

Rabbis lauds decision allowing women to ranks

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"We have a written law," Spectre said. "Every tradition has this. The Talmud is based on the oral law of the faith, he said. The teachings were written down at a point in history when Jews became scattered

and many feared the teachings would be lost. "So they made a decision to write down the law and that became the Talmud. Among the things written in that law, it says specifically women may not be counted as witnesses," Spectre

said. Women may not, for example, be included in a minyan, a term referring to the number of people required to hold a service. "It is possible to be a rabbi, and not be counted in the minyan," Spectre said. "The two are not

necessarily in conflict, but it is awkward, it is difficult." Some Conservative congregations, including Beth Shalom in the Detroit area, do include women in the minyan, he said.

IN SEPTEMBER of 1984, women were admitted to the rabbinical school at the Jewish Theological Seminary. Some women had already done some of their coursework, Spectre said.

In order to be admitted to the seminary, students must hold at least a bachelor's degree. The course of study then takes at least four years, Spectre said. It could take longer, depending on the student's previous training and language proficiency.

She helps children

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"That made me decide I wanted to work with kids," she said.

So it was back to school for Hinz. In 1973 she started working as a volunteer with Oakland County recruiting and training people to work as "special friends" to children.

In 1976 she moved into the youth assistance program in Oak Park, followed by years in the Novi and Walled Lake programs.

Now besides counseling and working with youths and their families, Hinz spends about 40 percent of her time working with volunteers on programs sponsored by the FYA.

Currently Hinz is working with volunteers on forming a study skills workshop for youths who are having problems in school. The six-week program would provide these students with study and organization. Sometimes, she said, youths

have problems in school simply because they don't know how to study or organize their time.

The volunteer programs offered by FYA are also on the success list for Hinz. These programs "have an intangible impact" on families.



FILE PHOTO

Rabbi Etry Spectre, of Congregation Adat Shalom Synagogue in Farmington Hills, was happy with last week's decision to accept women as Conservative rabbis.

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