

My 50th Anniversary as a Rabbi

Part One: "Convention Honors"

Each year at the conventions of both the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the National Association of Retired Reform Rabbis, members who are commemorating their fiftieth ordination anniversary are honored. This month the class of 1972 will be recognized by NAORRR at their virtual convention; in March the CCAR will do so. The good thing is that the CCAR no longer requires dues from their celebrants. If that were the case with NAORRR, they'd go bankrupt very quickly.

In another *Focus Emeritus* column I'll write about my classmates, but now I want to just focus on the convention itself. It hasn't happened yet at the time of this writing, but being on the program committee, co-chairing the Shabbat service portion, I know what's in store.

We contacted most of our classmates, inviting them to participate. Some have already died. As is said in our tradition, they are now "in the *yeshiva shel ma'alah*, the study hall/seminary on High," and a few of the others are no longer in the rabbinate. My co-chair and I invited more than a handful to be participants in the service. He and I will be speaking, and since it happens to also be the 62nd anniversary of my Bar Mitzvah on that Shabbat, I'll be offering the *D'var Torah*.

When the convention is not virtual the members of the class offer a few words of reflection on their rabbinate. Last year's was also virtual and the way those reflections were presented over Zoom was phenomenal...extremely well-done and moving. We decided to replicate that in our reflections.

It's hard to believe a half-century has passed. What makes it more special for me is that I'm the only one in my class to have stayed with the same congregation for his (ooo, now I can write his/her) entire rabbinate. I'll write about that in yet another *Focus Emeritus* column building up to the very kind celebration Beth Emeth is holding on April 8th for Suzy and me.