

The Inland Empire is a far cry from the Hebrew Academy. But that's precisely where Hebrew Academy Alumnus Michael (Menachem) Rubinstein was born and raised. Michael's family lived in Norco, where his parents worked for the family egg business, Norco Ranch, which was founded by his grandparents Harry and Hilda Eisen.

Norco did not have much in the form of Judaism—only a small conservative temple in Corona, and a reform Sunday School in Riverside Michael and his sister Erika attended. Although the environment was not teeming with Yiddishkeit, Michael and Erika knew of their roots through listening to the stories of their grandparents, who are all Polish Holocaust survivors. The family also had personal experiences with the Rebbe when Erika was a small child, and Michael's father Mark obm donned Tefillin every day ever since meeting the Rebbe in 1981. After attending a Sunday School Chanukah party in which Michael and Erika were the only Jewish children in attendance, their mother Mary knew it was time for a better Jewish education.

In 1989, after Michael's younger brother Joey was born, the family moved to Yorba Linda to join the new Chabad congregation opened by Rabbi Dovid Eliezie. Michael remembers the night Rabbi Newman visited his home to invite his parents to enroll him in the Hebrew Academy. Michael's parents agreed to send him and his siblings to the school, and it was a life-changing decision. It was a memory Michael appreciated when Rabbi Newman read the kesubah at his wedding in 2006!

Around the time of his Bar Mitzvah, Michael started becoming more observant. He began high school at the Hebrew Academy, and later transferred to the Chabad yeshiva in Los Angeles to complete his high school studies. Even though he eventually went on to Rabbinical School and graduated with semicha ordination, and later from Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, the education he received at the Hebrew Academy is what set the overall tone for his life.

Every day Michael feels the impact the Hebrew Academy had on his life. As a personal injury attorney, he's proud of his unique background as the "Rabbi Lawyer" which enables him to achieve great results for his clients. "Without the Hebrew Academy and the life-changing education I received there, I would have never gone on to law school, nor would I have met my wife Chavi, or had my two beautiful children," says Michael. "The friends and memories I have from school are, to this day, among my closest. This school has a special place in everyone's hearts. I am forever grateful to the Hebrew Academy and the selfless dedication of its teachers and rabbis."

You can learn more about Michael's practice by visiting his website, www.rabbilawyer.com.