowering women both professionally and through volunteer efforts and being the face of Jewish values, traditions, and education in her congregation, Temple Beth-El in South Bend, IN and the greater Jewish and non-Jewish communities.



Rabbi Noa Sattath is the Director of the Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC), the social justice arm of the Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism. She is entrusted with leading the staff of the organization, developing and implementing social change strategies in the fields of separation of religion and state, women's rights, and the struggle against racism. Prior to her work at IRAC, Rabbi Sattath was the Executive Director of the Jerusalem Open House, the LGBT community center in Jerusalem. Rabbi Sattath was also the Executive Director of The Middle East Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow, a nonprofit organization that uses technology to create a common language between Israeli and Palestinian young leaders. Rabbi Sattath is also a recognized leader in the Israeli software industry. She is a graduate of Hebrew University and Gratz College. She was ordained by Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 2014. She is a member of Congregation Kol Haneshama in Jerusalem. Rabbi Sattath is being honored for her direction of IRAC's legal teams to victories in court after attempts to silence women's voices and exclude women from public spaces.





Peggy Rubenstein is deeply involved in empowering women at her local congregation and sisterhood, North Shore Congregation Israel in Glencoe, IL. She also worked for decades as a pediatric nurse practitioner, empowering many economically disadvantaged women and children to be healthy, make healthy choices, and be their own advocate in life. Peggy is receiving this award for her work on numerous women's activities at her congregation and especially for her 12 years of leadership in building the congregation's yearly women's retreat. The women's retreat is led and created 'from scratch' each year by a devoted group of women who study the Torah portion and create educational, spiritual, and social justice programming, and do so with a high level of learning, a sense of community, and exquisite examples of *hiddur mitzvah* (enhancement/beautification of the mitzvah). Peggy created this program and leads a group multi-generational team of women to make this retreat a success. Her leadership on this event encourages attendees and organizers to study, dream and make the sacred event happen.



Rabbi Lea Mühlstein is the Chair of the International Federation of Reform and Progressive Religious Zionists (ARZENU) and serves as a rabbi at Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue (NPLS) in Northwood, UK. At NPLS, in addition to her general rabbinic duties, she coordinates social action and interfaith initiatives of the synagogue. She also helps organize an annual Jewish-Christian-Muslim Dialogue conference. Rabbi Mühlstein was ordained at Leo Baeck College in London. Rabbi Mühlstein is being recognized for her persistent work to bring young women into leadership roles across the world. This includes her work mentoring young women and her insistence, as ARZENU Chair, that each affiliate around the world bring an equitable number of women to global Zionist meetings, conferences, and congresses. In the span of two years, this has had a ripple effect, as almost all ARZENU constituents have newly empowered women in leadership roles and the delegation that the global Reform/Progressive Movement brings to Israel yearly has shifted from almost exclusively men to a nearly perfect balance.





Rabbi Mary L. Zamore was ordained by Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 1997 and is the Executive Director of the Women's Rabbinic Network (WRN). As part of her work supporting and advocating for Reform women rabbis, she is co-leading the Reform Pay Equity Initiative with WRJ's Executive Director, Rabbi Marla Feldman. This initiative works to narrow the wage gap for all female employees of the Reform Movement, creating a replicable model addressing employment interactions for a more equitable hiring process. As a licensed "Safe, Respectful Workplace Trainer," she has also launched WRN's Clergy: Safe Employees and Employers Program. This program

provides safe, respectful resources and trainings to Jewish seminaries to teach the next generation of Jewish leaders to create safer Jewish communities. She is also the editor of "The Sacred Exchange: Creating a Jewish Money Ethic" and "The Sacred Table: Creating a Jewish Food Ethic" which was designated a finalist by the National Jewish Book Awards. Rabbi Zamore is receiving this award for her leadership at WRN, her commitment to pay equity, aiding in contract negotiation, and her dedication to the future leaders of the Reform Movement.



Rabbi Sigma (Sissy) Faye Coran has served K K Bene Israel/Rockdale Temple in Cincinnati since 2004. Rabbi Coran was the first woman to serve as a senior rabbi in Cincinnati. Previously, Rabbi Coran served congregations in Ann Arbor, MI and Worcester, MA. She was also the Associate Jewish Chaplain at Williams College. Born in St. Louis, Rabbi Coran grew up in Akron, OH. Her earliest memories in Akron include stuffing envelopes for the Temple Israel Sisterhood with her mother. She graduated *magna cum laude* from Tufts University with a degree in Clinical Psychology and Biology. She was ordained in Cincinnati at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) in 1993. Rabbi Coran works to inspire Jewish living and is an educator for all ages. She has served as a mentor to many rabbinic students, both those in congregations she led and those who are part of the community on the

Cincinnati campus of HUC-JIR. Rabbi Coran serves on the faculty of Union for Reform Judaism Goldman Union Camp Institute. Rabbi Coran has been involved in several social justice initiatives, including as one of the founders of RAC-Ohio. Rabbi Coran is being recognized as a role model for Reform women rabbis and for her dedication to empowering others to pursue leadership roles.



Jewish Women's Archive



The Jewish Women's Archive is a national organization dedicated to collecting and promoting the extraordinary stories of Jewish women. JWA explores the past as a framework for understanding the issues important to women today; inspires young people with remarkable role models; and uses Jewish women's stories to excite people to see themselves as agents of change.

