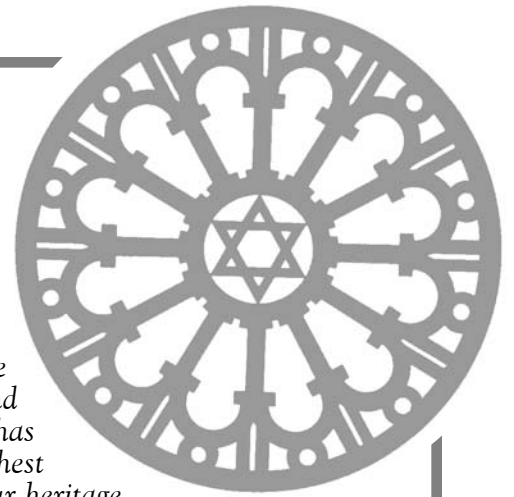


FROM THE ARCHIVES: CELEBRATING "120 YEARS"



For those who attended Temple Emanu-El's December 15, 2006, rededication service, it was an evening to remember for many years to come. Not that this should be a surprise...Congregation Emanu-El has a history of celebrating in style.

Among the Emanu-El "notables" is that of the 120th anniversary of the congregation, which culminated in a dinner attended by nearly 1,000 Temple members in the grand ballroom of the Waldorf=Astoria on December 14, 1965—coincidentally, almost 41 years to the day before the recent sanctuary rededication. According to the comments of Dr. Julius Mark, then senior rabbi, the congregation's 120th anniversary was selected because of the significance of "120" in Jewish tradition. Moses was 120 years old when he died—"neither senile nor bowed down by the years." (*Deut. 34:7*) Consequently, 120 is considered an ideal age, and it has become

common in Jewish tradition to wish a person well by saying, "May you live to be 120." Emanu-El's anniversary garnered attention not only within New York but from around the country—evidenced by many telegrams and letters received. Included among these in the Temple Archives is a letter from President Lyndon Johnson, who so eloquently wrote the following:

It has been said that there are two ways of spreading light—by being the candle or the mirror that reflects it. Temple Emanu-El has kept aflame

the candle of the Jewish faith. And its membership has reflected the highest traditions of your heritage.

As part of the 120th anniversary festivities, attendees were treated to a performance of *A Legacy of Light*, a "dramatic narrative recalling" of the foundation of the congregation. This was not an amateur production but rather one with a professionally commissioned script written especially for the 120th anniversary by Marc Siegel. Professional actors were hired—including New York City native

and actress of stage, screen and television Marian Seldes. It also featured music composed by singer/songwriter Oscar Brand, host of the radio show *Oscar Brand's Folk-song Festival*, which has aired on Saturday evenings for more than 60 years.

While serious in nature, *A Legacy of Light* also had humorous moments. In one scene, two women discuss the congregation's decision to purchase an organ:

"I do love the sound of organ music."

"How will we ever afford it?"

"My dear, how can we not afford it? Have you listened to our volunteer choir lately?"

One other passage of the play stands out particularly, perhaps because of its continued relevance:

How shall we measure the influence for good of Emanu-El? Its impact on Jewish life. Its impact on America. Its impact on the world.



From left to right: Robert Bloch, Dr. Julius Mark, Alfred Bachrach, Rabbi Nathan Perilman, Herbert Bernard, Henry Fruhauf