

Fellowship for Progressive scholar

PETER KOHN

SCHOLAR and novelist Elisabeth Holdsworth (pictured) has been awarded a fellowship to research and write about Progressive Judaism in Australia, Israel and the United States, and says she aims to emphasise the inclusivity she sees in this stream of Judaism.



Holdsworth, who lives at Strathbogie in north-eastern Victoria and attends services at Kehillat S'dot Zahav, the Goldfields Progressive congregation based in Bendigo, said she will particularly research the role played by women in Progressive Judaism.

"I'm interested in the inclusive aspect, that there are female rabbis, cantors and synagogue presidents in the Progressive movement, and I'll also focus on interfaith initiatives," she told *The AJN*.

Growing up in the Netherlands after World War II, she arrived in Australia with her parents in 1959. Her father, a devout Calvinist, was a wartime resistance leader from a privileged family with ties to the Dutch royal family, while her mother was from a poor Jewish family.

Holdsworth's 2007 essay *An*

Die Nachgeborenen (*For Those Who Came After*) retraced the heritage left to her by her parents and their world, and won her the *Australian Book Review* (ABR) inaugural Calibre Prize. She turned it into a novel *Those Who Came After*, published in 2011. She has just completed her third novel.

ABR will publish Holdsworth's essay on Progressive Judaism, which she plans to write as the 2017 fellow of the Religious Advancement Foundation Trust (RAFT), an organisation promoting awareness of religion in the broader community, particularly the three Abrahamic faiths. This is only the second RAFT fellowship, in a program which began last year.

ABR editor Peter Rose said Holdsworth "is well known to ABR readers", adding that her Calibre Prize essay "brought the author to the attention of readers and editors alike. It remains one of the most popular articles ever published by ABR".

Rabbi Fred Morgan, movement rabbi of the Union for Progressive Judaism said, "It is an accolade to the Progressive movement that ABR has chosen an essay proposal for the RAFT Fellowship that celebrates our liberal approach to Jewish practice."