

# **“THE PRESERVATION OF RABBI LEONARD HELMAN’S SERMONS, PAPERS, CORRESPONDENCE, AND PUBLIC SERVICE ACHIEVEMENTS”**

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Funded by the New Mexico Historical Records Advisory Board, NMJHS is organizing and rehousing Rabbi Helman’s professional and personal papers to meet archival standards to preserve and make them available to future scholars and others. Eventually, these documents will be housed in the New Mexico State Archives and Records.

Rabbi Helman had a diverse, complex, and interesting career as a congregational rabbi, lawyer, and state employee. In 1974, he came to Santa Fe as the religious leader at Temple Beth Shalom and simultaneously worked as a lawyer and hearing officer for the State Public Service Commission. One of Rabbi Helman’s lasting influences was his tireless work within the Santa Fe inter-faith and lay communities in northern New Mexico. In addition, Helman’s contributions and writings will be sought by future rabbinical students and teachers in modern U.S. Jewish seminaries.

Helman also had many interests, talents, and a complex personality that made him a well-known figure in Santa Fe and internationally. The significance of Helman’s sermons and writings can help us to understand the issues and concerns felt by New Mexico (as well as American and world) Jewry, how were they interpreted by local Jews, and what actions did they take? To what extent was New Mexico Jewry in step with Jews elsewhere? How well informed were New Mexico Jews? To what extent were their non-Jewish neighbors aware of these matters and did they share the outlook of other Americans? Were New Mexicans overall becoming more cosmopolitan?