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## Gay Cantor Mark Goldman of Plantation temple elected president of American Conference of Cantors

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The first time Cantor Mark Goldman attended an American Conference of Cantors convention about 20 years ago, he went to a secret meeting of gay colleagues.

"It was in somebody's hotel room. There were maybe a dozen people," said Goldman, longtime cantor at Temple Kol Ami Emanu-El in Plantation.

At the next year's convention, a few more gay cantors showed up at another word-of-mouth meeting, he said.

Now, secret meetings are out and so is Goldman, who in July was elected national president of the 505-member Reform Jewish cantors conference.

"I see being gay as being a part of me, part of my personality. It's not everything that defines me," said Goldman, 46, who grew up an Orthodox Jew in suburban London.

"I always wanted to be a cantor from a very young age. I enjoyed going to synagogue with my father, and the music in the synagogue spoke to me," he said.

At 18, Goldman studied at an Israeli yeshiva, "a very orthodox learning institution where you delve into the intricacies of Jewish tradition."

The following year, he pursued cantorial studies and an honors bachelor of arts degree in Judaic studies at the London School of Jewish Studies. He became the youngest recipient of certification by the United Kingdom's chief rabbi.

Goldman recalls that when the subject of homosexuality came up at an Orthodox high school, "we were told this is something terrible and abhorrent."



Cantor Mark Goldman of Temple Kol Ami Emanu-El in Plantation. Andrew Uloza / For The Miami Herald.