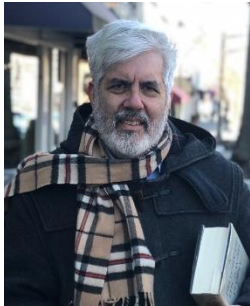


Profiles of Panelists For The Film Screening Discussion

Sunday, November 22, 2020

2-3:30 p.m. via Zoom

[RSVP](#)



Adam Brown is a frequent lecturer on genealogical subjects at conferences all over the world, is Managing Editor of [AvotaynuOnline.com](#), and was National Co-Chair of the [IAJGS](#) 2017 conference in Orlando. A strategic planner by profession, he has led numerous boards and commissions pertaining to municipal planning and finance, Jewish education, and scientific research in Israel.

The Avotaynu DNA study is a worldwide academic collaboration of scientists, historians, genealogists and community leaders that has utilized DNA to illuminate the origins and migrations of the Jewish People. Under the guidance of [the Technion](#), the Avotaynu DNA study has over 8,000 participants representing all known Jewish communities from China to Curacao. The project has actively studied Sephardi and converso populations all over the Western Hemisphere as well.



Joe Lovett, Executive Producer, Director; Event Moderator, started Lovett Stories + Strategies (as Lovett Productions, Inc.) in 1989 after 10 years as a producer at ABC News “20/20,” following five years as an editor and producer at CBS News Magazine which was created as a daytime “60 minutes” for an at home audience.

Before working for the networks, Joe was a freelance editor and assistant working on networks, features and industrials. He got into film as an MFA student at Columbia. Joe’s team has produced over 30 hours of prime-time television programming and countless projects for a wide-variety of clients, from non-profit organizations and Fortune 500 companies, to federal, state and local government agencies. Their productions have won critical acclaim and numerous awards, including the Peabody Award, Christopher Award, Telly Award and an Emmy nomination.



José “Akiba” Portuondo-Dember, Esq. is descended from conversos that fled the Spanish Inquisition, settling in Puerto Rico and Cuba. He received his J.D. from Boston College (2012) and his B.A. in Jewish Studies from the University of Chicago (2006). He currently works as a translator and attorney, with practice interests in LGBTQ rights; and First Amendment jurisprudence and indigenous medicines of the Americas.

He divides his time living in Sharon, MA and Santa Clara, Cuba. He lives with his husband, Josh Portuondo-Dember, their dog, cat, and three Chilean brush-tailed rats.



Rabbi Or Rose, Founding Director of the [Miller Center for Interreligious Learning & Leadership of Hebrew College](#).

Before assuming this position in 2016, Rabbi Or's work at Hebrew College for over a decade has included serving as a founding faculty member and Associate Dean of the [Rabbinical School](#). In addition to his work at Hebrew College, Rabbi Or has taught for the Bronfman Youth Fellowships, The Wexner Graduate Fellowship, and in a variety of other academic, religious, and civic contexts throughout North America and in Israel. A prolific author and editor, his recent publications include: [Words To Live By: Sacred Sources for Interreligious Engagement](#) (co-editor, Orbis) and [Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi: Essential Teachings](#) (co-editor, Orbis). Rabbi Or is also the creator of the weekly scriptural commentary series [70 Faces of Torah](#), curator of the web-based project [PsalmSeason](#), and co-publisher of the [Journal of Interreligious Studies](#).



Reyna Simnegar, author, was born and raised in Venezuela. Her family history dates back to the Spanish Inquisition when her family fled from Spain and ultimately arrived in Venezuela. Reyna is the author of [Persian Food from the Non-Persian Bride](#), published by Feldheim. This unique cookbook and her popular blog posts about kosher Persian food have received extensive broadcast, print, and digital media coverage nationally and in Israel and Iran. Additionally, Reyna was interviewed in *Tablet* magazine by beloved Jewish cookbook author Joan Nathan and was offered a cooking show on the Jewish network JLTV in Los Angeles.

Today, she travels around the United States and Canada doing cooking demonstrations and classes as well as giving motivational speeches inspiring many Jews and non-Jews to rediscover their past and embrace their Jewish roots. [Read more about Reyna's Jewish journey](#)



Keith Stokes, Vice President of the 1696 Heritage Group, and descendant of a founder of the Touro Synagogue in Rhode Island

Mr. Stokes' past professional positions have included Executive Director of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation and Executive Director of the Newport County Chamber of Commerce.

He has also been an Advisor with the National Trust for Historic Preservation along with serving on numerous regional and national historic preservation boards including Chairman of the Touro Synagogue Foundation, Vice President & Trustee of the Preservation Society for Newport County, and Newport Historical Society. Mr. Stokes is a frequent national, state and local lecturer in community & regional planning, historic preservation and interpretation with an expertise in early African and Jewish American history. Mr. Stokes frequently appears on national historical programs including C-SPAN, Fox News Legends & Lies, and Ted Talk. He recently travelled to Ghana, Africa to deliver a lecture as part of the 400th Anniversary of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

This event is made possible thanks to a generous, anonymous donor, and is co-sponsored by the [Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston](#) and [Temple Beth Sholom](#) in Framingham.

