

Rabbi Dennis C. Sasso, D. Min. Curriculum Vitae

PERSONAL:

Married to (Rabbi) Sandy Eisenberg Sasso
Children: Dr. David (Dr. Dana) Sasso and Dr. Debora (Dr. Bradley) Herold
Grandchildren: Darwin Sasso, Ari and Levi Herold

EDUCATION:

- 1985 Doctor of Ministry, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis Indiana
Dissertation Title: "A Case Study in Congregational Pluralism and Vitality"
- 1976 Advanced Pastoral Care Certificate, Chaplaincy School, New York Board of
Rabbis
- 1974 Ordained Rabbi, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania
- 1972 Master of Arts, Department of Religion, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- 1969 B.A. Cum Laude, with Honors in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies, Brandeis
University,
Waltham, Massachusetts
- 1967-68 Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Department of Judaic Studies, Jerusalem, Israel
- 1965 Bachiller en Ciencias, Filosofía y Letras, Instituto Alberto Einstein, Panama,
Republic of Panama

EXPERIENCE:

- 1977-Present Senior Rabbi, Congregation Beth-El Zedeck, Indianapolis, Indiana
The Melvin and Bren Simon Senior Rabbinic Chair
- 1995-Present Affiliate Professor of Jewish Studies, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis,
Indiana
- 1979-Present Adjunct Professor, Marian College, Department of Philosophy and Theology.
Has also taught at: Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis, Department
of Religion, Butler University, Department of Religion
- 1974-77 Rabbi and Educational Director, Reconstructionist Synagogue of the North Shore,
Roslyn, Long Island, New York
- 1976 Lecturer, North Shore Institute of Adult Jewish Education
- 1976 Lecturer, B'nai B'rith, Central America and Caribbean Circuit
- 1970-74 Teaching and Research Assistant, Department of Religion, Temple University
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

- 1972-74 Scholar in residence, Faculty Bible Consultant and Lecturer in College of Adult Jewish Studies -- Reform Congregation Kenneseth Israel, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Summer 1973 Rabbi, Chautauqua Hebrew Congregation, Chautauqua, New York
- Summer 1972 Director of Jewish Cultural Arts, Camp Modin, Maine

AFFILIATIONS AND ACTIVITIES:

- 2011 - United Way of Central Indiana Public Policy Subcommittee
- 2010 - Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School Identity Committee, Board Member
- 2009 - Indianapolis Immigrant Welcome Center, Board Member
- 2008 - Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee, Board Member
- 2007 - Indianapolis Interfaith Hunger Initiative, Steering Committee
- 2006 - 2007 Community Crime Prevention Task Force
- 2005 - Board of Lake Family Institute Advisory Board; Executive Committee, Program Committee
- 2004 - Interfaith Clergy Group
- 2004 Board of Directors, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
- 2003-2004 Advisory Committee Member, LaPlaza Inc., Indianapolis, IN
- 2003 - Participant POLIS: Community Leaders Forum, sponsored by IUPUI and Lilly Endowment
- 2002 Indiana University Center for Bioethics Stem Cell Study Group
- 2002- Board of Directors, United Way of Central Indiana, Indianapolis, IN
Community Issues Committee
Winter Assistance Fund, Chairman
- 2001- Ethics Forum, St. Vincent Hospital
- 1999-2001; Chairman, Indianapolis Board of Rabbis
1994-95; 88-89;
1980-82
- 1998-99 Board of Directors, Hispanic Center, Indianapolis, IN.
- 1997-99 Member, Publications Committee of the Rabbinical Assembly of Conservative Judaism
- 1996 Member, Advisory Board of *The Reconstructionist*, a journal of contemporary thought and practice
- 1997-98 President, Indiana Interreligious Commission on Human Equality
- 1996-98 Co-Chairman, Citizens Complaint Working Group, Indianapolis (Mayoral Appointment)

1995-96	Co-Chairman, Race Relations Leadership Network of Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee, Indianapolis (Mayoral Appointment)
1995-Present	Rabbinic Advisory Committee of the Jewish Fund for Justice
1995-Present	Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Regional Board of Directors
1993-Present	Board of Directors, Jewish Federation of Greater Indianapolis
1992	Rabbinic host and member of Steering Committee: Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot national convention, Indianapolis, Indiana
1990-96	Board of Directors, MAZON (A Jewish Response to Hunger)
1990-96	Founding Co-Chairman of the Rabbinic Table, MAZON
1987-Present	United Jewish Appeal Rabbinic Cabinet
1987	Co-Chairman, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association Annual Convention, Washington, D.C.
1984-86	President, Indiana Interreligious Commission on Human Equality
1982-84	Co-Chairman, Religious and Cultural Intolerance Commission, Indiana Interreligious Commission on Human Equality
1980-1984	Chaplaincy Advisory Committee, Methodist Hospital
1980	Chaplaincy Committee, Jewish Welfare Federation
1979-81	Chairman, Jewish Welfare Federation Jewish Acculturation Sub-Committee for Russian Immigrants
1978-80	Board of Directors, National Conference of Christians and Jews, Indianapolis, Indiana
1978-80	President, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
1977-Present	Board of Directors, Bureau of Jewish Education
1977-Present	Board of Directors, Jewish Community Relations Council
1976-78	Founding Board Member and Treasurer, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
1976-Present	Chairman, Standing Commission on Conversion, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Assoc.
1974-Present	New York Board of Rabbis

AWARDS AND HONORS:

	Reconstructionist Rabbinical College President's Council
2009	Gold Star Award, National Council for International Visitors, International Center of Indianapolis

2006 Faith and Freedom Award for Advocacy, Indiana Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

2003 Keynote Speaker, United in Diversity Celebration, Indianapolis, IN

2001 Doctor of Divinity, *Honoris Causa*, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, NY

1997-2003 Renaissance Weekend, Hilton Head, South Carolina

2000 Doctor of Divinity, *Honoris Causa*, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, IN

1999 Doctor of Divinity, *Honoris Causa*, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Philadelphia, PA.

1999 “Community Service Award” by the Greater Indianapolis Branch of the NAACP for “Commitment to Advancing Race Relations in our City.”

1999 Key to the city presented by Mayor Steve Goldsmith for “Helping Me Build a Great City”

1998 Honored by the Indianapolis Chapter of LINKS in a Tribute to Distinguished Religious Leaders in the category of “Fostering Life” for work in Interfaith and Interracial Relations.

1997 Frank H. Newman Award, presented by the Jewish Federation of Greater Indianapolis “In recognition of professional service, beyond the call of duty, and . . . leadership toward meeting human service goals established by the Jewish Community.”

1995 “Sagamore of the Wabash”, highest civilian award by Governor of State of Indiana

1994 “Past President Award for Service and Leadership” on the 20th Anniversary of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association

1984 Theta Phi Scholastic Honor Society in Religion

1982 Who's Who in American Jewry

1976 Keynote Speaker and Honoree at 100th anniversary of the Panamanian Jewish Community

1975 Award for "Contribution to Judaism, the Rabbinate and the Jewish Family", B'nai B'rith Women, District One (shared with wife, Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso)

1974 Valedictorian at graduation ceremonies, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

1970-72 Scholarship Grant, Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture

1969-74 Fellowship, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

1969 B'nai Zion Fraternal Organization Hebrew Award, Brandeis Univ.

1965-69 Wien International Scholar at Brandeis University

1965-66 U.S. Department of State Scholarship Grant

- 1965 Humanities Award, Instituto Alberto Einstein, Panama
- 1965 Jewish Studies Award, Instituto Alberto Einstein, Panama

ACTIVITIES AND CONFERENCES:

- 2009 Center for Interfaith Cooperation (CIC)
- 2008 Trip to Turkey – Holy Dove Foundation
- 2008 Trip to Spain – Jewish Federation of Indianapolis
- 2008 Trip to Guatemala – Ambassadors for Children
- 2008 Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association: Past President, Advisory Committee
- 2005 Trip to Israel – Jewish Federation of Indianapolis
- 2001- Member of the International Affiliation Committee of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation.
- 1992-2001 Lecturer and Respondent at Annual Jewish-Christian Conference, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, IN.
- 1992 Adult IUPUI extension course "Jews from Spain: The Sephardic Experience 1492-1992".
- 1992-Present "Faces of Faith" -- Member of Steering Committee and Panelist on WRTV, Channel 6 interfaith program.
- 1991 Keynote speaker at the conference in Santo Domingo on La Celebracion del Quinto Centenario del Descubrimiento y Evangelizacion de America (The 500th Anniversary of the Discovery and Evangelization of the Americas).
- 1991 Speaker at the 1990 Annual Convention of the American Sephardi Federation. "Pioneers in the New World: Sephardic Jews in the Caribbean and Central America."
- 1990 Evangelicals, Liberals and Jews: Traditions in Conflict, Christian Theological Seminary and Jewish Community Relations Council
- 1989-1992 Chairperson, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association Rabbi's Manual Commission
- 1978-91 "Focus on Faith", regular panelist on religious issues show (Channel 6 TV)
- 1978-90 "A Jewish Perspective", periodic host and/or guest on Jewish issues program.
- 1984 Commissioner, Indiana Civil Right Interfaith Hearings
- 1983 "Genetic Counseling & Pastoral Care Conference", Executive Planning Committee and panelist
- 1983 "Ethics in a Nuclear Age", speaker, Indiana Peace Center at Christian Theological Seminary
- 1983 "Peace with Justice Conference", keynote speaker, Indiana Council of Churches

- 1982 “Has God Rejected His People”, keynote speaker, Christian Theological Seminary, Jewish Community Relations Council
- 1981 “Mordecai M. Kaplan’s View of Torah”, guest speaker, Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot, Midwest Region, Chicago
- 1980 Second Annual Conference of Evangelicals and Jews, Trinity Evangelical Seminary, Deerfield, Illinois, American Jewish Committee and Christianity Today
- 1979 Clergy Institute on Israel, keynote speaker, Jewish Community Relations Council/American Jewish Committee (Indianapolis)
- 1979 Conference on “The Moral Significance and Meaning of the Holocaust”, Planning Committee, program participant.
- 1978-89 “Information on Judaism”, lecturer, Bureau of Jewish Education

PUBLICATIONS:

“Exploring Reconstructionism’s Mission”, *RRA Connection*, October, 2011.

Monthly columnist for The Indianapolis Star.

“What Do We Mean by Religion?”, *The American Rabbi Anthology*, High Holy Days, 2009 ☆ 5770.

“Journeys: From Exile to Homecoming”, *The American Rabbi Anthology*, High Holy Days, 2009 ☆ 5770.

“Religious Dialogue – Getting Beyond The Basics. *Christian Science Sentinel*, November 12, 2007.

Commentator, “Ethics of Speech”, edited by David Teutsch, 2006.

Contributor. *For the Good of the City: A 20th Anniversary Devotional of Interfaith Alliance Indianapolis*. Interfaith Alliance Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN, 2005.

Commentator, “Bioethics – Reinvigorating the Practice of Contemporary Jewish Ethics”, edited by David Teutsch, 2005.

Commentator, “A Guide to Jewish Practice – Tzedaka”, edited by David Teutsch, 2005.

“Whose Counting”, *The American Rabbi*, High Holy Days, 2004 ☆ 5765.

“Diverse Perspectives: Considerations About Embryonic Stem Cell Research”, (Co-Author) *Indiana University Center for Bioethics Stem Cell Study Group*, October 2002.

“Encounter – Reflections on the Way of Blessing: Essays Presented to Clark M. Williamson”, *Judaism: An Evolving Religious Civilization*, Vol. 63, No. 1/2, Winter/Spring 2002

“Rabbi Ira Eisenstein”, *Reconstructionism Today*, Vol. 9, No. 1, Autumn 2001.

“Jewish Continuity: The Search for Meaning”, *The American Rabbi*, Vol. 33, No. 3/4, Spring/Summer 2001.

“A Comment on Sanctity in the Secular World”, *Common Ground: Piety & Politics*. Indiana: The Indiana Civil Liberties Union, Vol. 2, Number 2, Summer 1997.

- “Rabbi Samuel Schwartz” (eulogy), *Proceedings of the Rabbinical Assembly 1995*. New York: The Rabbinical Assembly, Vol. LVII/1995.
- “Stages of Faith: The Experience”, *The American Rabbi*, Vol. 26, No. 5, April 1994.
- “Never Forget: A Rabbi Reflects on the Holocaust”, *The Disciple*, Vol. 131, No. 4, April 1993.
- “Judaism Then and Now”, *Tidings*, April 1993.
- “As the Rabbi Said”, *Moment*, June 1992.
- “First Steps”, *Raayonot*, Vol. 8, No. 4, Spring 1992.
- “A Ceremony for Veteran's Day”, *Reconstructionist*, Vol. LVII, No. 1, Autumn, 1991.
- “The Role of the Rabbi in a Participatory Community”, *Reconstructionist*, June 1989.
- “A Case Study In Congregational Pluralism and Vitality”, unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana, May, 1985.
- “To Accept and To Be Accepted”, *Conservative Judaism*, Vol. 37, No. 4, Summer, 1985.
- “Kaplan and Whitehead: A Study of Symbolism” *Jewish Civilization: Essays and Studies*, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College Press, Philadelphia, 1985.
- “The Influence of Mordecai M. Kaplan”, *The Reconstructionist*, Vol. XLIX, No. 6, April/May, 1984.
- “Renewing the Huppah”, *Menorah*, Vol. IV, Nos. 9-10, November/December, 1983 (co-authored with Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso)
- “The Eulogy As A Pastoral Tool”, *Raayanot*, Vol. 3, No. 4, Fall, 1983.
- “The Future of Reconstructionism”, A Symposium, *Reconstructionist*, Vol. 48, No. 1, March, 1982.
- “I Also Am Evolving”, *M. M. Kaplan On His Hundredth Year*, Judaism, Vol. 30, #1 Winter, 1981.
- “What Is Reconstructionist Judaism”, *Keeping Posted*, Vol. XXVII, No. 3, January 1982.
- “Que? Por Que? Hacia Donde?” (“What? Why? Whither?”) Keynote address published in *Kol Shearith Israel: A Hundred Years of Life in Jewish Panama*, edited by E. A. Fidanque, et. al., Panama, 1977.
- “Que es el Reconstruccionismo”, *Herencia Judia, Segunda Serie, #9*, Bogota, Colombia, 1976.
- “One Century of Jewish Life in Panama”, *The Reconstructionist*, Vol. XLII, No. 6 (September 1976). Hebrew translation in *T'Futsot Yisrael*).
- Or Babayit: A Hanukkah Family Resource Booklet*, Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Fellowships, 1975.
- “B'rith B'not Yisrael: A Covenant for the Daughters of Israel”, birth ceremony co-authored with Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, *Moment*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (May/June 1975).

“Jewish Life in Panama”, *Hayom*, Philadelphia, December 1974 (excerpted in *Jewish Digest*, January 1978).

“The Joys and Yoke of the Rabbi”, *The Reconstructionist*, Vol. XL, No. 6 (September 1974).

Ezequiel, Biblioteca Popular Judia, Congreso Judio Mundial (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1970).