



DEPARTING RABBI — The Rev. M.R. Bradley, left, pastor of Westlawn Baptist Church, was among Christians of many denominations who paid tribute this past week to Rabbi Irwin Cutler. Cutler, spiritual leader of Dauphin Street Synagogue, is leaving Mobile for a rabbinate in Southern California. (Mobile Press Register photo by Aaron O. Tesnev)

Honored by local Christians

Cutler heads west

By SYLVIA HART

Press Register Reporter

As Rabbi Irwin Cutler leaves Mobile this weekend, he will be carrying with him a memory of accolades from members of the Christian community.

Cutler, rabbi of Dauphin Street Synagogue for the past three years, is to become spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation which is forming in the community of La Coasta in Southern California. That town has no synagogue.

The rabbi was honored this past week during a luncheon at Westlawn Baptist Church in Mobile and again in a service in the local synagogue. Spearheading the recognition at both events were leaders of the Area Interfaith Disaster Services (AIDS).

Since Hurricane Frederic struck the Gulf Coast nearly a year ago, Cutler has served as chairman of the AIDS management committee, which has been overseeing hurricane relief work sponsored by area Christians and Jews on a long-term basis.

The Rev. M.R. Bradley, pastor of Westlawn Baptist

Church and a member of the AIDS management committee, said area Christians involved in AIDS have spent a year "learning to love and appreciate" the rabbi.

Cutler had planned to move quietly from the Port City, but his Christian associates made that type of leave-taking impossible. "He has meant too much to our community for that kind of departure," said Bradley.

The rabbi, with characteristic wit, said, "The Christians told me they wouldn't pray for me if I left quietly" without allowing the two programs of recognition.

The twinkle in his eyes fading, the Jewish leader turned serious. "It has been just beautiful that I as a rabbi have been so well received in the community. In all my 20 years in the rabbinate I have never had such concern and love expressed to me in working within the community," he said.

He attributed much of the interfaith cooperation to Hurricane Frederic.

"It's unfortunate that it took a disaster to bring this kind of fellowship, but we know good does come out of bad."