

*For Immediate Release*



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## Advocate for Pluralism in Israel Elected New Chair of Masorti Foundation



Heidi Schneider, Rabbi Harold Kravitz

New York, NY, January 8, 2019 - The Masorti Foundation for Conservative Judaism in Israel is proud to announce the election of Heidi Schneider as its incoming Chair of the Board effective January 1, 2019.

To her 25+ years of work on behalf of Masorti/Conservative Judaism here and in Israel, Ms. Schneider brings the passion of someone who has chosen Judaism.

A former litigator and a public speaker, she is an ardent Zionist, seeker of social justice, and fearless truth teller. Rabbi Robert Slosberg, current Chair, said: *"The Foundation is in good hands with Heidi; she's a leader of great integrity, matching her words and beliefs with action."*

On a mission to Israel, Ms. Schneider confronted Member of Knesset Yair Lapid because her son--while attending high school in Israel--had been told he was not a Jew. She asked: *"How do you think it felt to my Jewish child to be told in Israel, the country he loves, by an Israeli, a fellow Jew, that he is not Jewish? It makes my blood boil, and it should yours, too. I ask you, MK Lapid, can you assure me that you will do everything in your power to assure that my children, and the children of other faithful converts to Judaism will be welcomed as equally Jewish in the only Jewish state?"*

The pursuit of an egalitarian, pluralistic, and welcoming Israel has been central to Ms. Schneider's life and to her work as past president of her congregation, Adath Jeshurun in Minneapolis, as a lay leader of the Overseas Committee of the Minneapolis Jewish Federation, and as a Trustee of the Masorti Foundation. In all these roles she has been an inspiring community leader and teacher.

Rabbi Harold Kravitz of Adath Jeshurun says: *"Heidi has been a trusted partner, a warm and true friend, a tireless advocate for the congregation, and for Masorti/Conservative Judaism. I'm proud and delighted at her elevation to Chair of the Masorti Foundation. Heidi's vision for building a thriving future for modern religious streams in Israel is exactly what's needed—with her dynamism and spirit, she'll be unstoppable."*

Beth Leonard, former Board Chair of the Minneapolis Jewish Federation who now serves on the Board of Governors of JAFI (Jewish Agency for Israel), adds: *"Heidi is an extraordinary leader of our community and our synagogue. She inspires with wisdom and kindness, championing the cause of Masorti Judaism in Israel."*

*"I'm honored," says Ms. Schneider, "to have been chosen Chair. I am continually inspired by the important work of our Masorti colleagues in Israel. I'm prepared to channel my energy to hold the State of Israel true to the words of its founding document, that it "will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education, and culture..."*

Ms. Schneider and Executive Director Gideon Aronoff are laser-focused on issues of religious equality and social justice in Israel including:

- Recognition of the legitimacy of all Jewish streams in Israel;
- Acceptance of converts, including Masorti Jews from Uganda;
- Full equality at the Kotel, including expanded egalitarian prayer space;
- Support for the rights of the disabled to fully participate in Jewish practice; starting with Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies.

Says Mr. Aronoff of Heidi's election: *"Heidi has been a tireless advocate and passionate fighter in the struggle for equality, and for observance combined with modernity, in Israel. I am thrilled to be working in partnership with her, and grateful to have her guidance, as together we propel Masorti to the forefront of leadership in the Jewish community in Israel."*

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***About The Masorti Foundation for Conservative Judaism in Israel***

The Masorti Foundation supports the Masorti Movement in Israel whose goals are the furthering of an egalitarian, democratic and welcoming Judaism consistent with Jewish tradition and values.

### ***About Heidi Schneider***

Heidi Schneider is a lawyer and educator. She teaches outreach classes to adult and public school audiences concerning Judaism and Israel. A magna cum laude graduate of Carleton College with a law degree from the University of Minnesota and a master's degree in Education from Columbia Teachers College, Heidi has served on many boards including the Board of Trustees of Carleton College, the Minnesota Private Colleges Council, the Minneapolis Jewish Day School, the Masorti Foundation, and as President of her congregation, Adath Jeshurun, in Minnetonka, Minnesota. She served as the chair of the Speakers Bureau of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas.

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