



John Planer

Dr. John Planer was born in Chicago, Illinois. He now lives in North Manchester, Indiana and is a recently retired professor at Manchester University after 47 years of service

John has always professed a desire to be a lifelong learner, and that is a quality about him that is admired by many. He was the only person in the history of Manchester University to teach in five departments: music, humanities, religion, English, and art. From the moment he arrived at Manchester, he seized opportunities to improve. He undertook a substantial study of Hebrew, taking a sabbatical to Hebrew Union College, and created an inventory of the Birnbaum manuscript. He was committed to equipping students with tools, both tangible and internal. He helped instill a sense of confidence in the students they would never have had. John also introduced and taught the only Jewish-focused class ever at Manchester—Rel131: The Jewish Faith, Culture, and

People. The syllabus covered the Torah, calendar, holidays, rituals, music, denominations with Judaism, Judaic art and literature, and more.

John additionally contributed to the understanding of Judaism in the local community with some presentations throughout his many years to community groups and through the university. Uniquely, over several decades, he and his wife have touched a large number of students and community members by including them in their family Seders. In doing so, they provided those who are not Jewish an appreciation of the history, an understanding of the significance of the service from the past and the present, and an insight into the faith and life of Judaism.

John's teaching was not limited to a classroom. He is an educator in every sense of the word. He has impacted hundreds of students for generations, and the lessons he has taught will reverberate for many years to come.

John is married to Janina who is also a retired faculty member and they have two children, Joseph and Jacinth.