



# THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

*Preserving American Jewish History*

MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series E: General Alphabetical Files. 1960-1992

Box 91, Folder 5, Tanenbaum, Marc H. - obituaries, 1992.



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"We in the Catholic community ... shall miss his guidance and advice, his constructive criticism and his constantly innovative approaches to improving Jewish-Christian relations," they said. "We shall miss him as a voice of reason and prudence in a world all too often prone to harshness and stereotyping."

Rabbi Tanenbaum is survived by his wife, Georgette Bennett, who is expecting their child in September; three children from a previous marriage, Susan and Michael, both of New York, and Adena of Oxford, England; and a sister, Sima Scherr of Pikesville, Md.

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TANENBAUM July 6, 1992 (820 words) With photo to come.  
INTERFAITH PIONEER RABBI MARC TANENBAUM DEAD AT 66  
By Tracy Early

Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) -- Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, a prominent figure in Catholic-Jewish relations, died of heart failure July 3 at a New York hospital. He was 66.

After a period as executive vice president of the Synagogue Council of America, Rabbi Tanenbaum became interreligious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee in 1960.

From 1983 until his retirement in 1990, he was the committee's international affairs director, but remained actively involved in interfaith relations.

When Pope John XXIII called the Second Vatican Council, Rabbi Tanenbaum saw it as an opportunity for overcoming centuries of religiously legitimated anti-Semitism, and went to Rome as a council observer.

In a 1983 symposium on the late Rabbi Abraham Heschel, his teacher at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, Rabbi Tanenbaum told of enlisting Rabbi Heschel as the chief Jewish spokesman in efforts to secure adoption of the council statement on Judaism and other non-Christian religions, "Nostra Aetate."

He recalled that the efforts included preparation of written statements outlining Jewish views, talks with Cardinal Augustin Bea, first head of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, and a private meeting of Rabbi Heschel with Pope Paul VI.

Rabbi Tanenbaum welcomed "Nostra Aetate" as a "historic turning point" and spent the rest of his life seeking to build the new interfaith relationship it made possible.

His work included periods as chairman of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, the designated representative for official dialogues with the Vatican, the World Council of Churches and other international religious bodies.

He worked energetically and persistently to build ties with Protestants, Eastern Orthodox Christians and others, but gave priority to Catholic relations. In his last years, he worked on a as-yet unpublished book about Vatican diplomacy in relationship to Israel.

Cardinal Edward I. Cassidy, president of the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, told the New York Times that Rabbi Tanenbaum was "a great source of reconciliation and strength during moments of deep difficulty between our communities."

In recent years, these moments included the bitter disputes over Pope John Paul II giving audiences to Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat and Austrian President Kurt Waldheim, and over the convent at Auschwitz, Poland.

Cardinal John J. O'Connor, who had been closely associated with Rabbi Tanenbaum since becoming archbishop of New York in 1984, said his death represented "the end of an era."

"Over the years, a deep friendship developed between Rabbi Tanenbaum and myself, born of honesty and a willingness to discuss both our differences and our mutual goals," he said.

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"Catholics knew him as a man of indefatigable hope who never lost sight of our common humanity, of how much we share and depend on one another and how much we must care," Msgr. Lynch said.

Archbishop William H. Keeler of Baltimore, moderator of Catholic-Jewish relations for the U.S. bishops, praised



# Rabbi united Jews and Christians

By **GEORGE W. CORNELL**  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

## NEW YORK

At an interfaith service at the United Nations, there were prayers by a Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim and Jew. Momentarily, the eyes of the Christian and Jew met and lighted up with mutual affirmation.

"That look said it all," Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum recalled later. "We identified with each other. The words, the cadences, the attitude of our prayers were the same. The others had a different ring.

"But we two were in the same biblical mode, dedicated to the same God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Jesus. In that moment, we recognized our oneness. We didn't have to say it. We just knew it in that exchanged look."

Tanenbaum, one of the 20th century's most influential builders of closer Jewish-Christian relations — often dubbed the Jewish "apostle to the Gentiles" — died July 3, at 66, of heart failure.

His funeral earlier this month drew an ecumenical throng. Among about 1,000 at Manhattan's Park Avenue Synagogue were nuns, priests, bishops and ministers of Roman Catholic, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox churches as well as many noted rabbis and religious scholars.

He "worked to accomplish unity among people," making for a "peace that helped us all," said Pope John Paul II in a message read by New York's Cardinal John O'Connor.

Evangelist Billy Graham called Tanenbaum the "best friend I had in the Jewish world," and said he "did more to bring about understanding and friendship between Christians and Jews than any clergyman I ever knew."

On the wall in Tanenbaum's office at the American Jewish Committee,

from which he retired in 1990, there used to hang pictures of Graham and the late Pope John XXIII, who sparked Catholic reforms of the 1962-65 Second Vatican Council.

Tanenbaum was a key Jewish voice at that council, which repudiated anti-Semitism and the Christ-killer charge against Jews and which also facilitated continued working ties with Judaism and other Christians.

Tanenbaum also had influenced earlier, similar steps by the World Council of Churches, including most major Protestant and Eastern Orthodox churches, and by the National Council of Churches.

"Improving Jewish-Christian relations is not simply a luxury or an academic enterprise of singling out the terrible old chapters of the past," he said in an interview a few months ago.

"The human condition is so fraught with perils to all of us that strengthening bonds of humanity and mutual responsibility is a necessity rather than a luxury."

He said that confronting the "dehumanization and fanaticism" in the world "requires the best minds and hearts of Jews and Christians, not only to respect each other but to trust each other in building a moral consensus to try to contain the demonization taking place."

In about 30 years with the American Jewish Committee as interreligious affairs director and later as director of international relations, Tanenbaum — a lean, square-jawed, six-foot man with gray streaking his brown hair — roamed the earth to heal religious ties torn by centuries of hostility.

"Somebody had to be prepared to take the heat and get the job done," he said.

He was not only a familiar figure at the Vatican, at Canterbury and at World Council headquarters in Ge-

neva, but lectured widely and regularly at universities, military installations and in meetings across this country.

"I literally traveled to every major city in the United States, helping to organize groups, laying the foundation for the most extensive network that ever existed between Christians and Jews," he related.

"In a sense they rediscover and experience a very deep moral and spiritual bondedness. Only Jews and Christians share a common vocabulary of faith. They understand together the concepts God, man, history, the Kingdom of God."

What helped stimulate the movement were textbook studies, with which Tanenbaum was involved, bringing out mutual falsehood being taught, and also the 1963 interreligious conference on race in Chicago, of which Tanenbaum was program chairman. It led to the massive march that year on Washington.

"There was just electricity in the air," he recalled. "It was an explosion of coming together on very deep moral grounds to advance justice and social relations."

Tanenbaum also was a vigorous contender for human rights and world refugees, joining delegations in fact-finding investigations of the plight of Vietnamese "boat people" and organizing relief efforts for Kurds, Lebanese, Nigerians, Haitians, Afghans and others.

An old Talmudic adage that he considered a compass to life goes: "He who saves a single life is regarded as if he saved the entire world."

Added Tanenbaum: "It diminishes the divine presence every time a human being dies."

*Cleveland Plain Dealer 7-18-92*





PD file

**RABBI MARC TANENBAUM:**  
Pioneer in promoting Christian-  
Jewish relations leaves void.

# Rabbi Tanenbaum Dies at Age 66

By MASHA LEON  
FORWARD STAFF

"Why couldn't he have died after this funeral?" posited Georgette Bennett Tanenbaum in her eulogy to her late husband, Marc, at what will be remembered as an extraordinarily moving funeral at the Park Avenue Synagogue. It is hard to recall a time when laughter was heard at such a somber event, but there were moments of laughter at this funeral as friends and family recalled the *mentsch* named Marc Tanenbaum with humor and love.

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, 66, died of heart failure on July 3 in New York. He retired as the international affairs director of the American Jewish Committee in 1989, where he had worked for more than 30 years. He also served on the board of the International Rescue Committee for refugees. His pioneering efforts to foster Jewish-Christian dialogue won praise from the Pope and he has been called "father of modern Jewish-Christian dialogue."

They all came to say goodbye — friends, colleagues, clergy, politicians — Rudolph Giuliani, Robert Abrams, Elizabeth Holtzman, Haskel Lazare, Diane Steinman, Lou Jacobi, Jack Eisner, Randolph Brahm, Lou Rudin and Rabbi James Rudin. Sitting behind me was Hy Levy, who showed me the front page of the June 12, 1940 American Family Magazine of Baltimore with 13-year-old Marc in his graduation photo from the Hofetz Chayim Yeshiva. "Even then he had the face of promise, of one who could help change history," said Mr. Levy.

The speakers included Rabbi David Lincoln of the Park Avenue Synagogue, Rabbi Arnold Turetsky of the Temple Israel Center at White Plains and Rabbi Emeritus Judah Nadich.

John Cardinal O'Connor read condolences from Pope John Paul II, but would not read a hand-written letter from Marc because it was "too flattering," to himself. "I did not bring with me those letters full of harshness and criticism," he added. "Marc spoke with gentleness when he believed gentleness was called for and with firmness when that was appropriate." Then, speaking to Georgette, who is seven months pregnant, the Cardinal said, "To me Joshua [the name the Tanenbaums have chosen for their unborn child] represents the bridge between the Pentateuch of Moses and the rest of Jewish history. It was Joshua who led Israel to the Promised Land and who

fought the battle of Jericho where 'the walls came tumbling down.' It is in the Promised Land where the Lion and the Lamb will lie down in peace. And one day Israel and Rome — and I am not saying which is the lion and which the lamb — will lie down together in peace."

Roy Goodman, the state senator, also addressed himself to the unborn Joshua when he said, "You will know your father of eminent courage from the legions who knew him." As I listened, I found myself thinking, "Poor Joshua, what a burden will be your birthright — and what about Marc's other children?"

Ari Goldman of the New York Times recalled how he lunched with Rabbi Tanenbaum, recently retired from the American Jewish Committee, and Rabbi Wolf Kelman, who had just retired from the Rabbinic Assembly of America. "Usually I throw away my notebooks once the column is done — but I kept this one," he said. Mr. Goldman recalled how Rabbi Tanenbaum told Rabbi Kelman, who was smoking a pipe, "Why don't you try one of these beauties," referring to a cinnamon-stick substitute for his beloved cigars. He recalled Rabbi Tanenbaum saying that, "I can't help believing that if the Jews of Munich and Dusseldorf had had meaningful dialogue then, perhaps the Holocaust might never have happened." Mr. Goldman would later write both men's obituaries.

But it was Georgette who held the assembled guests spellbound as she revealed the personal side of Marc — the man she loved. "Because of our age difference, the odds were that we would never age together and we often talked about death. I opted for ten years with this man rather than forty with another. We were told we were too old to have children, so we decided to have our own 'grandchild.' The only way Joshua will know his father is through videotapes and audiotapes and newspaper clippings. We were so interesting to each other — we brought different things to each other. He brought Popes and Cardinals and I brought police captains," she said, referring to her work as a criminologist.

"Marc wore my father's large European-style tallis...and I would sit in the congregation signalling him to straighten it over the shoulders. When I went out he would say 'You look so pretty, as if you just stepped out of a bandbox,'" she recalled. She spoke of their walks together, of their

shopping together, of making low-fat lasagna together and of grocery lists where between eggs and ginger ale he would scribble, "I love you." When he died a neighbor across the hall hung an Israeli flag with a black mourning ribbon symbolizing the loss to the Jewish people.

Georgette also recalled that the one "toxic issue" they argued over was his study. Her late husband was a compulsive collector who was wedded to the Depression era-mentality, and he could not part with a single scrap of information. "I threatened him, 'The minute you die I will wrap you up in newspaper like your mother wrapped herring and set your room on fire.' It was an incentive for him to live. So he took me seriously

and willed his interreligious library to the Jewish Theological Seminary and the files on the Vatican to Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati." She quoted Rabbi Tanenbaum as saying "When I get better I'll have two Hebrew National frankfurters and a cigar — and then you can set the room on fire." She concluded with: "Our love was such a celebration of life that the memory will sustain me for the rest of my days."

In Rabbi Lincoln's eulogy, he mentioned that Mordechai, the first person to be identified as a Jew in The Book of Esther, was Rabbi Tanenbaum's Hebrew name. Did anyone else notice that Marc/Mordechai had as a last name Tanenbaum (Christmas tree)? Who was more appropriately destined to be that bridge between Rome and Israel that Cardinal O'Connor spoke of....

Published at New York City

July 10, 1992

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# FORWARD



## RABBI MARC TANENBAUM

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, who has died in New York aged 66, made it his life's work to improve relations with the Christian world, particularly the Roman Catholic church.

From an Orthodox background and educated in Orthodox schools, he was ordained by the Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary in 1950. But he never occupied a pulpit.

The greater part of his working life was spent as the American Jewish Committee's director, first of inter-religious affairs and then of international affairs. His high-level contacts with the Vatican led to the quip

among Catholic cardinals that he saw more of the Pope than they did.

He was the only rabbi to attend the Second Vatican Council in 1965, at which the Catholic Church denounced anti-Semitism and committed itself to a revision of the traditional teaching that Jews killed Jesus.

But his contacts with the Christian world, and his occasional attempts to explain it to the Jewish world, brought bitter denunciation from strictly Orthodox rabbinical leaders who accused him of paying too much deference to religions which had for centuries persecuted Jews. Some refused to address him as rabbi.

He was also a well known radio commentator on religious affairs, with his syndicated articles carried on networks across America.

For many Americans he became the spokesman for Jewry.

He was an active member of many groups and organisations working in the field of religion and race relations.

He was also a winner of the International Interfaith Achievement Award of the Council of Christians and Jews.

He is survived by his second wife and three children by his previous marriage.

JEWISH CHRONICLE 17/7/92



# Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, 66; pioneered interfaith dialogue

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, an architect of modern Christian-Jewish dialogue and one of the most widely respected representatives of the Jewish community on interreligious matters, has died at the age of 66.

Tanenbaum died of heart failure July 3 after undergoing heart surgery here last month.

In the more than 40 years that he devoted to forging understanding between Jews and Christians, Tanenbaum earned the respect of religious leaders all over the world for his commitment, wisdom and sensitivity.

He forged close relationships with Christians from a wide range of denominations, including Pope John XXIII, the Rev. Billy Graham and Desmond Tutu, the black Anglican archbishop of Johannesburg.

Some 2,000 people representing many faiths attended Tanenbaum's funeral at Manhattan's Park Avenue Synagogue. Pews were filled with clergy wearing the garb of Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox priests. Among those delivering eulogies was Cardinal John O'Connor, the Catholic archbishop of New York.

Tanenbaum was an indefatigable advocate of better understanding among faiths.

Although he retired in 1989 from the American Jewish Committee, where he worked as interreligious affairs director and director of international relations for 30 years, Tanenbaum continued to criss-cross the country, speaking at universities and seminaries until illness forced him to stop earlier this year.

Tanenbaum first investigated Christian anti-Semitism while a rabbinical student at the Jewish Theological Seminary, which he attended after graduating from Yeshiva University.

His interest, said colleagues, was fueled by his own memories of Eastern European pogroms and the Holocaust. Tanenbaum's parents fled Europe and settled in Baltimore, where he was born in 1925.

He once explained his interest in Christian-Jewish relations by saying that he was compelled to probe how "a church that preached a gospel of love could have turned it into a gospel of hatred and destruction when it came to Jews."

After his ordination as a Conservative rabbi in 1950, Tanenbaum briefly worked in publishing and public relations, and then went on to become one of the first Jewish professionals to devote himself full-time to Christian-Jewish relations.

He worked in the late 1950s as executive vice president of the Synagogue Council of America, a body of Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Jews that represents the American Jewish community in interfaith dialogue, and went to work for the American Jewish Committee in 1960.

A measure of his accomplishment even at that relatively early point in Tanenbaum's career is that he was invited to Rome by Pope John XXIII as an official observer of the Second Vatican Council, which lasted from 1962 to 1965.

He was the only rabbi to attend the proceedings that produced the watershed Catholic document *Nostra Aetate*. The document rejected anti-Semitism and the teaching that Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus.

Tanenbaum hosted a syndicated weekly radio show on religious matters beginning in 1965, and authored a weekly column for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency during the 1980s.



Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum

In 1983 he was the first Jewish leader to address 4,000 Protestant delegates attending the World Council of Churches assembly in Vancouver.

And in the early 1980s, Tanenbaum was a member of an International Rescue Committee delegation that made three trips to Southeast Asia to research the plight of the Vietnamese boat people. Upon reaching the Thai-Cambodian border, he joined Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel in reciting Kaddish for the 1 million Cambodians who were murdered by the Khmer Rouge.

Tanenbaum was also one of the founders in 1985 of the American Jewish World Service Committee, a development and relief agency.

In 1987 he was elected chairman of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, the body that represents the international Jewish community in its dealings with other religions.

And in May 1988, he was awarded the Interfaith Medallion by the International Council of Christians and Jews.

President Jimmy Carter invited Tanenbaum to represent American Jewry as one of 10 national religious and academic leaders to discuss "the State of the Nation" at Camp David summit meetings in 1979. He was also a member of the President's Commission on the Holocaust Advisory Committee.

Tanenbaum's passing has been called the end of an era by many of those who worked with him.

"He really took the declarations and resolutions and proclamations and made them come to life in human terms with an extraordinary amount of passion and intelligence," said Rabbi A. James Rudin, the current interreligious affairs director at the American Jewish Committee. "One of the things I learned from him is that interreligious relations are really about human relationships."

Tanenbaum's commitment was not to good relationships with Christians at any cost, according to his friend of 25 years, Rabbi Arnold Turetsky, but to creating a fuller Christian understanding of Jews and Judaism without sacrificing his own integrity.

"Marc spoke out; he risked his newly gained friendships with the highest-power Christians in the world. His mission was not to befriend Christians but to bring his people to a sense of pride," said Turetsky.

Jewish Telegraphic Agency

JEWISH WEEK  
JULY 10-16  
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TANENBAUM July 6, 1992 (820 words) With photo to come.

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TANENBAUM INSERT July 7, 1992 (160 words)

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The archbishop, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, praised Rabbi Tanenbaum's "knowledge of Catholicism and its struggles in the post-Vatican II period."

"His involvement also in issues of social concern and his willingness to collaborate with everyone to help the less fortunate will never be forgotten," Archbishop Weakland wrote.

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## Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum

RABBI Marc Tanenbaum, who has died in New York aged 66, was, in an unofficial capacity, American Jewry's ambassador to the Holy See.

Relationships between Jews and Christians, even in modern times, have never been particularly easy and the desire to improve them in Britain led to the formation of the Council of Christians and Jews in 1942. In America the work is undertaken by the Department of Inter-Religious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee, which, until his retirement in 1989, was headed by Rabbi Tanenbaum.

Tanenbaum discharged his delicate task with diplomacy and skill and in 1986 he was presented with the Inter-Faith Medallion by the International Council of Christians and Jews.

Marc Tanenbaum was born at Baltimore in 1926 and brought up in New York, attending the Orthodox Yeshiva University. He was

ordained in the Jewish Theological Seminary, where the prevailing ideas were more in keeping with his liberal principles, but he never became a synagogue rabbi.

When Pope John XXIII began to review the Catholic Church's attitude to the Jews, Tanenbaum was closely involved in the consultations and he was the only rabbi to participate in the meeting of the Second Vatican Council in 1965 which formally proscribed anti-Semitism and banned the depiction of Jews as deicides.

Tanenbaum had an engaging personality and counted Billy Graham and several leading members of the Catholic hierarchy among his close friends.

He was also on good terms with successive pontiffs and one cardinal was heard to complain that Tanenbaum saw more of the Pope than he did. His efforts in this field did not excite universal admiration in the Jewish commu-

nity and not a few Orthodox rabbis felt that he carried his ecumenism to excessive lengths and made it clear that whenever he purported to speak for, he did not speak for them. But Tanenbaum was not the sort of man to be distracted by criticism.

Every 10 years he tried to have the anti-Jewish sentiments in the Oberammergau Passion Play toned down. And, with matching regularity, the villages protested that the play was more than 300 years old and change would be a sacrilege.

Tanenbaum's intervention invariably led to an international furor. Some of the more offensive passages were eventually modified. But he brought the play far more attention than it would otherwise have received.

He was an accomplished speaker and could discuss complex theological issues in vivid terms without becoming folksy, which made him a popular broadcaster — when

President Carter brought together 10 leading religious and academic figures to discuss the state of the nation at Camp David in 1979, he was one of their number.

A tall, robust man, Tanenbaum became head of the International Relations Division of the American Jewish Committee and travelled extensively through Central and South America, sometimes at considerable hazard, to deal with the problems faced by small Jewish communities living under dictatorships or unstable regimes.

He extended his remit still further to help any group in distress and went to great lengths to help the Vietnamese boat people, Ugandans, Lebanese and Afghans. His job did not call for such an expansion of responsibilities, but his conscience did.

Tanenbaum had three children by his first wife. His second was expecting their first child at the time of his death.

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## Obituaries

# Marc Tanenbaum, father of interfaith dialogue

New York Times News Service

NEW YORK—Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, a father of modern Christian-Jewish dialogue and, through 25 years of radio commentary, one of the best-known rabbis in America, died early Friday at Lenox Hill Hospital in Manhattan. He was 66 and lived in Manhattan.

He died of heart failure after undergoing heart surgery last month, said his wife, Georgette Bennett.

With charisma and passion, Rabbi Tanenbaum preached better understanding between the faiths everywhere from the Vatican to the headquarters of the World Council of Churches in Geneva to the Christian Bible colleges of America's South.

The son of Orthodox Jewish immigrants from Russia who owned a grocery store in Baltimore, Rabbi Tanenbaum brought Jews and Christians together for dialogue in the wake of the Nazi Holocaust and the creation of the modern state of Israel.

He worked to heal nearly 2,000 years of mutual suspicion and animosity by helping both sides better understand each another.

Over the years Rabbi Tanenbaum found himself at the center of all the major Jewish-Christian controversies, everything from the Catholic convent at the death camp at Auschwitz to the claim of one Southern Baptist leader that "God Almighty does not hear the prayer of a Jew" to the position of mainline Protestants on the rights of Palestinians in Israel.

Cardinal John O'Connor, the Roman Catholic archbishop of New York, said Friday that Rabbi Tanenbaum's passing was "the end of an era." He called the rabbi "a pioneer in Christian-Jewish relations and Catholic-Jewish relations in particular."

Rabbi Tanenbaum was ordained in 1950 and, after a brief period in publishing and public relations,

became one of the first Jewish professionals to devote himself virtually full-time to improving relations between Christians and Jews.

In the early 1960s when Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council, Rabbi Tanenbaum was an official observer to the council and, according to his recollection, the only rabbi to attend.

In terms of relations with the Jews, the council produced a landmark document, "Nostra Aetate," which rejected the idea that the Jewish people were accountable for the death of Jesus and repudiated anti-Semitism "by anyone at any time."

In 1983 he became the director of international affairs at the Jewish Committee, which introduced him to a whole new set of issues dealing with refugee relief and human rights.

In the early 1980s he was a member of a delegation of the International Rescue Committee that made three fact-finding trips to Southeast Asia to investigate the plight of Vietnamese boat people.

At the Thai border with Cambodia, the rabbi joined Elie Wiesel, the Nobel laureate and chronicler of the Holocaust, in the recitation of Kaddish, the Jewish prayer for the dead, for the million Cambodians who died at the hands of the Khmer Rouge.

He was the former chairman of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations, which represents Judaism in talks with the Vatican and other world religious bodies.

He was the founder and a chairman of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, which, until the collapse of the Soviet Union, worked on behalf of both Jews and Christians oppressed for religious beliefs.

Starting in 1965, Rabbi Tanenbaum had a syndicated radio broadcast of religious commentary on WINS in New York.



# TANENBAUM DIES

INTERFAITH RABBI WAS 66

STORY ON PAGE 4



# MADONNA'S MEN

Special book excerpt kicks off  
SUMMER READING Page 10

# DAILY NEWS



40c

NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

Saturday, July 4, 1992

# Rabbi Tanenbaum is dead at age 66

By JAMES ROSEN

Daily News Staff Writer

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, 66, a dominant voice of mainstream American Judaism, died yesterday at Lenox Hill Hospital.

Tanenbaum died of cardiac failure after about two weeks in the hospital, said his wife, Georgette Bennett.

Bennett, Tanenbaum's second wife, said she is expecting their first child in September.

Tanenbaum's success in promoting better relations between Jews and non-Jews made him the most well-known rabbi for many American Christians.

His interfaith work also earned the conservative rabbi the friendship of Christian leaders as diverse as Pope John Paul, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Rev. Billy Graham.

Tanenbaum's Orthodox Jewish par-

ents emigrated from Ukraine, the former Soviet republic with a troubled history of anti-Semitism, where his father's brother had been drowned by a Christian mob.

In explaining his desire to reconcile Christians and Jews, Tanenbaum once said he was driven to probe how "a church that preached a gospel of love could have turned it into a gospel of hatred and destruction when it came to Jews."

Tanenbaum worked with the Rev. Jesse Jackson to promote harmony between blacks and Jews, but he criticized Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan for "uttering the most vile anti-Semitic bigotry."

Born in Baltimore, Tanenbaum made New York his permanent home after coming to the city to attend Yeshiva University at age 15. He was ordained in 1950 at Manhattan's Jewish

Theological Seminary.

Though Tanenbaum never led a congregation, he became one of the country's most prominent Jewish leaders as a weekly radio commentator, vice president of the Synagogue Council of America in the 1950s and an official of the American Jewish Committee for nearly three decades.

As the committee's international affairs director, Tanenbaum traveled the globe: he once half-jokingly referred to himself as "foreign minister of the Jews."

The rabbi was the only Jew who participated in the landmark Second Vatican Council, which in 1965 decried anti-Semitism and banned the Catholic Church's previous depiction of Jews as the killers of Jesus Christ.

His frequent visits to the Vatican led cardinals there to joke that he saw the Pope more often than they did.



Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum

When Pope John Paul offended many Jews in 1987 by meeting with Austrian President Kurt Waldheim — who was accused of participating in Nazi war crimes — Tanenbaum flew to Rome to try to mend fences.

Ever the peacemaker, he also mediated a 1988 clash between Mayor Edward Koch and Jesse Jackson.

A funeral service, open to the public, will be held at 12:30 p.m. Monday at Park Ave. Synagogue, 50 E. 87th St., followed by a private burial at New Montefiore Cemetery, Pinelawn, L.I.



# The New York Times

SATURDAY, JULY 4, 1992

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## Obituaries

Marc Tanenbaum,  
Jewish Leader,  
Dies at 66

## Obituaries

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, father of  
modern Christian-Jewish dialogue

**TANENBAUM**—Rabbi Marc. Beloved husband of Georgette Bennett. Devoted father of Adina, Susan and Michael. Proud father-to-be of Joshua. Loving brother of Sima Scherr. Services 12:30PM Monday, July 6th, Park Avenue Synagogue, 87th Street and Madison Avenue. Contributions to the American Jewish World Service, the American Jewish Committee or The International Rescue Committee. For information call Plaza Memorial Chapel 212-769-4400.

**TANENBAUM**—Rabbi Marc H. The officers, staff, and membership of the American Jewish Committee deeply mourn the untimely death of our distinguished colleague, Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum. For more than thirty years, he served with extraordinary skill as the AJC's Interreligious Affairs Director, International Relations Director, and International Relations Consultant. We remember with special appreciation the unique contributions he made during the Second Vatican Council. Rabbi Tanenbaum was the master builder and visionary who established countless human bridges of mutual respect and understanding between Jews and Christians. He was the gifted, charismatic leader who permanently changed the way that millions of Christians and Jews related to one another. For decades, he was a respected and articulate voice of the Jewish people that was heard throughout the world. During his life he energetically strove to eradicate the religious roots of anti-Semitism, racism, and bigotry, and his historic achievements are manifold. His work on behalf of the world's refugees, the hungry, and the disenfranchised was a fulfillment of the Biblical mandate to "love thy neighbor as thyself." The American Jewish Committee was privileged to be the organization through which Rabbi Tanenbaum channeled his exceptional energy and intelligence. We are saddened by his loss, but will seek comfort in the remarkable accomplishments of this man of commitment, courage and faith. We express our profound sympathy to his wife Georgette and his children Adina, Michael and Susan. May his memory always be a blessing!

Alfred H. Moses, President  
David A. Harris, Exec VP  
Rabbi A. James Rudin,  
Interreligious Affairs Director

**TANENBAUM**—Rabbi Marc. We mourn the loss of a great friend and co-founder of the American Jewish World Service. His role on our Executive Committee will be remembered by all those whose lives he touched, benefited, and inspired.

American Jewish World Service  
Lawrence Buttenwieser,  
Chairman  
Lawrence S. Phillips,  
Past Chairman  
Andrew Griffel, Exec. Director

## Deaths

**TANENBAUM**—Rabbi Marc H. The officers of UJA-Federation are profoundly saddened by the untimely passing of one of the greatest of modern American Jewish leaders. His lifelong, passionate, and inspired advocacy for understanding among people of all faiths set the standard by which all other such efforts must be measured. His accomplishments will endure, as will his blessed memory, for generations to come, and will stand as a monument to the difference that one man can make. Our sincere sympathies are extended to his wife, Georgette, his children, and the entire family.  
Irwin Hochberg, Board Chairman  
Alan S. Jaffe, President  
Stephen D. Solender, Exec. V.P.

**TANENBAUM**—Rabbi Marc H. Sifton Place Synagogue mourns the untimely loss of a beloved friend and the leader of our Parallel High Holy Days Services and extends heartfelt condolences to his adored wife, Georgette; his children and the entire bereaved family. He gave unstintingly of his wisdom, warmth and graciousness to our Synagogue for the past ten years and he shall be sorely missed by all who knew and loved him. We share the tragic loss of a great world leader.  
David B. Kahane, Rabbi  
Jack Sheingold, President

**TANENBAUM**—Rabbi Marc. We mourn the loss of a great friend and co-founder of the American Jewish World Service. His role on our Executive Committee will be remembered by all those whose lives he touched, benefited, and inspired.  
American Jewish World Service  
Lawrence Buttenwieser,  
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Lawrence S. Phillips,  
Past Chairman  
Andrew Griffel, Exec. Director

**TANENBAUM**—Rabbi Marc H. The Board of Directors and the worldwide Staff of The International Rescue Committee mourn the passing of our devoted colleague and distinguished board member, Marc Tanenbaum. His extraordinary dedication to the cause of refugees and his tireless work in their behalf have been a profound inspiration to us all. He never stopped caring and never stopped speaking out for victims of persecution, no matter who they were or where they were. He was a true champion of the oppressed. We extend our deepest sympathies and condolences to his wife, Georgette; his children and to his entire family. The IRC has lost a great friend and teacher. The world's refugees have lost a powerful voice and advocate. We are all one in mourning his departure.

Leo Cherne, Chairman Emeritus  
John C. Whitehead, Chair of Bd.  
Winston Lord, Vice Chair of Bd.  
James Strickler, Chair Ex. Comm.  
Robert P. DeVecchi, Exec. Dir.  
International Rescue Committee

**TANENBAUM**—Rabbi Marc. The board, staff and youth of Covenant House mourn the loss of Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum and express profound sympathy to his wife, Georgette, his children, and his family. His intelligence, compassion and commitment will be missed by all who were fortunate to know him. His work on behalf of youth, the underprivileged and interfaith relations will live on and be remembered.

Covenant House  
L. Edward Shaw, Chairman  
Sister Mary Rose McGeady,  
President

**TANENBAUM**—Rabbi Marc H. We mourn the death of our distinguished colleague, learned activist who improved Jewish-Christian relationships throughout the world. His dedication to understanding and respect among people of all faiths endures as an example to all. We extend our condolences to his family.

The Rabbinical Assembly  
Rabbi Gerald L. Zelizer,  
President  
Rabbi Joel H. Meyers,  
Executive Vice President

**TANENBAUM**—Rabbi Marc H. It is with profound sorrow that the Officers, Board of Directors and staff of HIAS note the passing of Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum who through his deeds and involvement was a great friend of refugees. May his family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Marlin Kesselhaut, President  
Dail Stalow,  
Acting Executive Director

**TANENBAUM**—Rabbi Marc H. The officers and staff of the Anti-Defamation League mourn the untimely death of our friend and colleague, Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum. His unique role in forging Jewish-Christian understanding is his legacy to all. We extend our condolences to his entire family.

Melvin Solberg, Nat'l Chairman  
Abraham H. Foxman, National Dir.

**Deaths**

**TANENBAUM—Marc H.** The Board of Directors and the worldwide Staff of The International Rescue Committee mourn the passing of our devoted colleague and distinguished board member, Marc Tanenbaum. His extraordinary dedication to the cause of refugees and his tireless work in their behalf have been a profound inspiration to us all. He never stopped caring and never stopped speaking out for victims of persecution, no matter who they were or where they were. He was a true champion of the oppressed. We extend our deepest sympathies and condolences to his wife, Georgette; his children and to his entire family. The IRC has lost a great friend and teacher. The world's refugees have lost a powerful voice and advocate. We are all one in mourning his departure.

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American Jewish World Service  
Lawrence Buttenweiser,  
Chairman  
Lawrence S. Phillips,  
Past Chairman  
Andrew Griffler, Exec. Director

**TANENBAUM—Marc.** The North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry (NACOEJ) mourns the passing of Rabbi Tanenbaum, an active and vital member of our Advisory Board. May his family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Joseph Felt, President  
Barbara Gordon, Exec. Dir.

**TANENBAUM—Rabbi Marc H.** The Synagogue Council of America mourns the passing of one of the foremost architects of modern Jewish-Christian relations. More recently Rabbi Tanenbaum was a Member of the SCA's Interreligious Affairs Committee and helped to shape our dialogue with the Christian church community. We extend sincerest condolences to his wife, Georgette and his family.

Rabbi Jerome Davidson, Pres.  
Rabbi Henry Michaelman, Exec. VP

**TANENBAUM—Rabbi Marc H.** The Officers, Trustees and Members of Park Avenue Synagogue mourn the passing of a devoted congregant. We extend to his wife, Dr. Georgette Bennett, and to the entire family our heartfelt sympathy.

Nathaniel H. Usdan,  
Chairman of the Board  
Irving Friedmann,  
President

**TANENBAUM—Marc.** We cherish our history with Marc Tanenbaum, who so generously shared his wisdom and insight with us as a founder and continuing supporter.

People for the American Way

**Deaths**

**TANENBAUM—Rabbi Marc H.** The Board of Directors and staff of the Greater New York Region of the National Conference of Christians and Jews mourn the passing of Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum. His creativity and rich contributions to the bettering of the Christian-Jewish relationship served and will continue to serve as an inspiration to all of us.

Murray Harris, Chairman  
Margaret Gillmore, Exec. Director





# The New York Times

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NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JULY 4, 1992

## Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, 66, Is Dead

By ARI L. GOLDMAN

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, a father of modern Christian-Jewish dialogue and, through 25 years of radio commentary, one of the best-known rabbis in America, died early yesterday at Lenox Hill Hospital. He was 66 years old and lived in Manhattan.

He died of heart failure after undergoing heart surgery last month, said his wife, Georgette Bennett.

With charisma and passion, Rabbi Tanenbaum preached better understanding between the faiths everywhere from the Vatican to the headquarters of the World Council of Churches in Geneva to the Christian Bible colleges of America's South.

The son of Orthodox Jewish immigrants from Russia who owned a grocery store in Baltimore, Rabbi Tanenbaum brought Jews and Christians together for dialogue in the wake of the Nazi Holocaust and the creation of the modern state of Israel. He worked to heal nearly 2,000 years of mutual suspicion and animosity by helping both sides better understand one another.

### A Confrontational Friend

His biography reads like a history of Christian-Jewish relations in the second half of the 20th century. Rabbi Tanenbaum developed friendships with Roman Catholic, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox Christian leaders, but he was not afraid of challenging them when he felt Jewish interests were threatened.

He often found himself negotiating between Jews who felt that Christian

### A leader in improving Christian-Jewish relations.

leaders deserved more deference and others who believed that confrontation was the best approach. His efforts sometimes incurred the wrath of Orthodox Jewish leaders who believed that to engage in interfaith dialogue was to diminish Judaism.

In his files, the rabbi kept a cartoon from the Yiddish press of the 1960's that showed Pope Paul VI holding Rabbi Tanenbaum on a leash.

Over the years, Rabbi Tanenbaum found himself at the center of all the major Jewish-Christian controversies, everything from the Catholic convent at the death camp at Auschwitz to the claim of one Southern Baptist leader that "God Almighty does not hear the

### A life dedicated to ending deeply held fears.

prayer of a Jew" to the position of mainline Protestants on the rights of Palestinians in Israel.

John Cardinal O'Connor, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of New York, said yesterday that Rabbi Tanenbaum's passing was "the end of an era." He called the rabbi "a pioneer in Christian-Jewish relations and Catholic-Jewish relations in particular."

From Rome, Edward Cardinal Cassidy, the president of the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations With the Jews, said that Rabbi Tanenbaum was "a great source of reconciliation and strength during moments of deep difficulty between our communities."

Rabbi Tanenbaum also had a long friendship with the Rev. Billy Graham. Before Mr. Graham held a crusade in Central Park last summer, Rabbi Tanenbaum set up a meeting between the Christian evangelist and the New York Board of Rabbis to assure the rabbis that Mr. Graham was not interested in converting Jews, but only in bringing Christians to their faith.

The Rev. Jerry Falwell, who publicly debated Rabbi Tanenbaum before a rapt audience of Conservative rabbis in 1985, said yesterday, "Rabbi Tanenbaum spent his life attempting to strengthen healthy relations between Christians and Jews. He was brilliant and committed."

Marc Herman Tanenbaum was born in Baltimore on Oct. 13, 1925, and began his education at the Talmudical Academy of Baltimore and at City High School. He entered Yeshiva University in Manhattan at the age of 15.

After graduating from college, he began his rabbinical studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary, also in Manhattan. While a student, he became an aide to Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, professor of Jewish ethics and mysticism at the seminary.

Rabbi Tanenbaum edited several volumes of Rabbi Heschel's books.

### Reconciling Love and Hate

While at the seminary, Rabbi Tanenbaum began to delve into the roots of anti-Semitism among Christians. He said that he was driven to reconcile how "a church that preached a gospel of love could have turned it into a gospel of hatred and destruction when it came to the Jews."

Rabbi Tanenbaum was ordained in 1950 and, after a brief period in publishing and public relations, became one of the first Jewish professionals to devote

himself virtually full-time to improve relations between Christians and Jews.

He served as the executive vice president of the Synagogue Council of America and, beginning in 1960, as director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee.

In the 1950's, much of the focus of the dialogue was between Protestants and Jews, but the spotlight shifted dramatically in the early 1960's when Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council. Rabbi Tanenbaum was an official observer to the council and, according to his recollection, the only rabbi to attend.

### Reputation of Anti-Semitism

In terms of relations with the Jews, the council produced a landmark document, "Nostra Aetate," which rejected the idea that the Jewish people were accountable for the death of Jesus and repudiated anti-Semitism "by anyone at any time."

Catholic-Jewish relations became Rabbi Tanenbaum's primary concern, but he also worked to open avenues to Evangelicals, Orthodox Christians and Muslims in the years that followed.

In 1983, he became the director of international affairs at the Jewish Committee, which introduced him to a whole new set of issues dealing with refugee relief and human rights even as he maintained his involvement in interfaith relations. He retired from the Committee in 1990 but remained as a consultant to the organization.

In the early 1980's, he was a member of a delegation of the International Rescue Committee that made three fact-finding trips to Southeast Asia to investigate the plight of Vietnamese boat people. At the Thai border with Cambodia, the rabbi joined Elie Wiesel, the Nobel laureate and chronicler of the Holocaust, in the recitation of Kaddish, the Jewish prayer for the dead, for the million Cambodians who died at the hands of the Khmer Rouge.

### White House Commissions

Rabbi Tanenbaum served on White House commissions on children, the elderly and the Holocaust. He was a member of the boards of directors of numerous institutions, including the American Jewish World Service and the International Rescue Committee. He was named to the board of Covenant House, a network of shelters for runaways, in an effort to restore confidence in the agency in the wake of scandals involving the founder, the Rev. Bruce Ritter.

He was the former chairman of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations, which represents Judaism in talks with the Vatican and other world religious bodies.

He was the founder and a chairman of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, which, until the



Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum

collapse of the Soviet Union, worked on behalf of both Jews and Christians oppressed for their religious beliefs.

Starting in 1965, Rabbi Tanenbaum had a syndicated radio broadcast of religious commentary on WINS, an all-news radio station in New York City.

He also served as a consultant to movie and television productions on religious and Jewish matters, including the NBC series "Holocaust."

Rabbi Tanenbaum received 15 honorary degrees from both religious and secular institutions, won the International Interfaith Achievement Award of the Conference of Christians and Jews and, in April, the Israel and Libby Mowshowitz Award of the New York Board of Rabbis.

Rabbi Tanenbaum is survived by his wife, who is expecting their child in September; three children by a previous marriage, Susan, of Queens, Michael, of Brooklyn, and Adena, of Oxford, England, and a sister, Sima Scherr, of Pikesville, Md.

Funeral services will be held on Monday at 12:30 P.M. at Park Avenue Synagogue, 50 East 87th Street.

A loud car, badly in r



# The New York Times

Late Edition

New York: Today: clouds and a few thundershowers, then brighter. High 81. Tonight, clearing. Low 68. Tomorrow, partly sunny. High 79. Yesterday, high 74, low 59. Details are on page 35.

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NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JULY 4, 1992

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## INSIDE

### Russia Deficit Daunts I.M.F.

The Russian budget deficit is growing at a rapid rate, putting pressure on the International Monetary Fund to accept that reforms will take longer to carry out than expected. Page 5.

### Sandinista May Face Trial

Nicaragua's army chief, considered a stabilizing holdover from Sandinista rule, could face trial on charges of covering up a murder. Page 2.

### Marc Tanenbaum Dies

The rabbi, 66 years old, was a father of modern Jewish-Christian dialogue and one of the best-known Jewish leaders in America. Page 10.

### Rushing to Fill Jobs

New Federal money has spurred a scramble from Connecticut to California to create and fill thousands of jobs for poor youths. Page 21.

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Alfred H. Moses, President  
David A. Harris, Exec VP  
Rabbi A. James Rudin,  
Interreligious Affairs Director



## Marc Tanenbaum, 66

Rabbi, promoted relations between Vatican and Jews

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, a pioneer in promoting Vatican-Jewish relations and the former international affairs director for the American Jewish Committee, died on Friday. He was 66.

Tanenbaum, who underwent heart surgery last month, died of heart failure at Lenox Hill Hospital, said his wife, Georgette Bennett.

For decades, the New York-based rabbi was a powerful voice of American Judaism in the world, active in promoting good relations between Jews and members of other faiths.

He became a prominent figure on the international scene in 1965 when he was the only Jew to participate in the Second Vatican

Council that decried anti-Semitism and banned the Roman Catholic Church's depiction of Jews as Christ-killers.

In 1987, when Pope John Paul II offended many Jews by meeting with Austrian President Kurt Waldheim, who was accused of being a former Nazi, Tanenbaum flew to Rome to mend fences.

As a result, many jokingly dubbed him "the foreign minister of the Jews," Bennett said.

The rabbi's friends in his interfaith work included South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Rev. Billy Graham and New York Cardinal John O'Connor.

But his forays into the Christian world cost him the wrath of some Orthodox Jews, who refused to call him "rabbi."

A native of Baltimore, Tanenbaum moved to New York as a child, attended an Orthodox Jewish Yeshiva and was ordained in 1950 at Manhattan's Jewish Theological Seminary.



Rabbi Tanenbaum (Brian Hendler)

# Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum dies at 66

NEW YORK (AP) — Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, a pioneer in promoting Vatican-Jewish relations and the former international affairs director for the American Jewish Committee, died Friday. He was 66.

Tanenbaum, who underwent heart surgery last month, died of heart failure at Lenox Hill Hospital, said his wife, Georgette Bennett.

For decades, the New York-based rabbi was active in promoting good relations between Jews and members of other faiths. He was a former head of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations, the organization that officially represents world Jewry in discussions with the Vatican.

Tanenbaum became a prominent figure on the international scene in 1965, when he was the only Jew to participate in the Second Vatican Council that decried antisemitism and banned the Roman Catholic Church's depiction of Jews as Christ-killers.

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The rabbi's friends in his interfaith work included the Rev. Billy Graham and New York Cardinal John O'Connor. But his forays into the Christian world cost him the wrath of some Orthodox Jews, who refused to call him "rabbi."

A native of Baltimore, Tanenbaum moved to New York as a child, attended an Orthodox yeshiva and was ordained in 1950 at the Jewish Theological Seminary, a Conservative institution.

In recent years, he was involved in work for the human rights of refugees and in trying to ease world hunger. Just after the fall of the Iron Curtain, Tanenbaum was among the first to assist Albania's Jews in leaving to the West.

He was on the board of directors of the International Rescue Committee for refugees, and also worked for the American Jewish World Service, a non-denominational organization dealing with problems in developing countries.

Tanenbaum retired as international affairs director of the American Jewish Committee in 1989.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by three grown children from a previous marriage, and a sister.



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# Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, 66; pioneered interfaith dialogue

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, an architect of modern Christian-Jewish dialogue and one of the most widely respected representatives of the Jewish community on interreligious matters, has died at the age of 66.

Tanenbaum died of heart failure July 3 after undergoing heart surgery here last month.

In the more than 40 years that he devoted to forging understanding between Jews and Christians, Tanenbaum earned the respect of religious leaders all over the world for his commitment, wisdom and sensitivity.

He forged close relationships with Christians from a wide range of denominations, including Pope John XXIII, the Rev. Billy Graham and Desmond Tutu, the black Anglican archbishop of Johannesburg.

Some 2,000 people representing many faiths attended Tanenbaum's funeral at Manhattan's Park Avenue Synagogue. Pews were filled with clergy wearing the garb of Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox priests. Among those delivering eulogies was Cardinal John O'Connor, the Catholic archbishop of New York.

Tanenbaum was an indefatigable advocate of better understanding among faiths.

Although he retired in 1989 from the American Jewish Committee, where he worked as interreligious affairs director and director of international relations for 30 years, Tanenbaum continued to criss-cross the country, speaking at universities and seminaries until illness forced him to stop earlier this year.

Tanenbaum first investigated Christian anti-Semitism while a rabbinical student at the Jewish Theological Seminary, which he attended after graduating from Yeshiva University.

His interest, said colleagues, was fueled by his own memories of Eastern European pogroms and the Holocaust. Tanenbaum's parents fled Europe and settled in Balti-



Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum

He once explained his interest in Christian-Jewish relations by saying that he was compelled to probe how "a church that preached a gospel of love could have turned it into a gospel of hatred and destruction when it came to Jews."

After his ordination as a Conservative rabbi in 1950, Tanenbaum briefly worked in publishing and public relations, and then went on to become one of the first Jewish professionals to devote himself full-time to Christian-Jewish relations.

He worked in the late-1950s as executive vice president of the Synagogue Council of America, a body of Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Jews that represents the American Jewish community in interfaith dialogue, and went to work for the American Jewish Committee in 1960.

A measure of his accomplishment even at that relatively early point in Tanenbaum's career is that he was invited to Rome by Pope John XXIII as an official observer of the Second Vatican Council, which lasted from 1960 to 1965.

He was the only rabbi to attend the proceedings that produced the watershed Catholic document *Nostra Aetate*. The document rejected anti-Semitism and the teaching that Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus.

Tanenbaum hosted a syndicated weekly radio show on religious matters beginning in 1965, and authored a weekly column for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency during the 1980s.

In 1983 he was the first Jewish leader to address 4,000 Protestant delegates attending the World Council of Churches assembly in Vancouver.

And in the early 1980s, Tanenbaum was a member of an International Rescue Committee delegation that made three trips to Southeast Asia to research the plight of the Vietnamese boat people. Upon reaching the Thai-Cambodian border, he joined Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel in reciting Kaddish for the 1 million Cambodians who were murdered by the Khmer Rouge.

Tanenbaum was also one of the founders in 1985 of the American Jewish World Service Committee, a development and relief agency.

In 1987 he was elected chairman of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, the body that represents the international Jewish community in its dealings with other religions.

And in May 1988, he was awarded the Interfaith Medallion by the International Council of Christians and Jews.

President Jimmy Carter invited Tanenbaum to represent American Jewry as one of 10 national religious and academic leaders to discuss "the State of the Nation" at Camp David summit meetings in 1979. He was also a member of the President's Commission on the Holocaust Advisory Committee.

Tanenbaum's passing has been called the end of an era by many of those who worked with him.

"He really took the declarations and resolutions and proclamations and made them come to life in human terms with an extraordinary amount of passion and intelligence," said Rabbi A. James Rudin, the current interreligious affairs director at the American Jewish Committee. "One of the things I learned from him is that interreligious relations are really about human relationships."

Tanenbaum's commitment was not to good relationships with Christians at any cost, according to his friend of 25 years, Rabbi Arnold Turetsky, but to creating a fuller Christian understanding of Jews and Judaism without sacrificing his own integrity.

"Marc spoke out; he risked his newly gained friendships with the highest-power Christians in the world. His mission was not to befriend Christians but to bring his people to a sense of pride," said Turetsky.

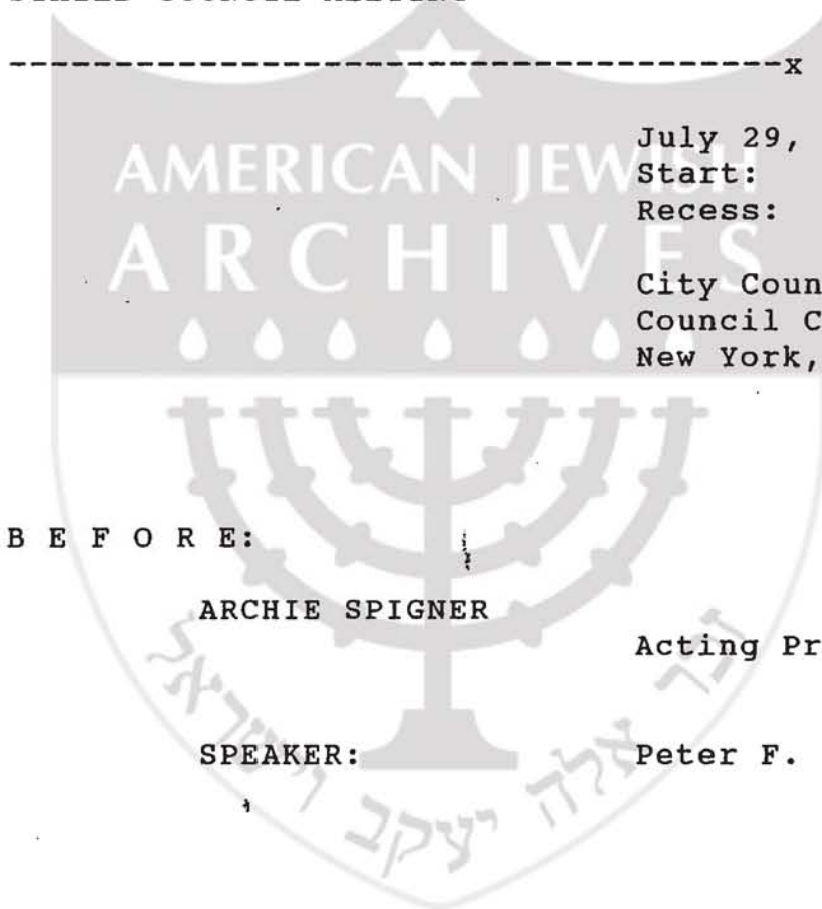
*Jewish Telegraphic Agency*



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CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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THE TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES  
of the  
STATED COUNCIL MEETING



July 29, 1992  
Start: 1:30 p.m.  
Recess: 5:10 p.m.  
City Council  
Council Chambers  
New York, New York

B E F O R E:

ARCHIE SPIGNER

Acting President,

SPEAKER:

Peter F. Vallone

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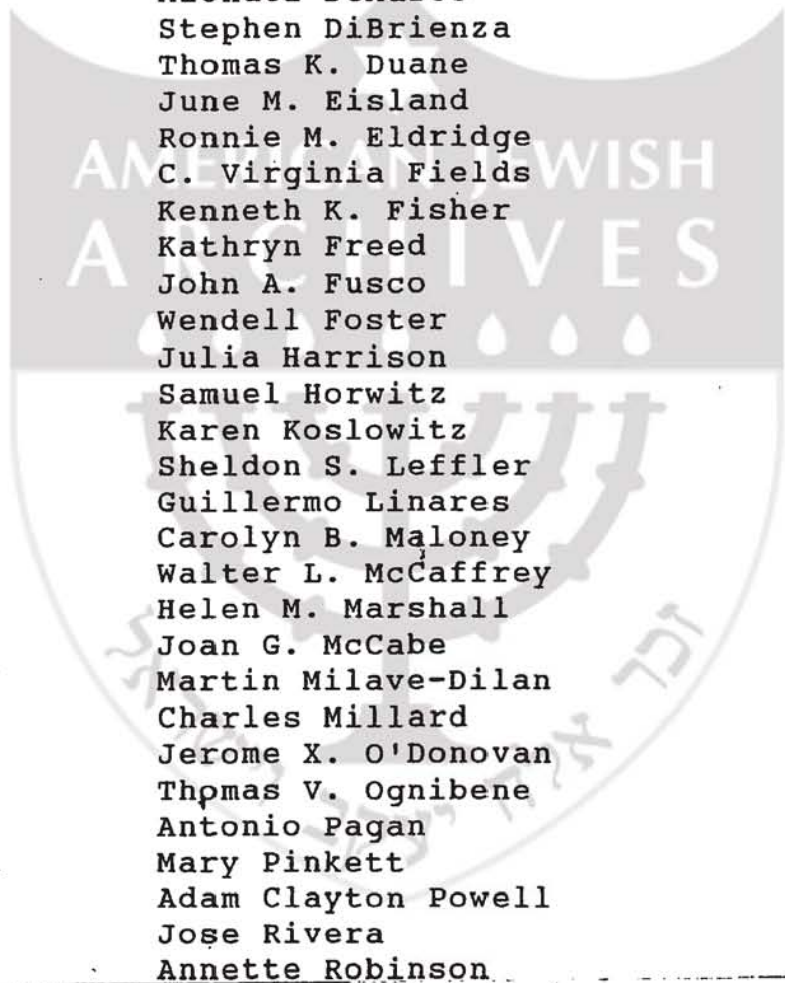
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COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- Michael J. Abel
- Sal F. Albanese
- Susan Alter
- Alfred C. Cerullo III
- Una Clarke
- Noach Dear
- Michael DeMarco
- Stephen DiBrienza
- Thomas K. Duane
- June M. Eisland
- Ronnie M. Eldridge
- C. Virginia Fields
- Kenneth K. Fisher
- Kathryn Freed
- John A. Fusco
- Wendell Foster
- Julia Harrison
- Samuel Horwitz
- Karen Koslowitz
- Sheldon S. Leffler
- Guillermo Linares
- Carolyn B. Maloney
- Walter L. McCaffrey
- Helen M. Marshall
- Joan G. McCabe
- Martin Milave-Dilan
- Charles Millard
- Jerome X. O'Donovan
- Thomas V. Ognibene
- Antonio Pagan
- Mary Pinkett
- Adam Clayton Powell
- Jose Rivera
- Annette Robinson
- Victor L. Robles
- Israel Ruiz, Jr.
- John D. Sabini
- Archie Spigner
- Walter Ward

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COUNCIL MEMBERS [CONTINUED]:

Lawrence A. Warden  
Anthony D. Weiner  
Thomas White, Jr.  
Enoch Williams  
Priscilla A. Wooten



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A P P E A R A N C E S :

Reverend Mario Marzocchi  
St. Andrews R.C. Church  
Cardinal Hayes Place  
New York, New York 10007

Georgette Bennett Tannenbaum

Carlos Cuevas  
City Clerk  
Clerk of the Council



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1 STATED COUNCIL MEETING

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2 ACTING PRESIDENT SPIGNER:

3 Members, please take your seats. Members,  
4 please take your seats. Members please take  
5 their seats. All members.

6 SPEAKER VALLONE: Council Members,  
7 please take your seats.

8 ACTING PRESIDENT SPIGNER: The  
9 Clerk will call the role.

10 THE CLERK: Abel.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ABEL: Here.

12 THE CLERK: Albanese.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ALBANESE: Here.

14 THE CLERK: Alter.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ALTER: Here.

16 THE CLERK: Berman. Castaneira-  
17 Colon. Clarke.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CLARKE: Here.

19 THE CLERK: Cruz. Dear.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER DEAR: Here.

21 THE CLERK: DeMarco.

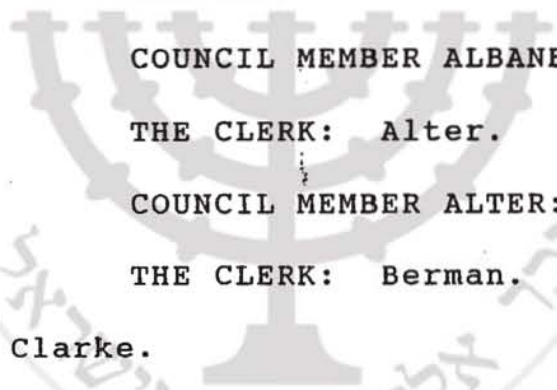
22 COUNCIL MEMBER DeMARCO: Here.

23 THE CLERK: DiBrienza.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER DiBRIENZA: Here.

25 THE CLERK: Dilan.

AMERICAN JEWISH  
ARCHIVES





1 STATED COUNCIL MEETING

6

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MALAVE-DILAN: Here.

3 THE CLERK: Duane.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DUANE: Here.

5 THE CLERK: Eisland.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER EISLAND: Here.

7 THE CLERK: Eldridge.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ELDRIDGE: Here.

9 THE CLERK: Fields.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FIELDS: Here.

11 THE CLERK: Fisher.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FISHER: Here.

13 THE CLERK: Foster.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER FOSTER: Present.

15 THE CLERK: Freed.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FREED: Here.

17 THE CLERK: Fusco.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FUSCO: Here.

19 THE CLERK: Harrison.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER HARRISON: Here.

21 THE CLERK: Horwitz.

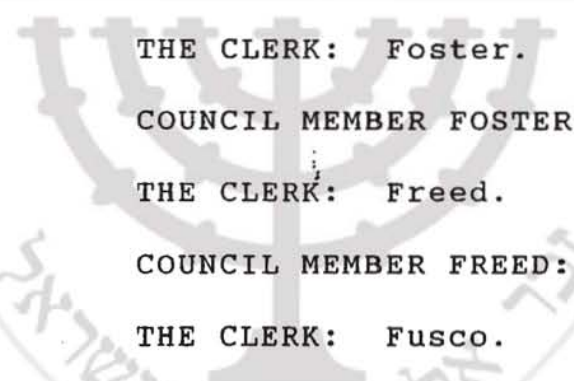
22 COUNCIL MEMBER HORWITZ: Here.

23 THE CLERK: Koslowitz.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Here.

25 THE CLERK: Leffler.

AMERICAN JEWISH  
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STATED COUNCIL MEETING

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COUNCIL MEMBER LEFFLER: Here.

THE CLERK: Linares.

COUNCIL MEMBER LINARES: Here.

THE CLERK: Maloney.

COUNCIL MEMBER MALONEY: Here.

THE CLERK: Marshall.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARSHALL: Here.

THE CLERK: McCabe.

COUNCIL MEMBER McCABE: Here.

THE CLERK: McCaffrey.

COUNCIL MEMBER McCAFFREY: Here.

THE CLERK: Michaels. Millard.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLARD: Here.

THE CLERK: O'Donovan.

COUNCIL MEMBER O'DONOVAN: Here.

THE CLERK: Ognibene.

COUNCIL MEMBER OGNIBENE: Here.

THE CLERK: Pagan.

COUNCIL MEMBER PAGAN: Here.

THE CLERK: Pinkett.

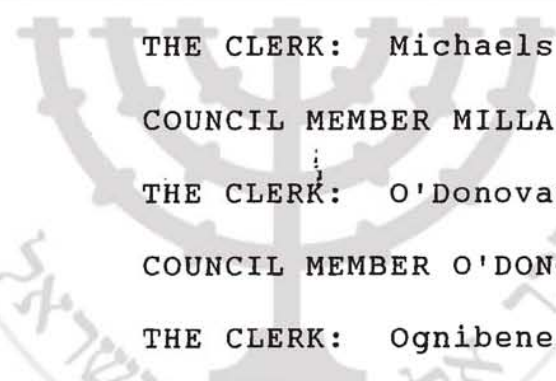
COUNCIL MEMBER PINKETT: Here.

THE CLERK: Povman. Powell.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWELL: Here.

THE CLERK: Rivera.

AMERICAN JEWISH  
ARCHIVES



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PENGAD CO., BAYONNE, NJ 07002 - LASER BOND-A



STATED COUNCIL MEETING

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COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Here.

THE CLERK: Robinson.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROBINSON: Present.

THE CLERK: Robles.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROBLES: Here.

THE CLERK: Ruiz.

COUNCIL MEMBER RUIZ: Here.

ACTING PRESIDENT SPIGNER: Could  
we have some order in the chambers, please.

THE CLERK: Sabini.

COUNCIL MEMBER SABINI: Here.

THE CLERK: Spigner.

ACTING PRESIDENT SPIGNER: Here.

THE CLERK: Ward.

COUNCIL MEMBER WARD: Here.

THE CLERK: Warden.

COUNCIL MEMBER WARDEN: Here.

THE CLERK: Watkins. Weiner.

COUNCIL MEMBER WEINER: Here.

THE CLERK: White.

COUNCIL MEMBER WHITE: Here.

THE CLERK: Williams.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Here.

THE CLERK: Wooten.



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1 STATED COUNCIL MEETING

9

2 COUNCIL MEMBER WOOTEN: Here.

3 THE CLERK: Cerullo.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CERULLO: Here.

5 THE CLERK: Vallone.

6 SPEAKER VALLONE: Here.

7 ACTING PRESIDENT SPIGNER: A

8 quorum is counted and present. Members, please  
9 rise and give your attention. Please, less  
10 conversation; please, members. Please rise and  
11 give your attention to Reverend Mario Marzocchi  
12 of St. Andrews Roman Catholic Church.

13 Reverend Marzocchi.

14 REVEREND MARZOCCHI: Let us pray.

15 Almighty and Eternal God, you guide everything  
16 in wisdom and love, accept the prayers we offer  
17 for our City, by the wisdom of our leaders and  
18 integrity of our citizens. May harmony and  
19 justice be secured and may there be lasting  
20 prosperity and peace.

21 Almighty God, the community here  
22 present asks these things and recommends them  
23 to your gentle love.

24 Amen.

25 ACTING PRESIDENT SPIGNER: Council



2 Member Freed. Council Member Pagan.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER PAGAN: I move that  
4 the invocation be spread on the record.

5 ACTING PRESIDENT SPIGNER: Without  
6 objection that motion is adopted.

7 Adoption of the minutes.

8 THE CLERK: None.

9 ACTING PRESIDENT SPIGNER: No  
10 minutes? Item number 4, Messages and Papers --

11 SPEAKER VALLONE: At this time,  
12 Mr. Acting President, with my colleagues'  
13 indulgence, I'm going to ask that we suspend  
14 the rules for a few minutes to make a very  
15 special presentation.

16 On July 3rd, Mr. Acting President,  
17 this City, this State --

18 ACTING PRESIDENT SPIGNER:  
19 Members, please, I must ask that you show more  
20 decorum and attention to the Speaker when he  
21 speaks, as well as to all other members, and if  
22 you must carry conversations, please, do us the  
23 favor of going outside in the rotunda or in the  
24 committee room.

25 Mr. Speaker.

2 SPEAKER VALLONE: Thank you, Mr.  
3 Acting President.

4 On July 3rd, this City, this  
5 State, this country, and indeed, the world,  
6 lost a great man, a hero. We all know the  
7 importance of a deep faith in God and what that  
8 could mean in terms of bringing healing to this  
9 world. We also know the great evil and harm  
10 that has been done in the name of God by  
11 misguided people.

12 One man arose in this century to  
13 bring healing between Christians and Jews and  
14 between all believers and spent his entire life  
15 in bringing peace where there was discord and  
16 in bringing the true message of God as a healer  
17 and as a person who loves and not hate to all  
18 four corners of this globe.

19 Accordingly, it is fitting that  
20 the Council have a memorial proclamation which  
21 I ask the City Clerk to read at this time  
22 before I ask for his widow to come forward for  
23 a presentation.

24 Will you kindly read the  
25 proclamation?



2 COUNCIL CLERK CUEVAS: The  
3 Council, City of New York Proclamation:

4 Whereas, Rabbi Mark H. Tannenbaum,  
5 a pioneer in promoting Christian-Jewish  
6 relations and a former International Affairs  
7 Director for the American Jewish Committee died  
8 on Friday, July 3rd, 1992 at age 66; and

9 Whereas, for decades, Mark  
10 Tannenbaum was a powerful voice of American  
11 Judaism in the world, active in promoting good  
12 relations between Jews and members of other  
13 faiths; and

14 Whereas, in 1987 when Pope John  
15 Paul II offended many Jews by meeting with  
16 Austrian President Kurt Waldheim, who was  
17 accused of being a former Nazi, Rabbi  
18 Tannenbaum, flew to Rome to mend fences and, as  
19 a result, many dubbed him the Foreign Minister  
20 of the Jews; and

21 Whereas, in addition to John Paul  
22 II, Rabbi Tannenbaum's friends in his  
23 interfaith work included the Reverend Billy  
24 Graham, New York Cardinal John O'Connor and  
25 South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu; and

2                   Whereas, for years Rabbi  
3 Tannenbaum was involved in work for the human  
4 rights of refugees and in trying to ease world  
5 hunger. He was on the Board of Directors of  
6 the International Rescue Committee for  
7 Refugees, and the American-Jewish World  
8 Service. He never stopped working for victims  
9 of persecution. He was a true champion of the  
10 oppressed; and

11                   Whereas, Rabbi Tannenbaum is  
12 survived by his wife, Georgette Bennett, three  
13 grown children from a prior marriage, a son  
14 Joshua, who is due in a few weeks, and a sister  
15 Sing Marsha.

16                   Now, therefore, let it be known  
17 that the Council of the City of New York wants  
18 to thank and honor the life and work of Rabbi  
19 Mark H. Tannenbaum. May his family be  
20 comforted among the mourners of Zion and  
21 Jerusalem.

22                   Signed this 29th day of July in  
23 the year 1992.

24                   SPEAKER VALLONE: And at this time  
25 I would ask our Chairman of Intergovernmental



2 Relations and Special Events Wendell Foster, to  
3 ask Rabbi Tannenbaum's widow, Georgia Bennett,  
4 and her son, expected, God willing, in several  
5 weeks, Joshua, and the family to come forward  
6 for a formal presentation.

7 At this time I'm going to ask Mrs.  
8 Tannenbaum to say a few words.

9 MRS. TANNENBAUM: My husband would  
10 have been enormously honored to be honored this  
11 way by the city that he loved.

12 He came here at the age of fifteen  
13 and lived here for most of his life, and was  
14 very dedicated to the cause of harmonious  
15 interreligious relations in this city and  
16 harmonious interracial relations in this city,  
17 and I hope that in his spirit that all of you  
18 and all of us will continue working towards  
19 those same goals, because that's what's made  
20 this city great, and Mark was honored to have  
21 been a resident of it.

22 And I thank you very, very much  
23 for this beautiful proclamation. I will  
24 cherish it, his son will cherish it, and I  
25 thank you.

2 SPEAKER VALLONE: Thank you so  
3 much, Mrs. Tannenbaum. We want you to know  
4 that the work he did obviously will live on  
5 forever, and we hope that God will grant you  
6 and your forthcoming son and family the peace  
7 that you so richly deserve.

8 Thank you so very, very much.

9 Would any Council Members like to  
10 come up now? Would the rest of the Council  
11 like to come up?

12 I ask the Council Members to  
13 return to their seats. We have one more  
14 presentation to make. I'd like to ask the  
15 Council Members, please return to your seats.

16 ACTING PRESIDENT SPIGNER: Council  
17 Members, please back in your seats.

18 SPEAKER VALLONE: We have one more  
19 presentation to be made. Many of you knew the  
20 previous representative from District Council  
21 37, Alice O'Brien. She has gone on to law  
22 school and other endeavors and she's being  
23 replaced by a person that we're about to make a  
24 proclamation to, and I'll ask Council Member  
25 Virginia Fields to borrow the minority leader's



# FORWARD

Published at New York City

July 17, 1992

\*\*\*\*\*

## MASHA LEON



My husband, Joe, and I officially met Marc Tanenbaum during the excitement of the Vatican Council II deliberations in the early 1960s, though I probably ran into him at the Jewish Theological Seminary's cafeteria in 1949-50 when I worked

around the corner at the YIVO's 123rd Street location. We met at lectures, seminars, conferences, at our home for dinner, at the discussions held by our Queens American Jewish Committee group where, in his inimitable way, he managed to temper



Tanenbaum:  
Ecumenical  
Mensch

2,000 years of pent-up Jewish anger against a Christian world that was just beginning to come to grips with its awesome guilt. More than anyone else, Rabbi Tanenbaum became the "medium" for the newly-found Jewish demand for justice and theological and historical redress.

\*\*\*

An early clue to his predestined role as "bridge" between Jew and Christian goes back to early childhood when Marc watched his Russian-Jewish mother, who was Orthodox and spoke in a Yiddish-accented English, prepare Christmas baskets filled with meats, cheeses, bread during the depression. Why, asked Marc? As Louis Auster wrote in his article, "A Prophet for Our Time," Marc's mother responded, "My son, I have just heard that our Christian neighbors down the street are so poor that they will not have anything to eat for Christmas dinner. It would be terrible if Mrs. Kirby, Mrs. di Falco, Mrs. Eder and their families would go hungry on their religious holidays." It proved an unforget-

table memory. Two devout Jews — mother and son — walking through the frigid December night handing out Christmas baskets. "How my mother, Sadie, and father, Abraham, behaved — their daily actions toward other human beings, whether Christians or Jews, blacks or whites — had far greater impact on me than almost anything they said or taught," said Marc.

\*\*\*

My interview with Rabbi Tanenbaum was in 1983 in his office at the American Jewish Committee headquarters. The walls were hung with autographed photos of Billy Graham, Archbishop Jakovos, Cardinal Cushing, Cardinal Bea, Cardinal Spellman, Cardinal Cooke, Archbishop Sheen.

Since it was the 500th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther, we spoke of the dialogue in progress with the Lutheran Council of Theological Education, of the current state of Catholic-Jewish relations, of the program at the University of Duisberg in West Germany examining German textbooks identifying anti-Jewish attitudes, about intermarriage in America and about the

impact of the NBC TV program "Holocaust" for which he had been an advisor. But our most heated exchange was when I suggested that the only way to eradicate anti-Semitism in the church was to excise the blatant anti-Jewish statements in the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Marc's response was intense. "Let me tell you what's wrong with that approach," he said. "That's like telling the Lubavitcher Rebbe that he should remove some entries in the Gemorrah which may be interpreted as unkind to gentiles." When I noted that since the Gemor-

rah was written in the fourth century and was a response to anti-Jewish edicts at the time, Marc reacted: "Are you saying that you would call on the Agudath Israel and the Lubavitcher Rebbe to change the Gemorrah? Let me say this — and you're not going to like this — if you are a religious person and you have some sense of the sanctity of certain texts, you simply cannot bring yourself to ask that question. I have had Jews say to Christians that nothing will change until the New Testament is changed. Which means you might as well forget about it. Any more than the five books of Moses can be changed. The thing is not to get locked into the past but how one deals with the uprooting of the past and laying a foundation for the new.

"Beyond that, the most important thing — even in textbooks — is teacher-training and seminary training plus the media. A tradition that was established over 2000 years of hatred and contempt for the Jews is not going to be changed in 20 years. But we have everything in place to move and with the power of the mass media we probably can in the next hundred years, uproot radically the source of anti-Semitism in all of Christian culture, including the Evangelists."

There never was ... and there never will be another Marc Tanenbaum. Our world will be a little emptier, a little darker without him.

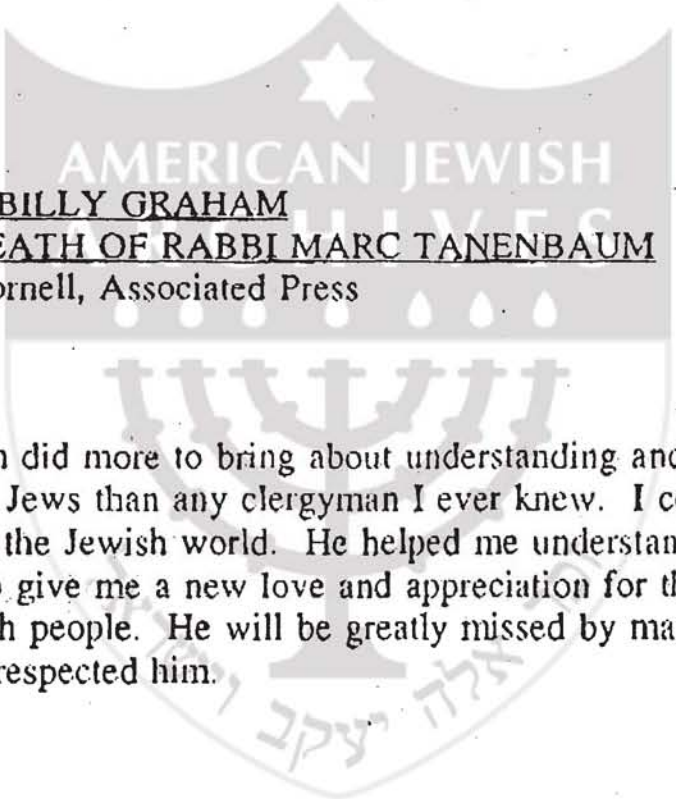
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Joe and I first met Georgette Ben-net at a lecture at the Jack P. Eisner Institute of Holocaust Studies at CUNY's Graduate Center.



Georgette:  
The light of  
his life

When we paid a shiva call the day after the funeral, Georgette greeted Karen and me at the door, barefoot, smiling with a scrapbook of clippings that had to be sorted. As we chatted in the book-lined spacious apartment, the sheet covering the wall mirror began to slide down. Repeated attempts to reattach it were at first unsuccessful. I.L. Peretz or Isaac Bashevis Singer would no doubt have invested that phenomena with some mystical significance. *Ver veys?* Who knows?



STATEMENT FROM BILLY GRAHAM  
REGARDING THE DEATH OF RABBI MARC TANENBAUM  
Exclusive to George Cornell, Associated Press  
July 6, 1992

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum did more to bring about understanding and friendship between Christians and Jews than any clergyman I ever knew. I considered him the best friend I had in the Jewish world. He helped me understand Judaism. He was used by God to give me a new love and appreciation for the hopes and aspirations of the Jewish people. He will be greatly missed by many Christian leaders who knew and respected him.





Jim Estrin/The New York Times

### **Funeral Service Is Held for Rabbi Tanenbaum**

Georgette Bennett, left, the widow of Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, being comforted yesterday by Donna Hanover at the funeral service at the Park Avenue Synagogue on East 87th Street in Manhattan. Rabbi

Tanenbaum, who died on Friday at the age of 66, is the father of modern Christian-Jewish dialogue. With them at the service were Rudolph W. Giuliani, center, and John Cardinal O'Connor.

## Deaths

**TANENBAUM**—Rabbi Marc. Beloved husband of Georgette Bennett. Devoted father of Adena, Susan and Michael. Proud father-to-be of Joshua. Loving brother of Sima Scherr. Services 12:30PM, Monday, July 6th, Park Avenue Synagogue, 87th Street and Madison Avenue. Contributions to the American Jewish World Service, the American Jewish Committee or The International Rescue Committee. For information call Plaza Memorial Chapel 212-769-4400.

**TANENBAUM**—Marc H. The Board of Directors and the worldwide Staff of The International Rescue Committee mourn the passing of our devoted colleague and distinguished board member, Marc Tanenbaum. His extraordinary dedication to the cause of refugees and his tireless work in their behalf have been a profound inspiration to us all. He never stopped caring and never stopped speaking out for victims of persecution, no matter who they were or where they were. He was a true champion of the oppressed. We extend our deepest sympathies and condolences to his wife, Georgette; his children and to his entire family. The IRC has lost a great friend and teacher. The world's refugees have lost a powerful voice and advocate. We are all one in mourning his departure.

Leo Cherne, Chairman Emeritus  
John C. Whitehead, Chair of Bd.  
Winston Lord, Vice Chair of Bd.  
James Strickler, Chair Ex. Comm.  
Robert P. DeVecchi, Exec. Dir.  
International Rescue Committee

**TANENBAUM**—Rabbi Marc. The board, staff and youth of Covenant House mourn the loss of Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum and express profound sympathy to his wife, Georgette, his children, and his family. His intelligence, compassion and commitment will be missed by all who were fortunate to know him. His work on behalf of youth, the underprivileged and interfaith relations will live on and be remembered.

Covenant House  
L. Edward Shaw, Chairman  
Sister Mary Rose McGeady,  
President

**TANENBAUM**—Marc H. We mourn the death of our distinguished colleague, learned activist who improved Jewish-Christian relationships throughout the world. His dedication to understanding and respect among people of all faiths endures as an example to all. We extend our condolences to his family.

The Rabbinical Assembly  
Rabbi Gerald L. Zelizer,  
President  
Rabbi Joel H. Meyers,  
Executive Vice President

**TANENBAUM**—Marc H. It is with profound sorrow that the Officers, Board of Directors and staff of HIAS note the passing of Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum who through his deeds and involvement was a great friend of refugees. May his family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Martin Kesselhaut, President  
Dail Stolow,  
Acting Executive Director

**TANENBAUM**—Marc H., Rabbi. The officers and staff of the Anti-Defamation League mourn the untimely death of our friend and colleague, Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum. His unique role in forging Jewish-Christian understanding is

## Deaths

**TANENBAUM**—Rabbi Marc H. The officers of UJA-Federation are profoundly saddened by the untimely passing of one of the greatest of modern American Jewish leaders. His lifelong, passionate, and inspired advocacy for understanding among people of all faiths set the standard by which all other such efforts must be measured. His accomplishments will endure, as will his blessed memory, for generations to come, and will stand as a monument to the difference that one man can make. Our sincere sympathies are extended to his wife, Georgette, his children, and the entire family.  
Irwin Hochberg, Board Chairman  
Alan S. Jaffe, President  
Stephen D. Solender, Exec. V.P.

**TANENBAUM**—Rabbi Marc H. Sutton Place Synagogue mourns the untimely loss of a beloved friend and the leader of our Parallel High Holy Days Services and extends heartfelt condolences to his adored wife, Georgette; his children and the entire bereaved family. He gave unstintingly of his wisdom, warmth and graciousness to our Synagogue for the past ten years and he shall be sorely missed by all who knew and loved him. We share the tragic loss of a great world leader.

David B. Kahane, Rabbi  
Jack Sheingold, President

**TANENBAUM**—Marc. We mourn the loss of a great friend and co-founder of the American Jewish World Service. His role on our Executive Committee will be remembered by all those whose lives he touched, benefited, and inspired.

American Jewish World Service  
Lawrence Buttenweiser,  
Chairman  
Lawrence S. Phillips,  
Past Chairman  
Andrew Griffel, Exec. Director

THE NEW YORK TIMES  
OBITUARIES  
SUNDAY, JULY 5, 1992



## Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, R.I.P.

I was recently saddened to learn that my friend, Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, had died. For many years, Rabbi Tanenbaum was the chief figure of the U.S. Jewish community involved in Catholic-Jewish relations. Cardinal Edward Cassidy, the Australian who is in charge of Catholic-Jewish contacts at the worldwide level, took note of the rabbi's death by paying tribute to the constructive results of this distinguished Jewish-American's associations with Catholics.

Rabbi Tanenbaum was a man of high intellectual ability, whose knowledge of history was as quick and detailed as his awareness of current events. In that knowledge, he was no stranger to all the anger and fear that has accompanied relations between Catholics and Jews. He also was a man not fatalistic in his knowledge of the past, or even of the present, but always fully confident in the better nature of people. He thought harmony and mutual respect absolutely possible among human beings.

In the past 20 years, Rabbi Tanenbaum came to be a valued and trusted resource in my reporting, as well as an admired compatriot in my own hopes for a time absent of prejudice, suspicion and injustice.

Marc Tanenbaum was a conciliator, a friend of the troubled and the abused, a builder of peace and cooperation. I recall an evening some years

ago when he, Will Campbell (a prominent Baptist writer) and I appeared as a panel to discuss interreligious and interracial hard feelings. The meeting had been well-publicized, but to our dismay, a particularly unruly element arrived and shouted obscenities at us.

Rabbi Tanenbaum whispered to the two of us: "Let me take over for a moment." Responding to the rabbi's calm, respectful reasoning, an angry and threatening young man began speaking quietly and reasonably. The rabbi invited more questions. We took the questions feeling more relaxed, less imperiled, energized by the growing sense of tolerance and commitment in the room. In the end, people applauded, smiled at one another as they left, and during the forum received a strong lesson in the benefits of regarding others well and in working with others toward a useful end. It was a witness to action of a person of good will, peace, respect and hope. It was not a denial of separations, but an affirmation of the human ability to build upon differences.

I thank God for having known Marc Tanenbaum. His memory is God's blessing, instructive and healing, a summons in its goodness and depth. □

*Father Campion is Our Sunday Visitor's associate publisher*

By Father Owen  
F. Campion



MARC  
TANENBAUM  
WAS A CON-  
CILIATOR, A  
FRIEND OF  
THE  
TROUBLED  
AND  
THE ABUSED.



# TANENBAUM DIES

INTERFAITH RABBI WAS 66

STORY ON PAGE 4



# MADONNA'S MEN

Special book excerpt kicks off  
SUMMER READING Page 10

# DAILY NEWS



40¢

NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

Saturday, July 4, 1992

# Rabbi Tanenbaum is dead at age 66

By JAMES ROSEN

Daily News Staff Writer

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, 66, a dominant voice of mainstream American Judaism, died yesterday at Lenox Hill Hospital.

Tanenbaum died of cardiac failure after about two weeks in the hospital, said his wife, Georgette Bennett.

Bennett, Tanenbaum's second wife, said she is expecting their first child in September.

Tanenbaum's success in promoting better relations between Jews and non-Jews made him the most well-known rabbi for many American Christians.

His interfaith work also earned the Conservative rabbi the friendship of Christian leaders as diverse as Pope John Paul, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Rev. Billy Graham.

Tanenbaum's Orthodox Jewish par-

ents emigrated from Ukraine, the former Soviet republic with a troubled history of anti-Semitism, where his father's brother had been drowned by a Christian mob.

In explaining his desire to reconcile Christians and Jews, Tanenbaum once said he was driven to probe how "a church that preached a gospel of love could have turned it into a gospel of hatred and destruction when it came to Jews."

Tanenbaum worked with the Rev. Jesse Jackson to promote harmony between blacks and Jews, but he criticized Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan for "uttering the most vile anti-Semitic bigotry."

Born in Baltimore, Tanenbaum made New York his permanent home after coming to the city to attend Yeshiva University at age 15. He was ordained in 1950 at Manhattan's Jewish

Theological Seminary.

Though Tanenbaum never led a congregation, he became one of the country's most prominent Jewish leaders as a weekly radio commentator, vice president of the Synagogue Council of America in the 1950s and an official of the American Jewish Committee for nearly three decades.

As the committee's international affairs director, Tanenbaum traveled the globe: he once half-jokingly referred to himself as "foreign minister of the Jews."

The rabbi was the only Jew who participated in the landmark Second Vatican Council, which in 1965 decried anti-Semitism and banned the Catholic Church's previous depiction of Jews as the killers of Jesus Christ.

His frequent visits to the Vatican led cardinals there to joke that he saw the Pope more often than they did.



Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum

When Pope John Paul offended many Jews in 1987 by meeting with Austrian President Kurt Waldheim — who was accused of participating in Nazi war crimes — Tanenbaum flew to Rome to try to mend fences.

Ever the peacemaker, he also mediated a 1988 clash between Mayor Edward Koch and Jesse Jackson.

A funeral service, open to the public, will be held at 12:30 p.m. Monday at Park Ave. Synagogue, 50 E. 87th St., followed by a private burial at New Montefiore Cemetery, Pinelawn, L.I.





Katchor

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My interview with Rabbi Tanenbaum was in 1983 in his office at the American Jewish Committee headquarters. The walls were hung with autographed photos of Billy Graham, Archbishop Jakovos, Cardinal Cushing, Cardinal Bea, Cardinal Spellman, Cardinal Cooke, Archbishop Sheen.

Since it was the 500th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther, we spoke of the dialogue in progress with the Lutheran Council of Theological Education, of the current state of Catholic-Jewish relations, of the program at the University of Duisberg in West Germany examining German textbooks identifying anti-Jewish attitudes, about intermarriage in America and about the

impact of the NBC TV program "Holocaust" for which he had been an advisor. But our most heated exchange was when I suggested that the only way to eradicate anti-Semitism in the church was to excise the blatant anti-Jewish statements in the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Marc's response was intense. "Let me tell you what's wrong with that approach," he said. "That's like telling the Lubavitcher Rebbe that he should remove some entries in the Gemorrah which may be interpreted as unkind to gentiles." When I noted that since the Gemorrah was written in the fourth century and was a response to anti-Jewish edicts at the time, Marc reacted: "Are you saying that you would call on the Agudath Israel and the Lubavitcher Rebbe to change the Gemorrah? Let me say this — and you're not going to like this — if you are a religious person and you have some sense of the sanctity of certain texts, you simply cannot bring yourself to ask that question. I have had Jews say to Christians that nothing will change until the New Testament is changed. Which means you might as well forget about it. Any more than the five books of Moses can be changed. The thing is not to get locked into the past but how one deals with the uprooting of the past and laying a foundation for the new.

"Beyond that, the most important thing — even in textbooks — is teacher-training and seminary training plus the media. A tradition that was established over 2000 years of hatred and contempt for the Jews is not going to be changed in 20 years. But we have everything in place to move and with the power of the mass media we probably can in the next hundred years, uproot radically the source of anti-Semitism in all of Christian culture, including the Evangelists."

There never was ... and there never will be another Marc Tanenbaum. Our world will be a little emptier, a little darker without him.

Joe and I first met Georgette Bennet at a lecture at the Jack P. Eisner Institute of Holocaust Studies at CUNY's Graduate Center.

When we paid a shiva call the day after the funeral, Georgette greeted Karen and me at the door, barefoot, smiling with a scrapbook of clippings that had to be sorted. As we chatted in the book-lined spacious apartment, the sheet covering the wall mirror began to slide down. Repeated attempts to reattach it were at first unsuccessful. I.L. Peretz or Isaac Bashevis Singer would no doubt have invested that phenomena with some mystical significance. *Ver weys?* Who knows?

MASHA LEON



Tanenbaum: Ecumenical Mensch



# Rabbi Tanenbaum Dies at Age 66

By MASHA LEON  
FORWARD STAFF

"Why couldn't he have died after this funeral?" posited Georgette Bennett Tanenbaum in her eulogy to her late husband, Marc, at what will be remembered as an extraordinarily moving funeral at the Park Avenue Synagogue. It is hard to recall a time when laughter was heard at such a somber event, but there were moments of laughter at this funeral as friends and family recalled the mentsch named Marc Tanenbaum with humor and love.

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, 66, died of heart failure on July 3 in New York. He retired as the international affairs director of the American Jewish Committee in 1989, where he had worked for more than 30 years. He also served on the board of the International Rescue Committee for refugees. His pioneering efforts to foster Jewish-Christian dialogue won praise from the Pope and he has been called "father of modern Jewish-Christian dialogue."

They all came to say goodbye — friends, colleagues, clergy, politicians — Rudolph Giuliani, Robert Abrams, Elizabeth Holtzman, Haskel Lazare, Diane Steinman, Lou Jacobi, Jack Eisner, Randolph Braham, Lou Rudin and Rabbi James Rudin. Sitting behind me was Hy Levy, who showed me the front page of the June 12, 1940 American Family Magazine of Baltimore with 13-year-old Marc in his graduation photo from the Hofetz Chayim Yeshiva. "Even then he had the face of promise, of one who could help change history," said Mr. Levy.

The speakers included Rabbi David Lincoln of the Park Avenue Synagogue, Rabbi Arnold Turetsky of the Temple Israel Center at White Plains and Rabbi Emeritus Judah Nadich.

John Cardinal O'Connor read condolences from Pope John Paul II, but would not read a hand-written letter from Marc because it was "too flattering," to himself. "I did not bring with me those letters full of harshness and criticism," he added. "Marc spoke with gentleness when he believed gentleness was called for and with firmness when that was appropriate." Then, speaking to Georgette, who is seven months pregnant, the Cardinal said, "To me Joshua [the name the Tanenbaums have chosen for their unborn child] represents the bridge between the Pentateuch of Moses and the rest of Jewish history. It was Joshua who led Israel to the Promised Land and who

fought the battle of Jericho where 'the walls came tumbling down.' It is in the Promised Land where the Lion and the Lamb will lie down in peace. And one day Israel and Rome — and I am not saying which is the lion and which the lamb — will lie down together in peace."

Roy Goodman, the state senator, also addressed himself to the unborn Joshua when he said, "You will know your father of eminent courage from the legions who knew him." As I listened, I found myself thinking, "Poor Joshua, what a burden will be your birthright — and what about Marc's other children?"

Ari Goldman of the New York Times recalled how he lunched with Rabbi Tanenbaum, recently retired from the American Jewish Committee, and Rabbi Wolf Kelman, who had just retired from the Rabbinic Assembly of America. "Usually I throw away my notebooks once the column is done — but I kept this one," he said. Mr. Goldman recalled how Rabbi Tanenbaum told Rabbi Kelman, who was smoking a pipe, "Why don't you try one of these beauties," referring to a cinnamon-stick substitute for his beloved cigars. He recalled Rabbi Tanenbaum saying that, "I can't help believing that if the Jews of Munich and Dusseldorf had had meaningful dialogue then, perhaps the Holocaust might never have happened." Mr. Goldman would later write both men's obituaries.

But it was Georgette who held the assembled guests spellbound as she revealed the personal side of Marc — the man she loved. "Because of our age difference, the odds were that we would never age together and we often talked about death. I opted for ten years with this man rather than forty with another. We were told we were too old to have children, so we decided to have our own 'grandchild.' The only way Joshua will know his father is through videotapes and audiotapes and newspaper clippings. We were so interesting to each other — we brought different things to each other. He brought Popes and Cardinals and I brought police captains," she said, referring to her work as a criminologist.

"Marc wore my father's large European-style tallis...and I would sit in the congregation signalling him to straighten it over the shoulders. When I went out he would say 'You look so pretty, as if you just stepped out of a bandbox,'" she recalled. She spoke of their walks together, of their

shopping together, of making low-fat lasagna together and of grocery lists where between eggs and ginger ale he would scribble, "I love you." When he died a neighbor across the hall hung an Israeli flag with a black mourning ribbon symbolizing the loss to the Jewish people.

Georgette also recalled that the one "toxic issue" they argued over was his study. Her late husband was a compulsive collector who was wedded to the Depression era-mentality, and he could not part with a single scrap of information. "I threatened him, 'The minute you die I will wrap you up in newspaper like your mother wrapped herring and set your room on fire.' It was an incentive for him to live. So he took me seriously

and willed his interreligious library to the Jewish Theological Seminary and the files on the Vatican to Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati." She quoted Rabbi Tanenbaum as saying "When I get better I'll have two Hebrew National frankfurters and a cigar — and then you can set the room on fire." She concluded with: "Our love was such a celebration of life that the memory will sustain me for the rest of my days."

In Rabbi Lincoln's eulogy, he mentioned that Mordechai, the first person to be identified as a Jew in The Book of Esther, was Rabbi Tanenbaum's Hebrew name. Did anyone else notice that Marc/Mordechai had as a last name Tanenbaum (Christmas tree)? Who was more appropriately destined to be that bridge between Rome and Israel that Cardinal O'Connor spoke of...

## Syrian Jews Wait, Worry

Continued from Page 8

and partly because of broader cultural and class differences, the Syrians say.

### Making Room

"The Aleppo Jews are in the majority here, and they're also the captains of industry because they come from the mercantile city," one community leader said. "The Damascus Jews are the workers here, and they're in the minority, so they feel oppressed sometimes."

The vast majority of Jews remaining in Syria are from Damascus, and some of their relatives here question

whether the Aleppo majority is raising enough money to help the eventual absorption of the Jews.

"Why should Ahi Ezer do all the work when Sha'arei Zion has all the money?" asked one Ahi Ezer member.

But most community leaders dismiss the complaints, saying that everyone is helping out in whatever way they can, donating unused mattresses, creating jobs in their stockrooms or writing out checks to the community's refugee organizations.

"They don't have to worry," one prominent businessman said. "We're ready ... We just hope they come."

## Policy Favored Iraq Over Israel

Continued from Page 4

nuclear use are "flimsy pieces of paper," Mr. Clay added. "They are a fig leaf, a way of fooling ourselves [that] there is no risk."

### Wanted Assurances

Mr. Perle suggested that given evidence of Iraq's commitment to develop nuclear weapons, Washington should require specific nuclear-use assurances. "This would have opened Iraq to U.S. inspections," Mr. Bryan told the Forward. Mr. Perle's memo argued for such an assurance as a condition for the sale, but reported that the State Department did not want to impose it as a prerequisite.

Ironically, the computers involved were probably not of any use to the Iraqi nuclear weapons program, according to Mr. Bryan and the documents themselves. Mr. Bryan said the

sale to Saddam Hussein of the particular equipment noted in the documents was like "selling the Gestapo a computerized finger-printing system and database to keep track of ten million opponents." He described the Sperry as "a big piece of administrative record-keeping" hardware.

By the mid-80s, the character of the Iraqi regime was firmly established, administration critics say. "Saddam had already used gas against the Kurds, and would do so again in the summer of 1988."

Lacking any other basis on which to oppose the sale, Defense Department officials tried to make an anti-proliferation case. "SNEC could stop it," Mr. Bryan said, referring to the Subcommittee for Nuclear Export Control, an inter-agency task force chaired by the State Department's Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.



# Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, 66, Is Dead

By ARI L. GOLDMAN

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, a father of modern Christian-Jewish dialogue and, through 25 years of radio commentary, one of the best-known rabbis in America, died early yesterday at Lenox Hill Hospital. He was 66 years old and lived in Manhattan.

He died of heart failure after undergoing heart surgery last month, said his wife, Georgette Bennett.

With charisma and passion, Rabbi Tanenbaum preached better understanding between the faiths everywhere from the Vatican to the headquarters of the World Council of Churches in Geneva to the Christian Bible colleges of America's South.

The son of Orthodox Jewish immigrants from Russia who owned a grocery store in Baltimore, Rabbi Tanenbaum brought Jews and Christians together for dialogue in the wake of the Nazi Holocaust and the creation of the modern state of Israel. He worked to heal nearly 2,000 years of mutual suspicion and animosity by helping both sides better understand one another.

## A Confrontational Friend

His biography reads like a history of Christian-Jewish relations in the second half of the 20th century. Rabbi Tanenbaum developed friendships with Roman Catholic, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox Christian leaders, but he was not afraid of challenging them when he felt Jewish interests were threatened.

He often found himself negotiating between Jews who felt that Christian

## A leader in improving Christian-Jewish relations.

leaders deserved more deference and others who believed that confrontation was the best approach. His efforts sometimes incurred the wrath of Orthodox Jewish leaders who believed that to engage in interfaith dialogue was to diminish Judaism.

In his files, the rabbi kept a cartoon from the Yiddish press of the 1960's that showed Pope Paul VI holding Rabbi Tanenbaum on a leash.

Over the years, Rabbi Tanenbaum found himself at the center of all the major Jewish-Christian controversies, everything from the Catholic convent at the death camp at Auschwitz to the claim of one Southern Baptist leader that "God Almighty does not hear the

## A life dedicated to ending deeply held fears.

prayer of a Jew" to the position of mainline Protestants on the rights of Palestinians in Israel.

John Cardinal O'Connor, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of New York, said yesterday that Rabbi Tanenbaum's passing was "the end of an era." He called the rabbi "a pioneer in Christian-Jewish relations and Catholic-Jewish relations in particular."

From Rome, Edward Cardinal Cassidy, the president of the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations With the Jews, said that Rabbi Tanenbaum was "a great source of reconciliation and strength during moments of deep difficulty between our communities."

Rabbi Tanenbaum also had a long friendship with the Rev. Billy Graham. Before Mr. Graham held a crusade in Central Park last summer, Rabbi Tanenbaum set up a meeting between the Christian evangelist and the New York Board of Rabbis to assure the rabbis that Mr. Graham was not interested in converting Jews but only in bringing Christians to their faith.

The Rev. Jerry Falwell, who publicly debated Rabbi Tanenbaum before a rapt audience of Conservative rabbis in 1985, said yesterday, "Rabbi Tanenbaum spent his life attempting to strengthen healthy relations between Christians and Jews. He was brilliant and committed."

Marc Herman Tanenbaum was born in Baltimore on Oct. 13, 1925, and began his education at the Talmudical Academy of Baltimore and at City High School. He entered Yeshiva University in Manhattan at the age of 15.

After graduating from college, he began his rabbinical studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary, also in Manhattan. While a student, he became an aide to Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, professor of Jewish ethics and mysticism at the seminary.

Rabbi Tanenbaum edited several volumes of Rabbi Heschel's books.

## Reconciling Love and Hate

While at the seminary, Rabbi Tanenbaum began to delve into the roots of anti-Semitism among Christians. He said that he was driven to reconcile how "a church that preached a gospel of love could have turned it into a gospel of hatred and destruction when it came to the Jews."

Rabbi Tanenbaum was ordained in 1950 and, after a brief period in publishing and public relations, became one of the first Jewish professionals to devote

himself virtually full-time to improve relations between Christians and Jews.

He served as the executive vice president of the Synagogue Council of America and, beginning in 1960, as director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee.

In the 1950's, much of the focus of the dialogue was between Protestants and Jews, but the spotlight shifted dramatically in the early 1960's when Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council. Rabbi Tanenbaum was an official observer to the council and, according to his recollection, the only rabbi to attend.

## Repudiation of Anti-Semitism

In terms of relations with the Jews, the council produced a landmark document, "Nostra Aetate," which rejected the idea that the Jewish people were accountable for the death of Jesus and repudiated anti-Semitism "by anyone at any time."

Catholic-Jewish relations became Rabbi Tanenbaum's primary concern, but he also worked to open avenues to Evangelicals, Orthodox Christians and Muslims in the years that followed.

In 1983, he became the director of international affairs at the Jewish Committee, which introduced him to a whole new set of issues dealing with refugee relief and human rights even as he maintained his involvement in interfaith relations. He retired from the Committee in 1990 but remained as a consultant to the organization.

In the early 1980's, he was a member of a delegation of the International Rescue Committee that made three fact-finding trips to Southeast Asia to investigate the plight of Vietnamese boat people. At the Thai border with Cambodia, the rabbi joined Elie Wiesel, the Nobel laureate and chronicler of the Holocaust, in the recitation of Kaddish, the Jewish prayer for the dead, for the million Cambodians who died at the hands of the Khmer Rouge.

## White House Commissions

Rabbi Tanenbaum served on White House commissions on children, the elderly and the Holocaust. He was a member of the boards of directors of numerous institutions, including the American Jewish World Service and the International Rescue Committee. He was named to the board of Covenant House, a network of shelters for runaways, in an effort to restore confidence in the agency in the wake of scandals involving the founder, the Rev. Bruce Ritter.

He was the former chairman of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations, which represents Judaism in talks with the Vatican and other world religious bodies.

He was the founder and a chairman of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, which, until the



Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum

collapse of the Soviet Union, worked on behalf of both Jews and Christians oppressed for their religious beliefs.

Starting in 1985, Rabbi Tanenbaum had a syndicated radio broadcast of religious commentary on WINS, an all-news radio station in New York City.

He also served as a consultant to movie and television productions on religious and Jewish matters, including the NBC series "Holocaust."

Rabbi Tanenbaum received 15 honorary degrees from both religious and secular institutions, won the International Interfaith Achievement Award of the Conference of Christians and Jews and, in April, the Israel and Libby Mowshowitz Award of the New York Board of Rabbis.

Rabbi Tanenbaum is survived by his wife, who is expecting their child in September; three children by a previous marriage, Susan, of Queens, Michael, of Brooklyn, and Adena, of Oxford, England, and a sister, Sima Scherr, of Pikesville, Md.

Funeral services will be held on Monday at 12:30 P.M. at Park Avenue Synagogue, 50 East 87th Street.