

# Rabbi Zamore's Message for April, 2015

## A Historic Moment in Philadelphia for LGBT Progress

In late March I had the pleasure of attending the [Central Conference of American Rabbis'](#) Convention in Philadelphia. I enjoyed over four days of intense learning, prayer, and collegial connection. The highlight, however, was being present at the installation and celebration of my colleague Rabbi Denise Edger as president of the CCAR.

I had the pleasure of sitting on the CCAR Board of Trustees with Rabbi Edger and personally know her as a strong leader, caring soul, passionate voice for justice, and astute thinker. Awed by her talents, I am excited to have her lead my professional organization which is a leading voice in the international Jewish and non-Jewish communities. However, her appointment is historic, as she is the first openly homosexual rabbi to serve as the president of our rabbinical organization.

The joy of Rabbi Edger's presidency is heightened by the coincidence that this convention marked the 25th anniversary of the CCAR's Resolution on Homosexuality and the Rabbinate which paved the way for openly gay and lesbian rabbis to have a welcomed place in our Conference. The installation of Rabbi Edger was a proud moment for her, her family, her congregation, and all the Reform rabbis present.

In her installation address, Rabbi Edger raised many important issues to our community that she hopes to focus on during her presidency. As a community, we were inspired to renew our efforts to affect change in our world. However, it was her reflection on her historic appointment that touched my heart.

Later in the conference, Rabbi Yoel Kahn spoke of his journey from hiding his sexual orientation and living in fear during rabbinical school to finally being able to come out as a rabbi who is gay. While I am proud of how far my Reform Jewish community, and America in general, has come, I was pained to witness the hurt and discrimination my colleagues have had to endure. I also know that many still live with these wrongs every day in our Jewish community, in America, and certainly throughout the world.

At Passover, my family always includes on our seder plate an orange, Dr. Susannah Heschel's symbol of inclusion of gays and lesbians and others who are marginalized within the Jewish community. (To learn more: [www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish\\_Holidays/Passover/The\\_Seder/Seder\\_Plate\\_and\\_Table/Orange.shtml](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Passover/The_Seder/Seder_Plate_and_Table/Orange.shtml).) As we mark Passover this year, I will celebrate the progress made, as embodied by Rabbi Edger's CCAR appointment, and rededicate myself to the work still unfinished to protect LGBT rights everywhere.

Wishing you and your family a very sweet Passover!

L'Shalom,

Rabbi Mary L. Zamore

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