

# President Emerita Credits ‘Privilege of Being an Outsider’ for Her Second Sight and Enduring Strength in New Memoir

*Experience Is the Angled Road* is the true story of R. Barbara Gitenstein — the first female and first Jewish president of The College of New Jersey.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, April 29, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In her new book, [Experience Is the Angled Road: Memoir of an Academic](#), R. Barbara Gitenstein chronicles the personal and historical obstacles she faced on her way to becoming the first woman and first Jewish president of The College of New Jersey.

“My story captures the shock and the humor as I, almost always, was the only ‘whatever’ in the room — woman, Jew, liberal,” Gitenstein said.

In *Experience Is the Angled Road*, Gitenstein acknowledges the impact that people, places and perceptions had on her personal and professional identities. Calling her childhood “challenging and strange,” she describes how, as a young girl, she learned that being different was all that there was. Born and raised in Florala, Alabama, after her parents headed south from New York City, Gitenstein’s “otherness” went beyond being Jewish and a Yankee. Her intellectual passions and love of music were considered peculiar by most of her acquaintances. Plus, she grew up with a particularly embarrassing chronic disease. All of these things, she said, taught her to approach the periphery as a position of power.

“I found that embracing the privilege of being an outsider results in great vision and ultimately can be a great foundation for strength,” she said.

That combination of second sight and resilience helped guide her as she confronted sexism,



R. Barbara Gitenstein's compelling account of her differences and how she navigated those while rising to the highest level in academia serves as an exemplar of intersectionality, leadership and survival.

anti-Semitism, regional animus, and the distrust of expertise in her professional and personal life. She also credits extraordinary mentors for helping her navigate the challenges of being the singular voice in a room.

Gitenstein reveals her difficulties and disappointments with refreshing candor, vulnerability and doses of dry wit, resulting in a story that is uplifting, tender and an exemplar of intersectionality, leadership and survival.

Thomas Kean, former governor of New Jersey, calls Gitenstein's memoir, "a remarkably readable book about the people surrounding a young Jewish girl growing up in the Deep South. ... This is an unflinchingly courageous story of love, exasperation, argument, and forgiveness."

#### About the Author

R. Barbara Gitenstein, President Emerita of The College of New Jersey, has over 40 years of experience as a college professor and administrator in both the public and private sectors. Named president of The College of New Jersey after more than six years at Drake

University as provost and executive vice president, she was the first woman to serve as provost at Drake and as president of The College of New Jersey. Currently, she serves as a Senior Fellow and Consultant for the Association of Governing Boards.

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*R. Barbara Gitenstein*



In her book, R. Barbara Gitenstein leads by example, tracing with unflinching candor what it was like being the only “whatever” in the room while grappling with personal challenges, including early onset chronic disease.

She is the author of some 30 academic articles on Jewish-American Literature and academic administration as well as the monograph *Apocalyptic Messianism and Jewish-American Poetry*. She has made over 100 presentations at literature and academic administrative conferences and was often interviewed on radio and television stations in New Jersey, focusing on higher education issues. She resides with her husband in New York City.

Her next book, *Portrait of a Presidency: Patterns in My Life*

as President of the College of New Jersey, has an anticipated publication date of January 2025.

For more information, please visit <https://rbarbaragitenstein.com/>.

Amazon link: <https://www.amazon.com/Experience-Angled-Road-Memoir-Academic/dp/1646637518>

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