

The Cantor's Note:***AN HONOR AND A RESPONSIBILITY***

On December 9th, there will be a special academic convocation at the Jewish Theological Seminary honoring members of the Cantors Assembly. At that occasion, I am pleased to announce, the Seminary will confer upon me, and other deserving Conservative cantors, the degree of Doctor of Music, *honoris causa*.

This convocation is an expression of the collective esteem and appreciation of the faculty, administration, and Board of Trustees, for long and distinguished careers of service to the Conservative Movement and *Klal Yisrael*. It is a recognition of the achievement of forty years in the cantorate for each of us.

In my case, I have been fortunate to have spent thirty-five of those forty years at the same congregation, our Plainview Jewish Center. During my tenure here, I have come to know countless hundreds of families and have served the membership in a variety of capacities.

Since the middle of the summer, I have been shouldering increased responsibilities in order to maintain the day-to-day functioning of the Center. It has been an enormous challenge. Sometimes I hear comments from well-meaning congregants about being both rabbi and cantor during this difficult period. While it is always good to be appreciated, the truth is that I am not being a rabbi. I am being what I am – your cantor, a *Shaliach Tsibbur*, a messenger of the congregation in the truest and fullest sense. *Hazzanim* should be, and are, by virtue of their training, temperament, and calling, spiritual leaders, not substitute rabbis, but in partnership with rabbis. The Jewish clergy is a dual one.

During the present exigency, I will continue to carry added responsibilities, but I will also never hesitate to seek rabbinic opinion or refer to a rabbi when such a course is right or appropriate. Plainview Jewish Center must, and will again, have both a rabbi and a cantor. Until that day, our congregants should be assured that their spiritual needs will continue to be met.

As for my newest degree, it would have given my mother, of blessed memory, much pleasure to be able, finally, to say, “*my son, the doctor*”.

Cantor Morris Wolk

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