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“Step into the Limelight” with Comedian Rita Rudner on February 12, 2000

1990 American Comedy Award recipient, Rita Rudner will “Step into the Limelight” on February 12, 2000 for the Jewish Federation’s second annual gala fundraiser.

Ms. Rudner is currently starring in *A Weekend in the Country*, an independent feature co-written with her husband. The film is a romantic comedy starring Rudner, Jack Lemmon, Christine Lahti, Richard Lewis and Faith Ford. Her second HBO special entitled “Rita Rudner: Married Without Children,” premiered in June of 1995 to rave reviews. She has made regular appearances on the “Tonight Show,” “Late Night with David Letterman,” and “Comic Relief.” Ms. Rudner has also written two books. Her first book, *Naked Beneath My Clothes*, published by Viking Penguin, quickly became a bestseller. Her most recent, *Rita Rudner’s Guide to*

Men, came out last May and contains 202 tips about who men are, how they think, and who they think they are.

The Gala, which will be held at the Marriott City Center will feature a cocktail reception, open bar, four course dinner, lavish dessert reception, comedy with Ms. Rudner and dancing with the band “Liquid Pleasure.”

Again this year, guests will be given the opportunity to hear about how funds from the Annual Community Campaign impact the lives of Jews here in Charlotte and around the world. “Step into the Limelight” will also focus the “limelight” on the outstanding work of the Federation’s recipient agencies. “This evening will be a true celebration of our community, both here in Charlotte and abroad,” said Sara Schreiber, who



Comic Rita Rudner

chairs the event. “We are looking forward to highlighting the work that is done by both our constituent agencies here in Charlotte and those that help Jews in need in Israel and the Former Soviet Union.”

Meg Goldstein, 2000 Annual Campaign Chair, will present the “case for giving” to the 2000 Campaign and is anticipating another strong show of support for the Federation. “We were thrilled with the results from last year’s fundraiser. There were over 477 people in attendance and we raised \$258,000. Of this amount, \$72,000 were new dollars.”

Again this year the event will reach out to the newcomers in the community to include them for the evening. “We have asked each of our



Table Captains to recruit at least one newcomer or newcomer couple to sit at their table,” said Sue Littauer who co-chairs this year’s Recruitment Committee with Marni Abramowitz. “We would like for ‘Step into the Limelight’ to include as many new people as possible to welcome them as part of our community.” The Gala Recruitment Committee is working hard to spread the word about the event.”

Be sure to make your reservations for this exciting event immediately. Ticket information can be obtained from Cary Bernstein (944-6762 or email cb@shalom-charlotte.org) ✪

At the General Assembly

UJC’s Inaugural Event Reflects Hope, Uncertainty about Future

By Julia Goldman

ATLANTA (JTA) — North American Jewish community federations decided years ago that it was time to change the way they relate to one another and the rest of the Jewish world.

In November in Atlanta, the formal transformation began to take shape.

But its real effects may take years to reverberate throughout the United Jewish Communities, which represents nearly 200 federations and some 400 independent communities.

People generally “have a feeling” that a change is afoot, but “they don’t know what it is,” Richard November, the president of the Jewish Community Federation of Richmond, said at the end of the UJC’s inaugural event here.

The UJC, formed through the merger of the Council of Jewish Federations and the United Jewish Appeal, became legal Nov. 17, according to papers filed with New York state.

The event capped off more than six years of deliberations over how to promote efficiency and give communities a greater say in the way the funds they raise are allocated for Jewish needs at home and abroad.

As more than 5,200 delegates

from North America and Israel converged on the southern capital, the UJC’s governing bodies met for the first time, beginning the business of reorganizing a social-service and fund-raising system that raised \$790 million in the 1999 annual campaign. Attending this year’s GA from Charlotte was Bill Gorelick, Patty Gorelick, Jill Newman, and Sara Schreiber. The Federation received an award from UJC for an outstanding campaign achievement for 1999.

Federations agreed that “a national system is needed to enhance the effectiveness of local federations,” but differed on its role.

Some of the people interviewed envision the UJC as a kind of “trade organization” for federations, providing a way for communities to work together on common issues.

Others believe the organization should take the initiative in setting a continental Jewish agenda.

Charles Bronfman, the philanthropist who serves as the UJC’s first chairman, told the first meeting of the 123-member Board of Trustees that “this is not simply a merger. This is a new institution.”

Joel Tauber of Detroit, the chairman of the executive committee, counseled patience. Noting that 1,000 board and committee

appointments have already been made, he said at a news conference that the definition of ownership “was left aside because it is so controversial.”

Bronfman said that even though questions remain, the high attendance level at the UJC’s kickoff event was “an indication of the tremendous groundswell of interest and the desire to be part of it.”

Indeed, the G.A. had the feel of a communal celebration, and Bronfman marked its opening plenary by leading the delegates who filled Atlanta’s Civic Center in the *shehecheyanu*, a Hebrew prayer traditionally said to mark beginnings and happy occasions.

High points of the event included appearances by Vice President Al Gore, who decided to speak only days before the G.A., and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, who delivered his address to the closing plenary by video after his plane was damaged while refueling in England en route to Atlanta from a conference in Turkey.

In his address, Gore told the delegates they “are forging a unifying coalition for social justice here, at home and abroad.”

Israel’s Prime Minister Ehud Barak thanked delegates “for all you give and have given to the

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At the General Assembly

Today’s Jewish Renaissance Creates a Canvas for the Future

By Lisa Hostein

ATLANTA (JTA) — If Michelangelo’s Renaissance meant sculpting Moses from a piece of marble, just what does an American Jewish Renaissance hope to create?

Like the great Italian artists who reached back to classical influences to transform art and culture, American Jewry is reaching back to Jewish sources to create a new kind of contemporary Jew — steeped in Jewish learning and tradition, a Jew excited about being Jewish out of choice, not necessity.

It’s a tall order in these times of growing assimilation; but it is one optimists and pessimists of the American Jewish scene believe will be necessary for American Jewry not only to survive, but to thrive.

Although some have been preaching the need for a Jewishly-literate American Jewry for years, the organized community, propelled by the grass roots, is now taking up the cause.

The United Jewish Communities, the new federation-driven national fund-raising and social service organization officially launched in November in Atlanta, has designated Jewish

Renaissance and Renewal as one of its four main pillars, or areas of focus.

Indeed, a task force charged with recommending a course of action suggested as its guiding vision: “to provide a bold and vigorous leadership for building a Jewish community permeated by Torah, *chesed* (lovingkindness) and *tzedek* (justice or righteousness).”

“We’ve come a long way, at least rhetorically,” Jonathan Woocher, executive vice president of the Jewish Education Service of North America, said last week at the opening Renaissance forum at the UJC’s General Assembly.

“Whereas in the past we were worrying about Jewish continuity, now the focus is on Jewish renaissance,” he said to hundreds of G.A. delegates who were representing federations throughout North America.

The buzzword has changed, and so, it seems, has the emphasis.

The forum drew the largest attendance of any of the four focus sessions — the others being Campaign/Finance Resource Development, Human Services and Social Policy, and Israel and Overseas, confirming that finding

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**Connecting Families
Sustaining Tradition
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**Campaign Surpasses
\$24 Million Mark!**

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