

Brandeis Three Chapels Mark 25th Anniv.

Three prominent religious figures will participate in an ecumenical rededication ceremony marking the 25th anniversary of Brandeis University's Three Chapels, the only individual Catholic, Jewish and Protestant chapels built simultaneously on an American college campus. The event will be held on Sunday, Sept. 7 at 11:30 a.m. at the Chapels.

The participants will be: Humberto Cardinal Medeiros, Archbishop of Boston; Rabbi Irving Greenberg, first Hillel director at Brandeis; and Dr. Krister Stendahl, former Dean of Harvard Divinity School and currently professor of divinity. Brandeis chancellor and founding president Abram I. Sachar, who participated in the 1955 dedication ceremonies, will serve as host for the event.

When the Chapels were dedicated in 1955 by the Jewish sponsored non-sectarian university, the event received nationwide attention as a pioneering ecumenical project. It marked a unique departure from customary practices at denominationally-sponsored colleges which traditionally built a chapel of that religion with use of the facility extended to students of other faiths. Typical reaction was a New York Times editorial which characterized the Chapels as "a sermon in stone."

The Chapels are designed to symbolize the heritages of Judaism, Catholicism and Protestantism. The Mendel and Leah Berlin Chapel, donated by the late Dr. David D. Berlin of Boston, and named for his parents, is in the form of a sacred scroll, the most revered object of the Jewish faith. Bethlehem Chapel is a gift of Roman Catholic friends of the University. It was named by His Eminence, Richard Cardinal Cushing for the city of David and the birthplace of Jesus and is shaped like an open Bible, as is John Marshall Harlan Chapel. Harlan Chapel is named for the Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, who preceded Justice Brandeis to the Bench, and whose dissent in the Plessy vs. Ferguson case to establish "separate but equal" facilities in education was vindicated by the court 58 years later. Funds for its construction were obtained by a national committee led by C. Allan Harlan, of Detroit, a descendant of Justice Harlan.

The construction of the Three Chapels was recognized as another among many pioneering steps taken in the early years of the only Jewish-sponsored, non-sectarian liberal arts institution in the nation.

The three extra-curricular religious groups at Brandeis supervise the use of the Chapels. The concept of the Chapels did not alter the University's policy of non-denominational activities; no official chaplain was named for Brandeis nor were services made compulsory. The chaplains for the Hillel Foundation, the Newman Club and the Student Christian Association conduct the services in the Chapels.