

President Richard M. Joel

Richard M. Joel became Yeshiva University's fourth president on September 21, 2003, and was named Bravmann Family University Professor in April 2010.

Over the past 10 years, President Joel has built upon the illustrious tradition of this storied institution by placing a renewed emphasis on the student experience, academic excellence, Torah scholarship and communal involvement.

With these advancements, and guided by the distinctive belief in education as a process of “ennobling and enabling” young women and men to build whole and meaningful lives, Yeshiva has emerged as North America's Torah-informed university. Further, with his guidance, Yeshiva University has expanded its focus far beyond the walls of the university, whether through professional and rabbinic placement globally or service learning missions worldwide.

With his characteristic charm and wit, President Joel can often be spotted around Yeshiva's campuses engaging with students and learning about them; one of his great pleasures at Yeshiva is in serving on its faculty and teaching his weekly course. Following his lead, the university has further developed a culture of warmth.

President Joel is renowned as a charismatic leader and a captivating orator, and has traveled globally to dialogue with audiences on values-driven education, communal leadership, and Jewish identity. Just as Yeshiva University has embraced its role as the flagship institution of American Modern Orthodoxy, President Joel has in many ways become more than a university president but a true spokesperson for the Jewish people.

Before taking the helm at Yeshiva, President Joel earned his reputation as a dynamic force with young people as president and international director of Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life. There, he facilitated an extraordinary renaissance of Jewish life on campuses through building numerous new facilities, partnering in the creation of Birthright Israel, and using engagement and empowerment models to reach Jewish youth.

Growing up in Bronx, NY, Joel earned his B.A. and J.D. from New York University where he was a Root-Tilden Scholar; he has received honorary doctorates from Boston Hebrew College and Gratz College. He also served as assistant district attorney and deputy chief of appeals in the Bronx, and Associate Dean and Professor of Law at YU's Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law.

President Joel considers his greatest accomplishment marrying his best friend and partner, Esther, who holds a Ph.D. from Yeshiva's Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology. Together, they have six children, all of whom attended Yeshiva University, and six grandchildren, who are the great joy of their lives.