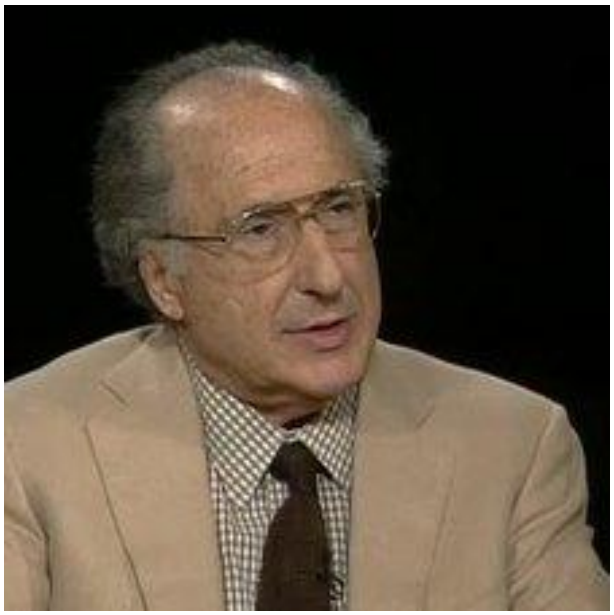
HENRY SIEGMAN has devoted more than seven decades to religious leadership, human rights, and the pursuit of peace. Born in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1930, he fled Nazi persecution with his family, eventually arriving in the United States in 1942. He later became an Orthodox rabbi and served as a U.S. Army chaplain during the Korean War. His childhood experiences as a Jewish refugee helped shape a lifelong commitment to justice and human dignity.

From 1978 to 1994, Siegman led the American Jewish Congress, one of the nation's leading Jewish organizations. Throughout his career, he worked to strengthen Jewish-Christian relations, participated in the civil rights movement, and spoke out against apartheid in South Africa. In 1984, he was arrested while protesting apartheid outside the South African Embassy in Washington, D.C.

Siegman subsequently became an influential voice in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. As a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, he directed the U.S./Middle East Project and later served as its president. His work brought him into direct discussions with Israeli, Palestinian, Arab, and American leaders. Raised in a deeply Zionist household, he became increasingly willing to challenge policies and assumptions held by the very institutions he had spent much of his career representing.

Throughout his remarkable life, Siegman has demonstrated the courage to speak his conscience, even when his views proved unpopular. His dedication to religious understanding, human rights, and a peaceful resolution of conflict reflects the kind of principled service that The Lodestar Foundation seeks to recognize through its Unsung Heroes in Philanthropy initiative.



Henry Siegman