

Film about First Woman Rabbi to be Screened at Bergen County YJCC on April 15

Rabbi Sally Priesand, First American Woman to be Ordained, to Introduce Film

MAHWAH, NJ – Ramapo College’s Gross Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies and the Pascack Valley Jewish Coalition will sponsor a screening of the recently released documentary *Regina* at the Bergen County YJCC, 605 Pascack Road, Township of Washington, on Wednesday, April 15 at 7 p.m.

Amy Stone, noted freelance writer and editor, will introduce and lead a discussion of the film. British actress and Academy Award-winner Rachel Weisz is the voice of Regina in this poignant film. Regina Jonas (1902-1944) made history by becoming the first properly ordained woman rabbi in the world. Sally J. Priesand, the first U.S.-ordained woman rabbi, will introduce and lead a discussion of the film. She will draw on her participation in a study mission to Berlin and Terezin which followed in the footsteps and honored the memory of Regina Jonas.

The event is free and open to the public. To reserve a seat, visit <http://bit.ly/reginatherabbi>. For more information, call 201-666-6610, ext. 5782.

Diana Groós’s poetic documentary tells the story of Regina Jonas, the daughter of an Orthodox Jewish peddler. She grew up in Berlin and studied at the liberal *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* (College for the Scientific Study of Judaism) beginning in 1924 and was ordained in 1935. During the Nazi era and the war, her sermons and her unparalleled dedication brought encouragement to the persecuted German Jews. Regina Jonas was murdered in Auschwitz in 1944. The only surviving photo of Jonas, showing a determined young woman gazing at the camera with self-confidence, serves as a leitmotif for the film.

“In addition to illuminating extraordinary circumstances surrounding the ordination of the world’s first female rabbi, *Regina* provides a mesmerizing glimpse of Jewish life in Weimar and Nazi Berlin,” said Michael A. Riff, director of Ramapo College’s Gross Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

Rabbi Priesand made history in 1972 when she was ordained by Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR), becoming the first female rabbi in American history. In addition to serving Reform congregations, Rabbi Priesand has been active within the larger Reform movement, serving on the executive boards of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Rabbinic Alumni Association, and the Board of Governors of HUC-JIR. Rabbi Priesand retired from Monmouth Reform Temple after 25 years of service to that congregation.

The Pascack Valley Jewish Coalition, a sponsor of the event, is a newly formed alliance committed to strengthening and enhancing Jewish life in the region. Participants include Temple Beth Or (Township of Washington); Temple Emanuel of the Pascack Valley (Woodcliff Lake); Congregation B’nai Israel (Emerson); Temple Beth Sholom of Pascack Valley (Park Ridge); Bergen County YJCC (Township of Washington).