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Series VI: Speaking Engagements, 1917-1964.

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Fredonia, New York, 1951-1956.

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE
FREDONIA, NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

March 14, 1951

Rabbi Abbi Hillel Silver
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Rabbi Silver:

*Jumpa,
Fla.*

I am requested by the Senior Class of the College to extend to you an invitation to deliver the baccalaureate address at the College on Sunday evening, June 3. Personally I am delighted to be able to join with the class in extending this invitation. The circumstances surrounding this baccalaureate are just a little unusual. I am, therefore, writing you at some length.

The Teachers College is a constituent unit of the State University of New York which, as you may have heard, was established in the State of New York two years ago. The College is located midway between Erie, Pennsylvania, and Buffalo, New York, on the main line of the New York Central.

The unusual circumstances are these: The administration of the College, supported as it is with virtually unanimous faculty effort, has labored consistently in the field of inter-cultural relations to the end that all groups, irrespective of origin, may enjoy the full fruits of a healthy democracy. We have tried to prevent within the College divisions which would set one group off against another.

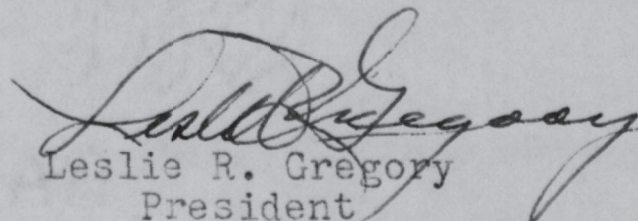
Four years ago the Bishop of the Catholic church of this diocese took the position that the Catholic students could no longer attend our baccalaureate services if they were to be religious. The faculty, therefore, voted to discontinue the baccalaureate service. The Student Christian Foundation chapter of the College, supported by the Protestant churches of the community, picked up where the faculty left off and for the past four years has conducted a baccalaureate service under the sponsorship of this organization. This sponsorship, of course, has not pleased the Catholic people, although the faculty has not participated.

Our present Senior Class has been unhappy about these divisions and its officers appointed a committee to see what could be done to provide a baccalaureate service which all groups could attend. This committee consisted of three members of the Hillel Society, three members of the Newman Club, and three members of the Student Christian Movement. The committee has emerged with a program which, although they recognize it cannot be religious in the sense that it would satisfy the various faiths, can at least be pointed in the direction of religion without dogma. The committee requested that, in the interest of solidarity, the reestablished baccalaureate service have as its first speaker a Rabbi. The motives of the committee I think are fine. By this means they hope to regain a certain degree of unity without total surrender to either the Protestant or the Catholic group. I think the young people have done some fine thinking and I am complimenting them upon their efforts to harmonize what I consider to be more or less artificial differences.

The committee was unanimous that I extend to you the invitation to deliver the address. Incidentally, this Commencement season is rather an important one for the College. On the occasion of the Commencement we will grant our first master's degrees, dedicate a new dormitory, lay the cornerstone for a new administration building, and initiate our 85th anniversary program.

There will be an honorarium for your services if you can accept the invitation.

Very sincerely yours


Leslie R. Gregory
President

LRG:MS

March 19, 1951

Dr. Leslie R. Gregory, President
State University of New York
State Teachers College
Fredonia, New York

My dear Dr. Gregory:

I appreciate very much your kind letter of March 14th and your gracious invitation to deliver the baccalaureate address to the State Teachers College on Sunday evening, June 3rd. It would have given me great pleasure indeed to come to you on that day. However, I am scheduled to deliver the baccalaureate address at the University of Tampa on that very day. I am very sorry that I am accordingly unable to avail myself of the opportunity to be with you.

Hoping that I may be of service to you at some future time, I remain

Most cordially yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

AHS:er

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE
FREDONIA, NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

December 28, 1953

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver
The Temple
Cleveland, Ohio

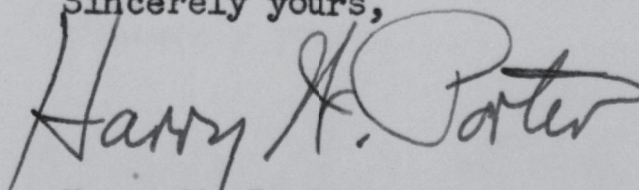
Dear Rabbi Silver:

The State Teachers College at Fredonia is completing its arrangements for the Baccalaureate Service which will be held at the College the evening of June 6, 1954. Many of our students and faculty members have personally requested that I extend to you an invitation to deliver the baccalaureate address. I share with them the sincerity and enthusiasm with which they have indicated their preference, and I am most gratified to be able to invite you to be our speaker.

You will be interested to know, I am sure, that Fredonia has an extremely active Hillel Society, Newman Club, and Student Christian Association which not only carry on independent activities, but also meet annually for a valuable inter-faith program. As an administrator of one of the teachers colleges in the State University of New York's system, I am most anxious to complement such an integration of inter-faith activities by continuing the fine series of baccalaureate speakers we have had in the past, a group which has included such men as The Reverend George A. Buttrick of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City, The Very Reverend Francis L. Meade, President of Niagara University, and Rabbi Leo Jung of the Jewish Center of New York. I sincerely hope that you will permit us to maintain the high standards of our baccalaureate service by joining us on our 1954 program.

Our honorarium for such an address is two hundred dollars. We hope that this is supplemented, in a way, by the satisfaction that can come from contributing to the preparation of young men and women who are about to enter an important profession.

Sincerely yours,


Harry W. Porter

HWP.cn

Spk. Aug.
Jed med

January 7, 1954

Dr. Harry W. Porter
State University of New York
State Teachers College
Fredonia, New York

My dear Dr. Porter:

Permit me to thank you for your kind letter of December twenty-eighth and for your gracious invitation to deliver the baccalaureate address before the State Teachers College on Sunday evening, June sixth.

That is the eve of our festival of Shabuot, the holiday on which we have Confirmation. It is therefore quite impossible for me to be away from my own congregation on that holiday. I hope that I may be of service to you at some future time.

With warmest regards, I remain

Most cordially yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

AHS:rms

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE ,
FREDONIA, NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

October 23, 1956

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver
The Temple
East 105th Street at Ansel Road
Cleveland 6, Ohio

Dear Rabbi Silver:

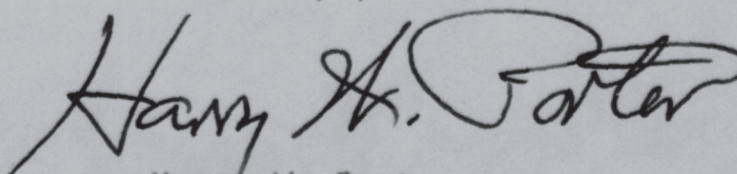
In December of 1953 I joined our faculty in inviting you to deliver the baccalaureate address at our 1954 commencement exercises. You were unable to accept the invitation because our services that year fell on the eve of the festival of Shabuot. You did, however, express the generous hope that you might be able to be of service to us at some future time.

Since we try to arrange our baccalaureate programs in three-year cycles -- with Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish speakers in rotation -- we should like to extend to you an invitation to speak at our 1957 exercises which will be held Sunday morning, June 9th.

As I indicated in the previous letter, Fredonia has an active Hillel Society, Newman Club, and Student Christian Foundation. Our baccalaureate programs of the past several years have, we believe, been important elements of our inter-faith activities, and we are anxious to maintain their high quality. Recent speakers have included the Reverend George A. Buttrick of New York, Dr. John B. Thompson of Rockefeller Chapel, University of Chicago, and Rabbi Leo Jung of New York. I earnestly hope that you may find it possible to accept this invitation and thus permit us to have in 1957 another distinguished baccalaureate service.

Our honorarium for such an address is two hundred dollars. We hope, as we have said in the past, that this is supplemented by certain intangible rewards that can come from making a valuable contribution to young people and to the teaching profession.

Sincerely yours,



Harry W. Porter
President

HWP.jwb

October 25, 1956

dictd. 10-24

Dr. Harry W. Porter, President
State University of New York
State Teachers College
Fredonia, New York

Dear Dr. Porter:

I am indeed very appreciative of your thoughtfulness in inviting me, for the second time, to deliver the baccalaureate address at your 1957 commencement exercises.

Again the date is an insurmountable obstacle to me. On that Sunday morning The Temple holds its Annual Rally and closing exercises of its Religious School. It is a function which I cannot miss as I am expected to address the school and the parents on that morning.

I regret deeply that I must forego the pleasure of being with you.

With all good wishes, I remain

Most cordially yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

AHS:sl