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Series G: Speaking Engagements. 1975-1992

Box 107, Folder 36, Opher Celebration [Sarasota, Fla.]. 30 April
1978.



RABBI OPHER TO BE HONORED

In observance of his fifth anniversary as the Rabbi of Temple Emanu-El, Rabbi Ahron Opher will be honored by the congregation and the community at a gala celebration to be held at the Temple on Sunday evening, April 30th.

Since Rabbi Opher assumed the spiritual leadership of Temple Emanu-El, its membership has more than quadrupled in number. Its Religious School equally increased as did its Sisterhood and other affiliates. He established its Men's Club, its young couples group and organized the youth. He developed a rich, cultural and social activities and planned its popular adult educational program. He enriched its worship services with many creative rituals, new choral selections and inspiring sermons.

Under his leadership the physical facilities of the Temple were enlarged and embellished, a new social hall and offices were built and the sanctuary extended and beautified.

In the five years of his ministry in Sarasota, Rabbi Opher has made a great impact on the Jewish and general community. He has participated in every civic and communal endeavor, in the Jewish Community Council, in the UJA and Israel Bond Drives, in the Mental Health Association, in hospital chaplaincy, in the School Board's Committee on Integration. Especially in interfaith and ecumenical activities he has made an invaluable contribution in building bridges across credal and racial barriers in the area. He has addressed all service clubs and many church bodies. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Sarasota Chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and in making the Ministerial Association and interfaith body.

Dr. Opher came to Sarasota with a wide reputation as a scholar, writer and leader of distinction. He was associate editor of the Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, has written extensively in the fields of history, theology and literature, and has served on the faculties of several institutions of higher learning.

Ordained at the Jewish Institute of Religion by the late Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, he served prestigious congregations in New York, Paterson, New Jersey and Chicago, Illinois, and was Chief Rabbi of the United Reform Congregation in Johannesburg, South Africa.

He has held positions of leadership in many local and national organizations and institutions. In New York he headed the Manhattan Washington Lodge of B'nai B'rith, in New Jersey, he was president of the State Region of the American Jewish Congress, and in Chicago, he was president of the Midwest Council of the AJC.

Dr. Opher was for six years Executive Vice-President of the Synagogues Council of America and also served as Vice-President of the National Association of Boards of Rabbis, both of which bodies comprise all the religious branches of American Jewry. He was a member of the Board of Governors of the Jewish Institute of Religion, the Executive Board of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and many other national bodies.

Dr. Opher served on the Governor's Commission on Human Rights in New Jersey and on the Mayor's Commission on Youth Welfare in Chicago. He was a member of the Panel on Theological Problems of the War Department and of the Tri-Faith Consultative Body to the U.S. Delegation at the United Nations Organization. He has been active in various local and national Inter-Faith endeavors, having been president of the Ministerial Association of Chicago's South Shore, the San Fernando Valley Interfaith Commission, and National Vice-President of R.I.A.L. (Religion in American Life). He is now President of the Sarasota Ministerial Association.

** He co-chaired, together with Catholic and Protestant leaders, the conferences on Prices, Profits and Wages; on Public Housing; Family Life; and co-authored Patterns for Peace and Goals for San Francisco.

From the desk of . . .

SEYMOUR BRIEF

DATE

4/17/78

TO:

Max Tarsan

The enclosed on Aha Okta
should have helped for your
visit. Don't overstay your
welcome but do have some fun.

Hope you're able to reach
Abe Sarna who cut us back
from \$1,000 to \$350.00. He
was the only real disappointment
in Seattle. Otherwise it was very
good.

Have a happy + healthy Passover.

Fondly,

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TEMPLE EMANU-EL TO HONOR RABBI AHRON OPHER ON APRIL 30



April 30th will literally be "Ahron Opher Day" as Temple Emanu-El as the Temple hosts a gala celebration to honor Dr. Ahron Opher in recognition of his Fifth Anniversary as Emanu-El's spiritual leader. In the words of Harry Sudakoff, Chairman of this important event, "It is not just a tribute, but a genuine expression by the membership of its admiration, fondness and esteem for Rabbi Opher."

"It is unbelievable what has been accomplished in these five years," says Joseph Wertheimer, a former President of Temple Emanu-El who helped select Dr. Opher as Rabbi: "Membership of both the Temple and our Sisterhood has more than tripled; the Religious School has expanded in enrollment, facilities and faculty; the Men's Club boasts 160 members and the young couples; and youth groups are now both strong and active."

"More than that, Rabbi Opher developed a rich cultural and social life for members; planned a record-breaking adult educational program.

Physical facilities at the Temple have been enlarged, with the Sanctuary extended and a new Social Hall and offices added."

Dr. Opher came to Sarasota with a wide reputation as a scholar, writer and leader. He was associate editor of the Universal Jewish Encyclopedia and served on the faculties of several institutions of higher learning. Ordained at the Jewish Institute of Religion by the late Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, he serviced prestigious congregations in New York, Paterson, N.J. and Chicago, Ill., and was Chief Rabbi of the United Reform Congregation in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Dr. Opher has held positions of leadership in many local and national organizations, including the Manhattan-Washington Lodge of B'nai B'rith, the N.J. State Region of the American Jewish Congress and the Midwest Council of the AJC.

Dr. Opher also served on the Governor's Commission on Human Rights in New Jersey, the Mayor's Commission on Youth Welfare in Chicago — was a member of the TriFaith Consultative Body to the U.S. Delegation to the United Nations' Organization.

In the five years of his ministry in Sarasota, Rabbi Opher has made a great impact on the entire community; has participated in every civic and communal endeavor, the Jewish Community Council, the UJA and Israel Bond Drives, the Mental Health Association, in hospital Chaplaincy and the School Board's Committee on Integration. In interfaith and ecumenical activities he has made valuable contributions; was instrumental in the establishment of the Sarasota Chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews and in making the Ministerial Association an interfaith body of which he is now President.

The tribute to Rabbi Ahron Opher will include important speakers from all over the country. The entire community is cordially invited to attend. Refreshments will be served.