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FROM PERIPHERY TO CENTER

A History of the Women's Rabbinic Network

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When I first wrote this essay for publication in the CCAR Journal *in 1997, I set out to document the founding narrative of the Women's Rabbinic Network (WRN). By that time—twenty-five years since the first woman had been ordained—the WRN had already gained prominence and relevancy among Jewish professionals for its ability to connect and advocate on behalf of female rabbis. Over the past two decades, the WRN has not only continued its proud legacy of advocating on behalf of its members for equal pay and family leave, but has also put itself at the forefront of broader human rights initiatives within the Reform Movement. For example, the WRN has championed the rights of LGBTQ clergy and congregants, serving as a beacon of progressive values for the world Jewish community, in partnership with the CCAR.*

The organization remains a powerful voice within the rabbinical context. Boasting a membership of over 650 female rabbis as of this writing,[1] the WRN represents women serving in all venues of Jewish life, including congregations, Hillels, hospitals, schools, seminaries, universities, organizations, and senior communities. The WRN offers its members a yearly retreat for meeting and engaging in professional, spiritual, and intellectual enrichment,

as well as programming throughout the year. Most important, the WRN has challenged Jews to consider feminist approaches to religious leadership, which de-emphasize hierarchical relationships between rabbis and laity and make all aspects of Judaism accessible to all. The WRN has not only humanized the rabbinate but brought male colleagues along in its pursuit of work-life balance.

Though some of the facts and context have changed since this essay was first published in 1997, it remains an important piece of the historical record and as such is presented here in its original form.

Prologue

One measure of an organization's success is its members' attention to its past. Initially, there is concern with the present, with the day-to-day business of infrastructure and participation. Only after its survival is assured does the membership begin to act toward creating a future forged of shared expectations and objectives. Finally, it turns backward to record its history, to chronicle how it got from there to here, crystallizing into the thriving organization that it has become. In 1987, a mere seven years after its founding and fifteen years after the first woman had been ordained, the Women's Rabbinic Network (WRN)—the organization founded to give professional and personal support to women in or about to enter the Reform rabbinate—developed a historical consciousness. For in that year, the leadership of the WRN had the prescience to establish an Archive Committee with the mandate to collect and preserve documents for posterity. This crucial step illustrates that female Reform rabbis and their professional organization had come of age. As the proposal for the Archive Committee put it in 1987: "We are an historical phenomenon of no small significance, and our organization, therefore, is an important subject of historical inquiry."

So be it.[2]

Early Attempts at Organizing: WRA and ROW

"We used to joke," reminisced Rabbi Mindy Portnoy, "that meetings of the Women's Rabbinic Network [WRN] could be held in the

women's restroom during conventions of the Central Conference of American Rabbis."[3] Indeed, at its inception in 1980, the Women's Rabbinic Network could necessarily yield only a short roster, given the fact that those eligible for membership included the fifteen female Reform rabbis and the nearly sixty female rabbinical students of the day. But the early numbers are in no way indicative of the immense impact that the WRN has come to have on the Reform rabbinate. The WRN has led the CCAR membership to reconsider such crucial topics as measuring success in the rabbinate and the nature of the rabbi-congregant relationship. Many issues raised in the earliest deliberations of the WRN have found their way onto the agenda of the CCAR. According to its [then] placement director, Rabbi Arnold Sher, recognizing "pulpit-free" rabbis, hierarchy in the rabbinate, and the development of a mentoring program are the chief concerns presently facing the CCAR's Placement Commission.[4] And members of the WRN may justifiably take credit for bringing these three important issues to bear. In fact, as its history shows, chronicling the WRN's movement through time is tantamount to charting its progress from the periphery to the center of the Reform rabbinate.

The story of the WRN's birth, growth, and influence is not unique in the annals of women's history. It is only one expression of a major upheaval in popular attitudes about both gender and family to emerge in the United States in the second half of the twentieth century. In 1978, one-half of all adult women were enrolled in the labor force, and as the center of gravity for womanhood shifted from the family toward outside employment, the gender cast of the rabbinate underwent a transformation as well: fewer than one in fifteen rabbinical students at Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) were female in 1975; almost one in three were female in 1980. At the same time, as an estimated 300,000 women enrolled in formal feminist organizations, female rabbis and rabbinical students, too, banded together to share their common concerns.[5]

The first such recorded meeting took place on February 8, 1976, when fifteen female rabbis and rabbinical students of Hebrew Union

College–Jewish Institute of Religion's New York campus, Philadelphia's Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, and independent ordaining organizations gathered to "investigate topics of general concern."[6] Although acknowledging and welcoming the press's powerful role in educating the public about the new phenomenon of female rabbis but at the same time conflicted about becoming the focus of a media circus, those gathered expressed their fear of and pain over the possibility of distortion or misrepresentation in the press. Ever conscious of the novelty of their situation, the pioneering female rabbis and rabbinical students of 1976 sought to encourage more young women to follow in their footsteps, but did so without the benefit of having female models of their own to trail behind. Thus the first formal meeting of women rabbis and rabbinical students was regarded as a welcome opportunity to share concerns and apprehensions among a population of Women's Rabbinical Alliance (WRA) to offer "mutual support and encouragement, maintain communication...[and] work together on problems facing [them]." While two chapters of this "national" organization were to function in New York City and Philadelphia—where, it was explained, "the largest concentration of female rabbis and [rabbinical] students was and remains"[7]—the East Coast originators encouraged their sisters on HUC-JIR's Cincinnati and Los Angeles campuses, along with women in the field, to join their cause.

This friendly action nearly backfired when the Cincinnati students announced that they had established the Rabbinical Students' Organization for Women (ROW—a deliberate nod to the colloquialism "raise a row," according to a founder) as a local answer to the "so-called national WRA."[8] Inclusive of students of both sexes, ROW directed itself to the "development of more open and mutually constructive relations between men and women on [the Cincinnati] campus."[9] Though secondarily interested in issues like the Equal Rights Amendment, legalized abortion, and participation of female laity in the synagogue, ROW sponsored (and continued to sponsor the far less revolutionary GROW—Graduate and Rabbinical Students' Organization for Women) inter-campus programs designed to foster communication

between women and men. The WRA immediately responded with apologies for its audacity, and the rapprochement led to the continued presence of Cincinnati women among the ranks of the WRA and the joint founding two years later of the Women's Rabbinic Network.[10]

Over the course of its three-year life span, the WRA continued to wrangle over issues of self-identity, geographic and otherwise. From time to time, the question of maintaining an exclusively female membership arose, but it was perpetually tabled for later discussion. As reported in the minutes of May 7, 1977, when (then Cincinnati student rabbi) Deborah Prinz—who later became the WRN's first official coordinator—sent her dues for membership to the WRA along with those of her husband (then student rabbi) Mark Hurvitz, the treasurer promptly returned his check. The general consensus was and remained that a single-sex organization guaranteed the trail-blazing female rabbis a haven in which to discuss openly issues of interest primarily, though admittedly not restricted, to them. The range of topics considered was as diverse as it was volatile and as theoretical as it was practical: relations with male colleagues and congregants, dressing for success on the bimah and off, changes in liturgical and theological language, and disappointment over the convening of the 1979 CCAR Convention in Arizona, one of the non-ratifying ERA states.

That female rabbis and rabbinical students needed a refuge while navigating the rough waters of their journeys appears indisputable in light of a report presented in 1978.[11] Upon returning from a Northeast Regional Conference of the CCAR, (then student rabbi) Laurie Rutenberg relayed to members of the WRA that future colleagues met her discussion on "Problems Women Face in the Rabbinate" with the following three questions:[12] (1) How would a woman officiate at the ritual of *hatafat dam b'rit*? (2) What are the women of the WRA discussing among themselves without males present? (3) Is Judaism becoming "emasculated" in that most of the active participants in congregations are women whose ranks will surely swell with the advent and subsequent encouragement of female rabbis? Additionally, some rabbis' wives expressed jealousy over their husbands' working so intimately

with female rabbinical assistants. Given claims such as these, the members of the WRA rapidly expanded their focus on professional support, in the form of combating workforce discrimination, to encompass the goal of personal support for women in the rabbinate.

To that end, the WRA convened a *kallah* for its membership in Princeton, New Jersey, over Presidents' Day weekend in 1978. The charter conference was wildly successful in that the participants, for the first time, found "comfort in knowing that their problems as rabbis [were] shared by others."[13] Besides raising mutual concerns, they worshiped together using *Siddur Nashim* (the feminist liturgy generated by then–Brown University students [Rabbi] Margaret Moers Wenig and Naomi Janowitz), studied halachic texts on *nidah*, devoted an afternoon to the subject of mothering and being mothered, and collected topics to be discussed at future WRA meetings including "the problem of congregants propositioning us, using sexist language, and making sexual innuendoes."[14]

The euphoria generated by the first *kallah* not only spawned a second, but led to the adoption of the conference format as a staple of WRA/WRN programming to this day. Female rabbis and rabbinical students have on an almost biannual basis retreated from the workaday world to out-of-the-way places across North America in order to convene with like-minded individuals at settings ideal for contemplation and relaxation.[15] Exactly one year after the initial *kallah*, a second was held on "Images of the Jewish Woman" with a keynote address by Dr. Arthur Green. This *kallah*, unlike the first, managed to kindle more sparks than heat and resulted, ultimately, in splitting asunder the membership of the WRA. As reported only months later, "New York (Reform women) and Philadelphia (Reconstructionist women) are now virtually separate groups, except for the upcoming [third] *kallah*."[16] The latter apparently never took place. Rather, a final blow to movement-wide unity among female rabbis and rabbinical students was struck when the CCAR's Task Force on Women in the Rabbinate usurped the role of *kallah* organizer from the WRA by planning a separate conference for Reform women

only at Manhattan's Central Synagogue.[17] Although the WRA continued to function for at least two additional years with a focus on feminist spirituality and women's prayer, interested Reform female rabbis and rabbinical students began to channel their energies into the workings of the Women's Rabbinic Network, which sprang to life at the 1980 New York City Conference.[18]

The CCAR's Task Force on Women in the Rabbinate

With travel subsidies provided by the CCAR, thirteen female Reform rabbis joined twenty-three fourth- and fifth-year rabbinical students in New York for a three-day conference in February 1980 under the auspices of the Task Force on Women in the Rabbinate.[19] Recognizing the tug-of-war between professional obligations and family responsibilities being played out in the lives of these women, the conference centered on the question: "What Gives—Home, Career, or Sanity?" While sessions were led by an outside facilitator trained in psychology, participants were urged to move beyond "personal sharing" to joint action that could result in policy shifts within the larger Reform Movement. Thus, after discussing issues of concern and formulating those issues into concrete proposals, the women met with representatives of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods (NFTS), the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), the CCAR, and HUC-JIR to discuss ways of working together toward common goals. The three main pertinent areas to emerge were job placement, inclusion of women in leadership positions in the Reform Movement, and parenting. "We, female rabbis, are not a fluke or a passing fad," declared one participant at conference's end, "but a growing presence in the American rabbinate."[20]

The need to blend this "growing presence" with the existing rabbinical organization weighed heavily upon the minds of the CCAR leadership. In the mid-1970s, the Executive Board established

the Task Force on Women in the Rabbinate to "overs[ee] and facilitat[e]...the complete professional and collegial integration of women as Rabbis."[21] By 1977, Rabbi Sally Priesand—HUC-JIR's first female rabbinical alumna—was chairing the task force, to which all female rabbis were automatically admitted.[22] Implicit in the creation of a task force rather than a standing committee was the optimistic expectation that integration could be achieved in a circumscribed period of time. Some twenty years after its inauguration, however, in recognition of the fact that its agenda is ongoing, the task force became a committee.

In its infancy, the task force functioned mainly as an advisory council of men and women who suggested ways for female rabbis to gain wider acceptance among colleagues and congregants. It was no small matter that a group of men and women set about thinking concertedly about questions of gender and their implications for liberal Judaism. Most agreed that exposure to a woman functioning in her role as rabbi was the key factor in boosting her approval rating. So, for example, in 1977 the task force proposed that female rabbinical students be invited to participate in CCAR conventions, UAHC biennials, and the like.[23] As the entity that stood watch over female rabbis and defended them against job discrimination, the task force additionally implemented a system of "Placement Assistance Teams" (PATs) to prepare and familiarize congregations with the placement process prior to its interviewing for a new spiritual leader. It was hoped that the PATs, which were fully functioning by 1981, would help to alleviate some of the prejudice encountered by female rabbis searching for employment.

At the behest of the committee planning the training for the PATs, leaders of the WRN collected data in the fall of 1980 summarizing the accumulated fears of congregants, boards, and senior rabbis with regard to hiring women as rabbis. The resulting list points out the very novelty involved in being a female professional in the early 1980s, along with the pervasive attachment to stereotypes about women's nature and capabilities. Among the apprehensions cited were the following:[24]

I. A basic fear that women cannot do the job because

a. the rigors of the rabbinate are too great and women too weak for the demanding routine;
b. the *Torah* is too heavy;
c. women are too soft-spoken;
d. women do not know how to, nor care to, wield power or authority;
e. women will need to be protected by the board or senior rabbi in confrontational situations;
f. women will cry at meetings when pressured or criticized;
g. women will create more work for the senior rabbi because congregants won't want to employ the services of women for certain events, plus the senior rabbi won't want to call her late at night, in dread of pulling her away from family responsibilities.

II. A fear that women in the rabbinate will not be able to balance a career and personal life because

a. the first priority will be to family and therefore either when female rabbis become pregnant or husbands are transferred, they will leave the congregation;
b. their work will lead to dissension within their families.

III. A fear that female rabbis are too political, too new, too "in," too faddy so female rabbis may alienate the more traditional-religious and social-segments of the congregation because

1. female rabbis are feminists only;
2. female rabbis wish to attract public attention to themselves;
3. female rabbis will give the same sermon on feminism;
4. in towns where the ordination of women in Christianity is at issue, it may not bode well for the Jews to have a female rabbi.

IV. A fear of the unfamiliar: the untoward aesthetic of seeing a woman carrying a Torah or wearing a tallit and *kippah*.

V. A fear of women succeeding. Women who succeed will reflect poorly on their colleagues. If women can read from the Torah, preach, and teach, the rabbis' duties become accessible to everyone. The mystique is lost. This possibly leads to the breakdown of the hierarchy of the rabbi-congregant relationship.

Indeed, the PATs had their work cut out for them. Through the years the task force has worked closely with the Placement Commission of the CCAR in an effort to eliminate by education and regulation discrimination against rabbinical candidates on the basis of sex. At the same time, it has given several issues involving women—such as parenting leave, salary differentials between male and female rabbis, and sexual harassment—a prominent place on the CCAR's agenda.

The Women's Rabbinic Network Is Born

While the CCAR's Task Force on Women in the Rabbinate was turning the legitimate concerns of female rabbis into policy issues of the CCAR at large, a need was emerging for a separate organization for the CCAR' s female membership, apart from male colleagues. Many women serving in the rabbinate yearned for the kind of sharing of experience that only those in their unique position were able to offer one another. As stated in the report on the task-force-sponsored conference of February 1980, "all the [female participants] agreed that there should be some kind of communications network to facilitate support and contact."[25] Thus the Women's Rabbinic Network was born, with Rabbi Deborah Prinz chosen as the overall coordinator and Rabbi Myra Soifer as editor of the newsletter.

Though exclusively female, from the outset the WRN maintained and acknowledged its association with the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Its very constitution—in both senses of the

word—demonstrates that fact. First, in terms of its population, it was and is a body of Reform rabbis and rabbinical students, defined by ordination from or current attendance at HUC-JIR, or membership in the CCAR.[26] Secondly, the preamble to its Constitution explicitly reinforces its connection to the CCAR, stating: "The Women's Rabbinic Network was created in cooperation with the CCAR Task Force on Women in the Rabbinate." In effect, the WRN could not be primarily separatist, for the professional goals of its membership could and can be met only within and with the cooperation and support of the CCAR. Therefore, while organizationally independent in its pursuit of specific programs and concerns of primary relevance to its membership, it was and is interlocked with the CCAR.[27]

Of course, not all agreed that a Women's Rabbinic Network was necessary. Some among the CCAR leadership feared that female rabbis and rabbinical students were driving a permanent wedge between themselves and their male colleagues by "forming their own corporation." Others expressed concern that women were not being adequately grateful for the good work being done by the task force in their behalf and preferred instead to "carry the ball themselves."[28] This, they argued, would surely doom prospects for women's entree to the Reform rabbinate. Yet the opposite became true as integration continued apace. Only one month after the founding of the WRN, five female rabbis served on CCAR committees; three years later, a woman sat on the Executive Board.[29]

True to its name, the Women's Rabbinic Network functioned early on as a communal bulletin board of sorts for its close-knit membership. As evidenced by the oldest editions of its newsletter, serious discussion competed with information of a personal nature (that is, marriages and births and rabbinical appointments) as women of the WRN attempted to find their pitch among the mostly male chorus of the CCAR. In the interim between the biannual conferences, the newsletter became the bread and butter of the organization. Published three or four times yearly, its pages reveal the poignant struggles waged by WRN members attempting to negotiate the novelty of their situation: "When

signing an official document in Hebrew, should one sign *ravnit* or *rav*?" queried Rabbi Ellen Lewis in the second newsletter. And, in anticipation of conversations that reverberate at CCAR conferences today, Rabbi Karen Fox asked: "What status, salary, and benefits ought to accrue to part-time rabbis?"[30]

Through the years, the WRN has stayed faithful to its goal of offering women a safe environment for discussing issues of importance to its membership. The biannual conference remains the principal vehicle for such dialogue. Whether in formal sessions with noted lecturers like Drs. Judith Plaskow and Rachel Adler or in casual conversation over meals, participants in the conferences vouch for their effectiveness. An opportunity for worship, study, and camaraderie, they are for many the antidote to a rabbinate spent for long stretches in solitary contemplation of the unique challenges facing women rabbis.

In general, considerations of gender have had important consequences for the WRN. Internally, this is most noticeable in the model of leadership it has developed and maintained since the early years of its existence. In particular, the WRN has repeatedly elected to its helm a pair of coordinators who share, with a board of regional representatives, responsibility for daily management and an ongoing agenda.[31] Though not codified as such within the WRN's bylaws, co-coordination has been the rule since the early 1980s. Besides allowing for a fair division of labor, the cooperative arrangement underscores the feminist appreciation for relationship. Externally, the WRN has contributed immeasurably to raising the feminist consciousness of the Reform Movement. When the reality of female rabbis outpaced the system's preparation for it, the WRN burst onto the scene to fill the gap, first on a grassroots level and then as an official arm of the CCAR. By the early 1990s, in fact, the CCAR granted the WRN the right to send a representative to Executive Board meetings, on a nonvoting basis. This means that, in addition to the several women who regularly sit on the Executive Board, one of the co-coordinators is present specifically to represent the concerns of the WRN.[32] Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, along with the Task Force on Women in the Rabbinate,

the WRN has served up for the entire CCAR membership the far-reaching implications of ordaining women as rabbis. Significantly, for instance, the 1993 CCAR Conference featured a WRN-sponsored panel entitled "Changing Models in the Rabbinate," which drew an audience of men and women interested in finding new ways of defining professional fulfillment and success. Indeed, the establishment of a separate women's organization has not engendered further segregation but rather has inspired the CCAR membership to reconsider, and in some cases transform, long-standing attitudes and prejudices.

Paradoxically, as the WRN nears its twentieth anniversary, it faces challenges that are a direct result of its success. As the membership of the WRN has expanded geometrically, numbering now over two hundred, differences in factors like geography and generation preclude the assumption of an easy acquaintance among all women. To take but one example, identifying oneself merely on a first-name basis (as in the early newsletters) is no longer viable. (In many ways, perhaps, the biannual conferences are an attempt to recapture the cherished intimacy of a bygone era.) Although older generations of WRN members may rightfully bemoan such a loss of intimacy, they must admit that it signals an expansion of power and influence on the part of the WRN. At the same time, it is altogether conceivable that the increased diversity of age, experience, viewpoint, and personality has rendered the WRN membership fully as varied as the CCAR, leading to an escalation in the number of subjects vying for a place on the WRN's agenda.[33] Thus, in an ironic twist of fate, as the WRN's goal of integrating women into the CCAR becomes less elusive, the WRN's ability to define itself becomes more elusive. Determining the changed nature of the organization remains a desideratum of the next generation.

Conclusion

During the early stirrings of the feminist movement, women rediscovered the bonding between members of their own sex that had been

the special resource and strength of many generations before them. Capitalizing on that knowledge, female rabbis and rabbinical students joined together like professional women of all stripes to offer a preliminary blueprint for building a web of social relations within a man's world. Over its seventeen-year history, the WRN has created opportunities for what its members call "womanspace"—moments in time wholly devoted to female rabbis and their concerns.[34] Simultaneously, the WRN has reached beyond its immediate membership to its parent organization to offer sensible models of leadership that challenge notions of success in the rabbinate. While raising and scrutinizing issues related to economic inequality and cultural stereotyping in the Reform rabbinate, the WRN has become an advocate not only for women but for men as well.

NOTES

1. The Reform rabbinate is presently one-third female (725 out of a total of 2,195 CCAR members). Approximately half of American HUC-JIR students identify as women, while over 80 percent of Israeli rabbinical students are female.

2. *WRN Newsletter*, June 1987.

3. With regard to Mindy Portnoy's joke, in fact, the meeting of the WRN at the CCAR Conference in Jerusalem in 1981 took place in the Turkish bath. In attendance were four members: Rosalind Gold, Deborah Prinz, Karen Fox, and Bonnie Steinberg. See *WRN Newsletter* (August 31, 1981).

4. Presentation by Arnold Sher at the CCAR Regional Conference of NER, April 7, 1997. Arnold gave credit to the WRN for coining the phrase "pulpit-free" to designate rabbis in non-congregational positions.

5. Statistics relating to the general American populace are from Mary P. Ryan, *Womanhood in America* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1983), pp. 314 and 318.

6. Letter to all Women Rabbis/Rabbinical Students (February 8, 1976).

7. Letter to prospective members of the WRA (September 19, 1978).

8. Minutes of WRA (November 13 1977). It was reported as well that two of the twelve female rabbinical students at the Cincinnati campus had paid dues to the WRA.

9. "Notes from ROW" by Sue Berman in the *WRN Newsletter* #1 (May 30, 1980).

10. See "Notes from Meeting between 3 ROW Members" regarding the status and future of the WRN (January 12, 1980). Note that the ROW Constitution

(March 1980) appears to have been the prototype for Laura Geller's initial draft of the WRN Constitution, which appears in the *WRN Newsletter* #2 (November 2, 1980). Note as well that the four female rabbinical students in Los Angeles in 1976 met to discuss the formation of the WRA. See letter of Deborah Prinz to Cathy Felix (March 12, 1976).

11. Report by Laurie Rutenberg included in minutes of the WRA (April 2, 1978).

12. Of course, the irony is that these questions bolster the very need for Rutenberg's presentation on "Problems Women Face in the Rabbinate" in the first place.

13. *Summary of the Proceedings of the First Annual Kallah of the WRA* (February 18–20, 1978, Princeton, NJ), p. 3.

14. Ibid.

15. The most recent WRN conference was held in March 1997 in San Diego, California.

16. Minutes of WRA Meeting (December 16, 1979).

17. A subsequent and recent attempt to reunite female rabbis and rabbinical students of all movements began over the Internet two years ago.

18. Report on WRA in Business Minutes of WRN (March 3, 1982).

19. *WRN Newsletter* #1 (May 30, 1980). The Report on the Gathering of Women Rabbis and Rabbinical Students of the CCAR's Task Force on Women in the Rabbinate puts the number at forty-one.

20. Temple Bulletin message of Melanie Aron included in *WRN Newsletter* #1 (May 30, 1980).

21. Neil Kaminsky, "The Role and Interrelationship of the CCAR TaskForce on Women in the Rabbinate and the Women's Rabbinic Network," American Jewish Archives (AJA), Cincinnati.

22. Report by Ellen Dreyfus, Letter of WRA (November 11, 1979).

23. Report of Task Force on Women in the Rabbinate, *CCAR Yearbook*, 1977.

24. Paraphrased from the report by Deborah Prinz in the *WRN Newsletter* #2 (November 2, 1980).

25. Report on Gathering of Women Rabbis and Rabbinical Students of the CCAR's Task Force on Women in the Rabbinate.

26. Of course, not all female rabbis and rabbinical students join the WRN. In the mid-1980s, there was a major membership drive, which succeeded in enrolling nearly 100 percent of all eligible members. See *WRN Newsletter* (Winter 1993).

27. See Neil Kaminsky, "The Role and Interrelationship."

28. See letter of Joe Glaser to Neil Kaminsky (October 27, 1980), American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati.

29. As reported in *WRN Newsletter* #2 (November 2, 1980): Rabbi Joan Friedman to Reform Practice Committee, Rabbi Judith Lewis to Sexuality Committee, Rabbi Rosalind Gold to Joint Committee on Social Action, Rabbi Bonnie Steinberg to Task Force on Synagogue Structure, and Rabbi Karen Fox to Nominations. By 1983, Rabbi Bonnie Steinberg served on the Executive Board of the CCAR.

30. See *WRN Newsletter* #5.

31. See Bylaws of the Women's Rabbinic Network, Article ill, Section 3 (August 10, 1995).

32. Note that this arrangement is only temporary. At the end of five years, an assessment will be made as to the viability of continuing observer status for the WRN.

In contrast to the WRN, the NAORRR has been granted an ex-officio position on the Executive Board. That is, the NAORRR has a vote.

33. This was raised as early as 1985. See Susan Einbinder's letter in the *WRN Newsletter* (Fall 1985).

34. WRN Minutes (June 21, 1995).

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