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*Foundation to Advance Interfaith Trust and Harmony*

## An American Rabbi in Queen Elizabeth's Court

**Rabbi Mark L. Winer is first American-born rabbi to receive royal honor for promoting interfaith relations**

December 30, 2013 – MIAMI, Fla. - **Rabbi Mark L. Winer**, a world-renowned American interfaith activist and scholar today was named a **Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) by Queen Elizabeth II** for his work in promoting interreligious partnership during a period of rising religious tensions in England. The award is announced in the Queen's 2014 New Year's "Honours List."

**Rabbi Winer becomes the first American-born rabbi honored with an MBE.** The award is for "promoting interfaith dialogue and social cohesion in London and the UK," according to the citation from the Queen.

"I am humbled and thrilled to accept the MBE," said Rabbi Winer, who for 30 years led congregations in the United States before moving to London in 1998 for 12 years as Senior Rabbi of the West London Synagogue of British Jews - Reform Judaism's flagship temple in Europe. "This signal honor demonstrates the importance of continuing the crucial work of improving interfaith relations, education, mutual respect and understanding, to combat religious hatred and violence in the world."

Rabbi Winer was instrumental in building interfaith relations and preaching for interreligious reconciliation after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, and the 7/7 London Underground bombings. During that period, he appeared frequently on national BBC broadcasts calling for understanding and mutual respect.

Rev. Richard Chartres, the Church of England's **Bishop of London**, said Rabbi Winer "has worked tirelessly for co-operation between Judaism and the many other religions represented in modern London's extraordinarily diverse population."

"He is in his own league," said Rubab Mehdi Hassan Rizvi, a Pakistani-British Muslim lawyer and **Chairperson of the International Imam Hussain Council**. "He has worked tirelessly to bridge gaps between communities. He is like a father to me, and a grandfather to my son."

While in London, Rabbi Winer launched a British branch of his international interfaith charitable initiative "**FAITH: The Foundation to Advance Interfaith Trust and Harmony**," which he founded in the United States in 1995. In 2002, while retaining his American citizenship, he became a British subject as well, and served two one-year terms as Chaplain to the Lord Mayor of Westminster.

Upon returning to the United States in September 2010, Rabbi Winer continued his lifelong devotion to interreligious reconciliation. He is Director of the Center for Ecumenical and Interreligious Studies of St. Thomas University in Miami, the Diocesan University of the Archdiocese of Miami. He is also adjunct Professor of Religion at St. Thomas.

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Before moving to England, Rabbi Winer, 71, was a congregational rabbi for over 30 years in **New Haven, Conn; Commack, Long Island, N.Y. and White Plains, N.Y.**, where he has been Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Kol Ami since 1998.

Throughout his career, Rabbi Winer has been a leader in promoting positive relations between faith communities. He has **been Chairman of the International Interfaith Task Force for the World Union for Progressive Judaism, the Reform Jewish movement's global arm**, and President of the National Council of Synagogues (USA), which represents Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist Rabbis and Congregations in dialogue with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the National Council of Churches.

Rabbi Winer has been involved in several major international interfaith events, including resolving the issues that led to the Treaty between Israel and the Vatican.

He was a key negotiator in resolving the dispute between Catholics and Jews over the Carmelite convent in Auschwitz, and for the release of Ethiopian Jews.

Winer is a true "All-American." He was born in Logan, Utah on Dec. 16, 1942, and raised in Dallas, Texas. He was educated at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he graduated magna cum laude in 1964. He was ordained as a rabbi in 1970 at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York City, and earned a PhD with highest distinction in 1977 at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut.

Rabbi Winer is married to Suellen. They have three children, Beth, Adam, and Rachel, and four grandsons, Matthew and Jason Michel, and Zachary and Luke Bleifer.

The MBE will be officially conferred within the next few months by the Queen at St. James's Palace in London in an "investiture" by the "Central Chancery of the Orders of Knighthood."

To arrange for an interview with Rabbi Winer, please either contact him directly at: **Rabbi Mark L. Winer, Ph.D., D.D.**

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View *The Rabbi, the Vicar and the Imam* (9 minute video):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1u7PNB02Tfo>