

Contact: Darcy Maher, 732-406-6584; Email: dbmbildner@comcast.net
December 23, 2020 / FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Explore the History of Jewish Name Changing in America
Online Talk, January 14**

NEW BRUNSWICK/PISCATAWAY, N.J. – Dr. Kirsten Fermaglich discusses her groundbreaking book on Jewish name changing in 20th century America. Winner of the American Jewish Historical Society’s Saul Viener Book Prize in 2019, *A Rosenberg by Any Other Name* reveals that name changing was a broad-based, voluntary response to an upsurge in antisemitism—and not just the purview of ambitious movie stars or insensitive officials at Ellis Island.

Rather than trying to escape their heritage, most name changers remained active within the Jewish community, achieving white middle class status and avoiding antisemitism. Relying on court documents, oral histories, archival records, and contemporary literature, Fermaglich contends that name changing had a lasting impact on the culture.

This online program will be held January 14 at 7:00 p.m. on the Zoom platform. Free and open to the public, the event is presented by the Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life at Rutgers University and is the Center’s Raoul Wallenberg Annual Program funded by Leon and Toby Cooperman. Advance registration is required on the Bildner Center website: BildnerCenter.Rutgers.edu.

Kirsten Fermaglich, a professor of history and Jewish studies at Michigan State University, is also the author of *American Dreams and Nazi Nightmares*, and coeditor of the Norton Critical Edition of Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*.

The Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life connects the university with the community through public lectures, symposia, Jewish communal initiatives, cultural events, and teacher training.